

GILMARTIN:

The Greed and Corruption at the Heart of Irish Politics

By

Tom O'Brien

(c) 2016 Tom O'Brien

The moral right of the author has been asserted. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means without the written permission of the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review to be printed by a newspaper, journal or magazine.

First printing

Performing rights

Applications for performance in excerpt or in full should be sent to:
tombrien2004@yahoo.co.uk

Published by tomtom-theatre

Characters

Tom Gilmartin (businessman)

Liam Lawlor (politician)

Owen O'Callaghan (businessman)

Padraig Flynn (politician)

Bertie Ahern (politician)

Maire Ann Howard (tribunal solicitor)

Nondescript man or woman

George Redmond (Dublin C Council)

Maguire (counsel for Ahern/O'Callaghan etc)

note

All characters can be played with a maximum of 6 males and 1 female if required

GILMARTIN:

The Greed and Corruption at the Heart of Irish Politics

A play in two acts

Preamble

When Bertie Ahern resigned on May 6th 2008 after 11 years as Irish Taoiseach and more than thirty years all told in the corridors of power, it was as a direct result of the fall-out that occurred from the treatment meted out to Irish businessman, Tom Gilmartin, which only emerged in its entirety at the conclusion of the Mahon Tribunal, which had sat for almost 15 years before reaching its conclusions in 2012.

Tom Gilmartin had emigrated to Luton in the 1950's from Sligo, and over the years had built up a successful business in construction and engineering, in Luton and South East England. Now a multi millionaire he decided in the late 1980's to invest his experience – and money - in some projects in Dublin, where unemployment was high, and where poverty had once again seen many young Irish people cross the water in the hope of a better life.

Tom had ambitious plans for several major retail developments in the city, which he hoped would provide work for hundreds, if not thousands, in the city, but little did he know that in order to do business in Dublin, senior politicians and public officials would want a slice of the action – in large amounts of cash.

Embittered and impoverished by his experiences, Tom finally blew the whistle on the corruption at the heart of government and the city's planning system. His complaints resulted in the setting up in 1997, by order of the Oireachtas, of the Mahon Tribunal to look into 'certain planning matters and payments'. Ironically, it was championed by none other than one Bertie Ahern.

Length...100 mins approx

Setting...Dublin 1990's – 2000's

PROLOGUE

Lights come up slowly to reveal Tom Gilmartin pacing slowly the room. The backdrop shows larger than life images of Paul Robeson – b/w film? - Some should be silent, some of Paul singing. Paul sings OLE MAN RIVER and Tom sings along with him in a deep voice.

There's an ol' man called de Mississippi;
That's the ol' man I don't like to be!
What does he care if the world's got troubles?
What does he care if the land ain't free..
Ol' Man River,
That Ol' Man River
He mus' know sumpin' But don't say nuthin',
He jes' keeps rollin',
He keeps on rollin' along.
He don't plant taters,
He don't plant cotton,
An' dem dat plants 'em
Is soon forgotten,
But Ol' Man River,
He jes' keeps rollin' along

TOM: I love that song. I love Paul Robeson. I just love that man. He had more trouble in his life than any man deserved. He was a genius, no doubt about it. But he was black. A black genius. He was a brilliant footballer; a brilliant lawyer - until the day a secretary said to him, ' I don't take dictation from a nigger'. That finished him and the law. Still, it didn't stop him from becoming a top class entertainer, acting and singing all over the world - until that too was taken from him by the scourge of America of the 1950's - MCarthyism. If he was white he could have been president of the USA. But he wasn't. And because he was black he suffered greatly. *(pause)*
We Irish are often referred to as the blacks of Europe. And maybe we are. We, too, have suffered. Famine and persecution; our rights, our freedoms, taken away. No Blacks, No Dogs, No Irish, we all remember that, don't we. But what about our own people? Those at the top I mean – politicians and the like. When they behave worse than the Mafia, or the Klu Klux Klan, how do we deal with that?

He sings a few more bars of the song before the lights gradually fade to black.

Act 1

Scene 1

Tom Gilmartin, a man in his late fifties, emerges from a meeting with Charles Haughey and a number of his government ministers. Tom, well dressed – suit, etc – looks a bit bemused. He sits in a chair for a moment, thinking. After a while a woman enters.

WOMAN: I think the Boss was impressed.

TOM: The boss?

WOMAN: Charlie. Shure that's what we all call him.

TOM: We? *(he looks at her)* Excuse me, have we met? Do I know you?

WOMAN: Wasn't I at the meeting?

TOM: Were you? Where were you – in a cupboard?

WOMAN: Ha, Ha. Them is the country's most powerful men. They'll get you what you want. No question about that.

TOM: And what do I want?

WOMAN: Money. Isn't that what we all want?

TOM: I thought all I wanted was to get this bloody development at Quarryvale off the ground.

WOMAN: We're all behind you on that. It's the money that's the problem.

TOM: No, the money's not a problem. When I get the go-ahead I'll get the money. In fact it's already there. Just waiting for the okay.

WOMAN: Ah now, I think there a little misunderstanding here. I was thinking more about...you know... the expenses.

Silence for a moment

TOM: Ah! You mean fucking bribes. Is this another shake-down?

WOMAN: Don't you realise you are going to get every assistance to get your two projects off the ground? We don't do this sort of thing for every Tom, Dick and Harry

TOM: This sort of thing?

She waves towards the closed offices.

WOMAN: What do you think was going on in there? A bloody garden party? That was a show of unity. To show we are all behind you. The Boss doesn't do appearances like this every day of the week'.

TOM: Well, it is a major investment that I'm bringing to the country, so I would think they would be happy to see it under the current economy

WOMAN: You're also – we're all aware that you are going to make hundreds of millions out of these projects.

TOM: Not me. Whoever invests in it might. But it won't be me that makes hundreds of millions

WOMAN: Well, we think that you should give us some of the money upfront.

TOM: We?

WOMAN: Everybody is agreed. And we would like you to deposit five millions - pounds that is - before you start.

TOM: Can you say that again? I think I'm hearing things.

WOMAN: Well, we want you to deposit five million pounds, and we want it deposited in an Isle of Man account.

TOM: That's not much. Does...'The Boss' know about this?

The woman takes a strip of paper and hands it to Tom. Tom looks at it.

TOM: What's this?

WOMAN: It's the account details

TOM: You seriously want me to put five million in there?

WOMAN: Yes.

TOM: You make the bloody Mafia look like monks. What do you think I am? Do I look like I came up the Liffey on a banana boat or something?

The woman tries to grab the paper from Tom's hand but he fends her off and sticks it in his pocket

WOMAN: You could wind up in the Liffey for saying things like that.

TOM: Do you know what you can do? You can eff off – whoever you are!

Tom walks to one side.

WOMAN: (*after him*) You won't get very far with an attitude like that. Remember, we'll be in touch

SCENE 2

Tom speaks to audience. He is calling out amounts and handing out fat brown envelopes. Each envelope is collected by a hand reaching out from behind a curtain

TOM: Pdraig Flynn fifty thousand... Ray Burke forty thousand... Liam Lawlor, eighty one thousand, Bertie Ahern fifty thousand...George Redmond a hundred thousand...Liam Lawlor a hundred thousand...

He chucks the rest of the envelopes on the ground

Ah Christ, the list is endless...(*pause*)

LIAM LAWLOR appears. He wears glasses, is smartly dressed, wearing a suit and tie. Has a Dublin accent. He doesn't speak for a while

TOM: The first time I met Liam Lawlor was in the Dead Man's Inn, a pub in Palmerstown. I was interested in finding out the ownership of land at Quarryvale, which I believed would suit my requirements down to the ground for my development scheme, and I had been told Lawlor was my man. He knew 'where every blade of grass was growing in Dublin' I was assured.

He came tearing in the door, all 'hail fellow and well met' and wasn't the slightest bit interested in what I wanted to know. He only wanted to talk about the Bachelors Walk development, which he said was on his patch, and told me the Government had allocated him to take care of me and get the deal into Dublin. He said he wanted to meet the people behind the proposed development, so I said I was meeting them in London the following Thursday and would ask them if they wanted to meet him

Take care of me! He did that all right.

The next thing I know is he turns up at the meeting in London as brazen as brass, saying he had been appointed by the Government to look after Bachelor's Walk, and that they would have to have him on board if the scheme was to get off the ground. He went on to say that he could knock two years, at least, off the time to develop the scheme if he was on board.

The fucker had some neck. (**Lawlor smiles at this**) I said I hadn't invited him – which I hadn't –that I didn't even know him and had only met him on one occasion. He contradicted me and said I had invited him. That's the sort of bastard he was, twisting peoples' words to suit his lies. He was a hustler, no doubt about it. Years later, when the details of his dodgy

dealing finally came out at the Mahon Tribunal, he was prepared to go to prison rather than reveal any of his financial shenanigans.

LAWLOR MOVES FORWARD

TOM. Anyway, I left him talking with my backers and went off for a cup of tea. About an hour later he turned up, a big grin on his face.

LAWLOR: Well, They've appointed me.

TOM: What do you mean?

LAWLOR: Your backers. I'm on board. In the mix. I told them I wanted a twenty percent stake...

TOM: Jesus, you've some neck, I'll say that for you.

LAWLOR: ...and a hundred thousand up front. But they turned it down.

TOM: They have some bit of sense anyway.

LAWLOR: But they agreed that you would give me half your stake and the hundred grand up front.

TOM: Did they? Well, go back and tell them you'll get nothing of my stake and no hundred thousand.

LAWLOR: Well, we won't fall out over the matter – yet. They have agreed to pay me a consultancy fee of three thousand five hundred month.

TOM: Consultancy...for what?

LAWLOR: You need somebody to help you traverse the difficult political landscape in Dublin.

TOM: Do I? And you're that man, I suppose.

LAWLOR: Someone to ease you through the corridors of power. Sure I know every...

TOM: I know. Every blade of grass. I don't need you. Or anybody. I think I can still recognise grass.

LAWLOR: You have to work with me or you are going nowhere.

Lawlor begins to leave as Tom shakes his head

LAWLOR: See you in Dublin

TOM: He had convinced my backers he could win the necessary 'political support' for the Bachelor's Walk Project and they had agreed to the consultancy fee. I was to pay it and be reimbursed by the company. I didn't like it but there wasn't much I could do. The first

cheque was given to Lawlor with the payees section left blank at his insistence. Jesus, I tell you, he was something else. On other occasions the cheques were made out to his brother-in-law, who had no idea what was going on.

The next time I saw Lawyer was in Dublin airport, a few weeks later

Lawlor reappears

What are you doing here?

LAWLOR: You could say that I'm your chauffeur.

TOM: I don't want you to be my anything.

LAWLOR: Ah shure it's no trouble. I was passing this way anyway. And you need someone to show you around.

TOM: How did you know I was going to be here? On this particular flight?

LAWLOR: (*touching his nose with his index finger*) That would be telling.

TOM: Hmm. Where are you taking me?

LAWLOR: We're going to see George Redmond, assistant county manager. He's the man you want to see for anything to do with planning in Dublin. Hop in and I'll have you there in two shakes of a lamb's tail.

Enter GEORGE REDMOND. He is a middle-aged man with greying hair, thinning on top. On the wall behind him is a large wall chart of the city. He rises and shakes hands with both men

LAWLOR: George, this is Tom Gilmartin. He wants to pick your brains.

REDMOND: Slim pickings there I'm afraid, Tom.

LAWLOR: Ah jaysus, will you go way or that! The best brains in the council this man has. If its plans you want to know about George knows where all the bodies are buried – metaphorically speaking, I mean! What he doesn't know about rezoning isn't worth knowing. Not to mention where the roads, water and sewage services would be available. Isn't that right, George?

REDMOND: If you say so, Liam. Now, how can I help you Tom?

TOM: Well, I'm looking to buy some land along the Dublin – Galway road.

LAWLOR: Aren't we all.

REDMOND: Council land, is it?

TOM: I am not sure. It might be.

REDMOND: Oh... I thought your interest was in the Bachelor's Walk development?

TOM: *(surprised)* I see news travels fast in this town. *(he looks at Lawlor, who studiously ignores him)* Well, that too. But this is another area I am looking at. I want to know who owns the plots of land out by Quarryvale?

He doesn't see the looks exchanged by the other two men

LAWLOR: Another site for development, is it?

REDMOND: Quarryvale? That's an easy one. It's owned by the council.

He goes behinds his desk and emerges in a moment with a colour-coded map providing the information

REDMOND: There you are. I think you'll find what you need

TOM: Thanks.

As he studies the map the other two men talk jokingly about the value of the information provided

LAWLOR: Did you hear that George? Thanks! That's worth a lot more than thanks

REDMOND: Do you thinks so, Liam?

LAWLOR: Indubitably, George.

REDMOND: Indubitably, that's a darlin' word, Liam.

LAWLOR: What's it worth? A hundred thousand?

REDMOND: Indubitably? I don't see why not.

Redmond moves away, ostensibly to make a phone call at another desk.

LAWLOR: Quarryvale? Are you planning to develop it?

TOM: Well now, that remains to be seen – as the monkey said when he pissed behind the grand piano.

LAWLOR: A comedian as well! Well, here's a good one for you; you're going to have to pay me one hundred thousand if you want this to proceed. And George will want a hundred thousand as well.

TOM: Jesus, you're some cowboy, Lawlor. I told you before I will not give you a penny of my money.

LAWLOR: That's not the way it works in this town.

TOM: So I'm beginning to notice. I always thought you applied for planning permission and if it looked like a good idea then you got it.

LAWLOR: Someone's got to pay the piper, Tom.

TOM: I don't like the tune – Liam.

Redmond returns, his phone 'conversation' at an end.

TOM: Liam tells me you require one hundred thousand for this to proceed.

REDMOND: For what to proceed? Nothing has been requested from me apart from some information. And that costs nothing. I hope I have been of some help to you Mr Gilmartin. (*he indicates the map*) You may keep that. Now if you'll excuse me.

Tom speaks directly to audience.

TOM: I never trusted Redmond from the first time I met him. I thought he was a sneak. By our third meeting he had confirmed my impression that he was a gangster. I also realised that I had learnt, at first hand, the cost of doing business in Dublin. I tried not to let either Lawlor or Redmond in on my plans for Quarryvale, but it was difficult to keep secret.

The price for their co-operation was two hundred thousand, and it had been made abundantly clear to me that if I did not pay up my ambition to purchase and develop the lands would not be realised

My backers, Arlington, eventually got fed up with the endless delays, and after a year of bickering and demands for money they pulled out of Dublin and the Bachelor's Walk project, leaving me free to concentrate on Quarryvale, which in any case was a much better proposition. With no outside backing now, I had to raise the initial development money myself. I formed a company, Barkhill, and by the end of 1988 had acquired the main blocks of land necessary for the project's success, using finance I had raised myself. Of course I had to take on loads of various professional advisors, including, auctioneers, solicitors and accountants, with the result that soon it was an open secret what I was planning. Lawlor was soon on my tail again.

LAWLOR: (moving forward) If you want to develop Quarryvale you will have to deal with Owen O'Callaghan.

TOM: The Cork property developer? What do I need him for?

LAWLOR: He's a big man – an important man around these parts. And he has an option on the site at Neilstown, which isn't too far from your Quarryvale. And it's also got official zoning as the preferred site by the council.

TOM: I looked at that place myself. Nobody in their right mind would build on that site!

LAWLOR: That doesn't matter, because Mr O'Callaghan, all he has to do is threaten to build it, and you will be stuck there – Quarryvale - for ever. If he proceeds he will get the planning permission, not you.

TOM: Jesus, Lawlor, you know how to make a body feel welcome.

LAWLOR: Look, Owen wants to come aboard the Quarryvale thing. He'd be a big asset. He knows his way around here. He's a well respected developer, and is well known in property and political circles. He could make things happen for you.

TOM: Fianna Fail man is he?

LAWLOR: To his core. He has a big pull with the likes of Charlie.

TOM: I bet he has. How come he knows about...this?

LAWLOR: Good news travels fast. And Dublin is a small town.

TOM: I'm just beginning to realise how small. If I farted in here you lot would know before I got a whiff myself.

LAWLOR: That's as may be. But he has you by the short and curlies. And you know it.

TOM: What does he want?

LAWLOR: He wants in on the deal. But he can tell you himself. I'll contact him and set up a meeting for you.

TOM: I have a feeling you are not doing this out of the goodness of your heart.

LAWLOR: I want a twenty percent share in the development for myself

TOM: Are you mad! That site could cost between three and five million to develop. If it is developed and comes to be worth – say – two hundred million- are you telling me you have to be paid forty million? What investor is going to come on board with a deal like that before him?

Tom speaks to the audience

I realised I had goofed. I spoke to several council officials and they confirmed that if O'Callaghan went ahead with his site at Neilstown it would cause problems for me. Basically, Quarryvale could not go ahead unless Neilstown wasn't built on. I knew then that I should have gotten control of that site first. I had been offered the site in early 1988, but I didn't think it could ever be built on, so I passed on it. At the time the corporation owned it, and later on in the year Albert Gubay bought it from them for £3 million, with a clause included in the contract which stated that if anything was built close by he didn't have to build on it. O'Callaghan had managed to buy it from Gubay in the meantime, knowing that it would provide him with vital leverage in any negotiation with me over Quarryvale.

SCENE 3

Tom is meeting with OWEN O'CALLAGHAN. O'Callaghan, from Cork, a middle-aged, well dressed, grey haired and clean shaven. He places a drawing on the table in front of them. They shake hands.

TOM: Mr O'Callaghan.

OWEN: Owen, please. I thought this might interest you, Tom

TOM: It's a drawing.

OWEN: It's a drawing of my Neilstown site, with a sketch of a shopping centre. It was done by my architect Ambrose Kelly. Good, don't you think?

TOM: Shopping centre! Out there in that dump? You'll never build it.

OWEN: I've already got outline planning permission.

TOM: And I say again that you will never build on that site.

OWEN: Can you be certain, though? To build or not to build, that is the question. Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or... to build the bloody bugger.

TOM: Alright, what do you want?

OWEN: How much would be more appropriate, don't you think.

TOM: How much then?

OWEN: Fifty-fifty.

TOM: You want half of my company! It's one of the best sites in Europe and you want me to give you half of it just like that.

OWEN: I'll take it off your hands then. What you paid for it - plus a profit of course.

TOM: It's not for sale

OWEN: £7 million, then, for my place.

TOM: You must be joking. It's worth fuck all to me

OWEN: I'm not your enemy, Tom. I want us to be partners, friends. This operation of yours is too big for one man. Too big for me anyway. I admire your determination, I really do, but I honestly think the two of us together could pull this off much better. *(pause)* Are you a religious man, Tom?

TOM: I could be better. All those years in England, I suppose

OWEN: Ah yes. I hear tell it's a pagan place. I never miss Mass. And I can't understand people who don't say the rosary every night. It's stood me in good stead all my life. The whole family praying together, isn't that a wonderful sight?

TOM: Yes, I guess it is.

OWEN: The family that prays together stays together.

TOM: (*sarcastic*) I'm sure I've heard that somewhere before.

OWEN: Are you a family man, Tom?

TOM: I am. Three boys and a girl.

OWEN: And your wife?

TOM: Her name is Vera. We met in Luton shortly after she arrived there from Donegal. We got married a few years later.

OWEN: And what part of the country are you from yourself

TOM: From a little place called Lislary.

OWEN: Ah, that's Mayo isn't it?

TOM: It's in Sligo, near Grange. We were small farmers, thirty acres small to be exact.

OWEN: Ah! The small farmers had it hard in the West, didn't they?

TOM: We survived. My father had many skills.

OWEN: I'm a countryman myself you know.

TOM: A small farmer like myself?

OWEN: Well, we had a bit of land, but I didn't do much farming. I got out young and made something of life. Like you did.

TOM: And now you're the most powerful developer in the land.

OWEN: So they say. Sure what does that mean? It's only a label. And you know what happens to labels? They have a habit of falling off. You're only as good as the people you know. Look, you have to keep on the ball in this game. Only a few days ago I was meeting with Albert Reynolds, the Minister for Industry and Commerce...

TOM: It's a big title, anyway

OWEN: ... and that night I was at a function with senior executives of Allied Irish Banks.

TOM: Was Quarryvale discussed?

OWEN: It was mentioned as a matter of fact.

TOM: It's my project. You had no right discussing...

OWEN: It a big project for Christ sake, Tom. A big project in a small country. The biggest around for quite some time. People want in on it. Want to be part of it.

TOM: I know they bloody do. You want half of it. Lawlor wants another bit of it. It seems like half of Dublin wants a bit of it. There will be nothing left for myself by time you lot are finished. *(pause)* I suppose Reynolds wants something too.

OWEN: He's a powerful man. He can smooth the path for you. For us...

TOM: There is no us.

OWEN: There will be eventually. There has to be. Otherwise... *(pause)* Look Tom, you and me, we're not politicians. We're just businessmen, trying to make an honest living the best way we can. And we have to deal with politicians – and officials – whether we like to or not.

TOM: People like Liam Lawlor?

OWEN: Yes. He can cut through a lot of the bullshit.

TOM: He's a bloody gangster!

OWEN: He's a survivor though. And he has got his finger on a lot of pulses in this town. You have got to keep him onside.

TOM: Does Lawlor work for you?

OWEN: *(laughs)*. Well, not officially. Liam loves the smell of money. That's why I use him. Any man with that much gra for the green stuff must be reliable

TOM: Reliable!

OWEN: Oh yeah. Especially when his remuneration depends on results. *(pause)* I hear tell you met with Charlie?

TOM: Lawlor, I suppose? Yeah, I met him.

OWEN: And?

TOM: It was short and sweet. 'I know you; you're Gilmartin from Lisary', he said to me. 'I have a holiday home by the sea near the townland'. We then chatted about the project for a while, and he gave me an assurance that no obstacles would be placed in my way at a time when jobs were desperately needed. 'I hope Liam is looking after you', he said to me a few minutes later as I left.

OWEN: I think he was impressed.

TOM: Well, somebody certainly was. Impressed enough to demand five million off me.

OWEN: I think that might have been a joke.

TOM: Some joke.

OWEN: Look, you have to be careful. Some of these fellas will take your money and do nothing for you in return.

TOM: (To the audience) O'Callaghan was right of course. I needed him. Well, I needed his site at Neilstown. I had no choice but to deal with him. And the price was high. I had to pay three and a half million pounds for the Neilstown land, to be delivered in stages. £800,000 upfront, £1.35 million in Jan 1990 and the final instalment of £1.35 million when zoning for Quarryvale was approved. I would be down nearly six million pounds by now if I had acceded to all the demands for money from various quarters. I had told a number of people, including O'Callaghan and some politicians of the constant demands made on me for money. But the five million was the last straw and I decided to make my complaint more widely known to the authorities.

SCENE 4

A meeting between Redmond, Lawlor and PADRAIG FLYNN, then a Minister in the Haughey government. Flynn carries a briefcase, is smartly dressed in a suit etc. He has brownish hair, a bald forehead, bushy eyebrows, and greying sideburns.

REDMOND: So what you are saying, Padraig, is that Gilmartin has already bought the Neilstown site from Owen?

FLYNN: Yes, he has. And that puts him in a strong position to develop Quarryvale.

REDMOND: If he gets his zoning

FLYNN: He's likely to, isn't he? A lot of the council are behind his plans.

REDMOND: We'll see about that.

LAWLOR: I hear he has already has an agreement to purchase sixty eight acres from the City Council and another twelve acres from the County Council. I'd say he has all the land he needs to go ahead now.

FLYNN: At forty thousand an acre, I believe. That fella is spreading money around like it was confetti at a wedding.

REDMOND: He hasn't got that land yet.

FLYNN: What are you up to, George?

REDMOND: I had a word in John Corcoran's ear.

FLYNN: Who?

LAWLOR: Ah, you know the man, Pdraig. Green Properties? They're developing that retail store at Blanchardstown.

FLYNN: Oh yes. Him.

REDMOND: Look, I'll be honest: I'm retiring in a few months. Only I'd go mad doing nothing, so I'm going to work for John after I retire. I thought a word in his ear might be useful. If he tenders for the same land it will put a spike in Gilmartin's plans.

FLYNN: It would certainly slow him down.

LAWLOR: Put a stop to his gallop, what! Might bring him down a peg or two. Thinks he can waltz in here and do what he likes. And without paying his dues.

FLYNN: I haven't heard any of this talk. I mean it. As a minister of Government I can't be party to any shenanigans...

LAWLOR: Ah for fuck sake Pee! What shenanigans? Look, Gilmartin is going to make a fortune out of this. A large fortune. Hundreds of millions is the estimate. What about us, the poor Dublin fools he has running around like blue arsed flies after him. Fixing up meetings, making introductions, smoothing the path for him. What are we, a fucking charity? It costs time and money. I'm owed consultancy fees, so is George. And you will be too because you will be dragged into it.

REDMOND: I hear he is already having problems with his advisors getting access to my engineers in the relevant departments...

FLYNN: Look, George, I don't want to know what you're getting up to in the planning department. But whatever it is don't make it too blatant. I don't want any comebacks. Nothing that reflects badly on the government. We need jobs badly in this city. Anything that looks or smells iffy and we could be the ones looking for the jobs ourselves....(pause)

And I've had Charlie's brother bending my ear too

REDMOND: Sean? What's his problem?

FLYNN: Gilmartin's been on to him as well

REDMOND: The man is paranoid – and thinks he's found an honest man in Sean.

LAWLOR: Not like his brother then!

FLYNN: I wouldn't let Charlie hear you say that if I was you Liam. Not even in jest.

LAWLOR: I know. Sure Charlie had a humour transplant years ago. Still, there doesn't seem to be any love lost between himself and Sean. What gives?

REDMOND: Well, - and I am sure you know this anyway, Pee – it seems The Boss has been in dispute with Gilmartin's sister about a bit of bog he was trying to buy in Lislary.

LAWLOR: Bog?

REDMOND: Well, a few acres of scrub adjacent to his holiday home there. I think he was hoping to put up a few more buildings on it. Anyway, she laid prior claim to the land and he had to abandon his plans. I'd say he's trying to give Gilmartin a few sly digs to get his own back.

FLYNN: And Gilmartin doesn't know?

REDMOND: I doubt it.

LAWLOR: You don't want to get on the wrong side of Charlie.

FLYNN: Something you should all bear in mind. There's another little matter you should know about. Gilmartin has made a complaint to the Gardai about 'planning irregularities'.

REDMOND: Planning irregularities my arse! He's the problem...

FLYNN: Hear me out, George. Following a meeting between the Taoiseach, Gerry Collins and myself there's going to be an inquiry into the matter.

REDMOND: An inquiry? Oh Jaysus, that's great, that is.

FLYNN: Ah, I expect it will run its course, and then blow over. You know how these things go.

LAWLOR: Who's headin' the inquiry?

FLYNN: Your old friend Hugh Sreenan, I believe.

LAWLOR: The Chief Super himself. A good man. One of our own.

FLYNN: Gilmartin alleges that you two have asked for cash payments and that someone asked him for five million following the meeting at Leinster House.

REDMOND: Five million! That's a bit strong even for Charlie.

LAWLOR: He won't get anywhere making accusations like that.

FLYNN: I expect they will want to talk to both of you.

Enter Tom who speaks directly to the audience.

TOM: Chief Supt Sreenan made a right hames of the inquiry as far as I was concerned. He interviewed me three times at my Luton home during the March of that year, whilst Sean Haughey and a few others were also spoken to, and another investigating garda interviewed Owen O'Callaghan in Cork. Liam Lawlor was never interviewed at all, and they also failed to question Redmond. Very careless of them I thought!

When I got a copy of the final report of my interview with Sreenan, there was no mention at all of the demand for £5 million. How could that not be included? When I spoke to him about

it he seemed confused to the point of stupidity, And as for Lawlor, there was no evidence to link him to the demand. When I pointed out that the demand came from a woman I could not identify he admitted that his notes of the conversation were ‘bitty and disjointed’.

It was not this lack of thoroughness, however, that made me lose complete faith in the inquiry. A few days after my conversation with Sreenan I received a phone call at my home from a woman who introduced herself as Ban Garda Burns...

VOICE: Listen, Gilmartin, the complaints you are making are not welcome here. We’ve had these complaints before and all the allegations resulted in those wrongly accused emerging with their reputations unscathed. So why don’t you fuck off back to England. And stay there.

TOM: I spoke to O’Callaghan and told him what had happened. He told me I was shooting myself in the foot by making the complaints in the first place. ‘This is not the way business is done in Ireland’. He said. ‘I can see that’ I replied. ‘Well they can carry on with their inquiry without my co-operation from now on. It’s a bloody joke’

TOM. The final report said there was no evidence to suggest that Redmond, now retired, had committed any crime. It also said that no evidence of criminal conduct by Liam Lawlor had emerged.

But back to Pdraig Flynn now.

I had been keeping in regular contact with him during my negotiations for Quarryvale, because as Minister for the Environment he was dealing with most of the day-to-day issues involved with it. I supposed I believed that he could hurry it up or slow it down, depending on which way the political wind was blowing. It was my complaints to him that had led to the Garda enquiry.

Pdraig Flynn enters.

Well Pdraig, that enquiry was a waste of time. And money. What’s going to happen now? Nobody in Leinster house seems to care a flying ...fig what’s going on.

FLYNN: Once you made it a Garda matter it was out of my hands, you know that. We politicians can’t be seen to interfere with the due process. The enquiry arrived at its conclusions. We have to accept their decisions.

TOM: Even if they are an incompetent bunch of idiots. Or worse. Perhaps they are part of the problem and not the solution, eh? (*pause*) I never saw such a bunch of beggars in all my born days. The hand out wherever I go.

FLYNN: Look, Tom, I’ll be honest with you. The party is in deep trouble financially. I think we’re almost £3 million in the red. There are lots of ...activities going on, not always pretty, to do something to rectify matters.

TOM: Is that what all this is about? To top up Fianna Fail’s coffers?

FLYNN: Well, a substantial donation to the party might help to curb these activities.

TOM: Who gets the money? Who is the party treasurer?

FLYNN: Well, I am. Along with Bertie Ahearn.

TOM: Everyone's looking for money. Deja vu.

FLYNN: Look, all I'm saying is that it might smooth out some of the problems you seem to be having if... they knew you were onside.

TOM: You mean on the Fianna Fail side.

FLYNN: Well, they wouldn't go out of their way to help you if they thought you might be giving a helping hand to ...other parties

TOM: Look, Jesus, I'm not on anyone's side. All I want is to build this fucking development without getting all tangled up in the politics. Although how paying somebody fifty thousand in backhanders is politics is beyond me.

FLYNN: It's the way it works, Tom. That's the system

TOM: Some system. How much of a donation are we talking about here? Twenty thousand?

Flynn shrugs

TOM: Fifty thousand?

FLYNN: That sounds a satisfactory amount.

TOM: I met somebody last week and he said to me 'They'll take your fucking money and still do nothing for you'.

FLYNN: I bet he wasn't a Fianna Fail man!

TOM: **(Taking out his cheque book and starts filling it out)** Who do I make the cheque out to?

Flynn is now packing files etc into his briefcase, checking his watch etc, seemingly in a big hurry

FLYNN: Oh, ah...look, there's a car waiting for me, I've got an important meeting shortly. *(turns round as he leaves)* oh, just leave the cheque on the desk. I'll sort it out later.

He exits. Tom speaks to audience

TOM: And that was the last I saw of my fifty grand. Why did I give him the money? All I wanted was to give some chance to the scheme getting off the ground. After all it was creating hundreds of jobs – my reason for coming to Dublin in the first place. I risked everything to put it there, including my name. And it had now been suggested by a Government official that I had to pay to get justice, so I felt I had no option but to pay up.

Besides, it was going into Fianna Fáil's coffers – and there was an election coming up, so they probably needed it.

SCENE 5

Tom speaks to the audience.

TOM: I had heard good words about Bertie Ahern. A man of the people, they said, so I contacted him. I raised the issue of how long it was taking to get the Quarryvale land sorted out and he said he would see what he could do. A couple of weeks later I was contacted by the council to tell me that my tender had been approved. At last, a man of his word!

BERTIE AHERN enters. Tidily dressed; suit, tie etc; his hair is rather long at the back.

TOM: I want to thank you for your help Mr Ahern.

BERTIE: Bertie, please. Everyone calls me Bertie

TOM: Thanks anyway...Bertie. If there's anything I can do...

BERTIE: Don't worry about it...Tom. It's not many Irishmen – successful ones I might add - who are prepared to come back and invest their hard-earned money in the auld country. Giving the place a leg-up when times are tough. What made you do it?

TOM: Poverty. A couple of years ago I noticed a big influx of young Irish people on the streets of Luton. Most of them had just arrived from Ireland, looking for work. I got talking to one young lad who was looking in the windows of a McDonalds, then checking how much money he had in his pocket. I asked him if he was long in Luton and he said a few weeks. He couldn't get work. He had no luck at all. I said 'Why the hell don't you go home? Anything is better than the streets of Luton'. I asked him if he had any money and he said he didn't have the fare to go home. 'Anyway, if I go home there's no hope at all. I'd rather starve'.

Here was a young fellow walking the streets of Luton looking for a job, with hardly the price of a burger, but he considered going home the greater of two evils. I told him I could understand, because I came over in the 1950's, when there was no hope either. But I felt it was a damning indictment of Ireland. I gave him some money and the address of a building site in Milton Keynes, where if he mentioned my name he should get fixed up. It was then that I decided to see if I could do anything to help rescue the Irish economy and keep lads like him at home.

BERTIE: And here you are.

TOM: Here I am.

BERTIE: And very welcome you are. To be honest, this country is on its knees economically. We are in the middle of as bad a recession as I can remember. People like yourself are to be encouraged – and helped – as much as possible. Anything that brings jobs is good news. And with an election coming up shortly we need all the good news we can get.

TOM: Will ye win it?

BERTIE: I hope so, for your sake as well as ours. God knows, the other lot could upset the applecart easy enough – just for spite. (*laughs*) The best laid plans of mice and men, wha? (*a pause*) Look, maybe there is something you could do. The party is in a bit of a state...financially; you could consider making a donation to it.

TOM: I have already given Padraig Flynn fifty thousand pounds towards the party's funds.

BERTIE: Well, he hasn't got round to telling me yet, the lazy so-and-so. Mind you I suppose it's understandable; we're all running around with our tails between our legs with all the elections rallies and so on. (*a pause*) I'm sorry, Tom, if I embarrassed you. I should have known the state of play.

Bertie exits as Tom speaks to the audience

TOM: Fianna Fail did win the election with the help of the Progressive Democrats, and the faces in government remained much the same. I had my own problems to deal with; by now I had spent almost four and a half million of my own money, funds which were now rapidly being depleted, and it was getting near the time when I had to pay the second instalment to Owen O'Callaghan.

Enter Owen O'Callaghan.

OWEN: I hear tell the Bank of Ireland turned you down.

TOM: Bad news travels fast in this town

OWEN: It's no big deal. I happen to use the same bank for a lot of my business loans for example. How much were you looking for?

TOM: It's not a problem. I can get the money somewhere else. But since you ask, nine million would do it. A short term facility while I complete the land purchases, and other... incidentals.

OWEN: Including my payment, I hope.

TOM : Of course.

OWEN: You should try AIB. I think you would find them more accommodating. Eddie Kay's your man. Tell him I sent you.

TOM: Thanks. I might try that if all else fails. (*laughs*) I hope you don't want an 'introduction' fee!

OWEN: Everybody wants an introduction fee in this town. That's how business is conducted. But, no, I don't want anything. I want to see this project get off the ground just as much as you do. Don't forget I have an investment in it.

TOM: But not enough of an interest to invest your own money in it. Yet you were prepared to buy another site in direct competition and force me to buy it off you. With a handsome profit to yourself

OWEN: That was only business, Tom. Nothing personal I can assure you.

TOM: Right. Nothing personal. I must remember that. *(pause)* You know, I have found only one honest politician in Dublin since I've been here.

OWEN: As many as that? Who is it?

TOM: Bertie Ahern

Owen roars with laughter

OWEN: Jaysus, that's the best one yet! Bertie Ahern! Sure his right ball doesn't know where the left one does be half the time

TOM: I found him very helpful in getting the sale of the Quarryvale land pushed through when Redmond and others blocked the original agreement.

OWEN: Of course he was. After I paid him fifty thousand pounds to do so.

TOM: What!

OWEN: You heard. I paid Bertie Ahern fifty thousand to push that deal through after he came to me.

TOM: Why would you do that?

OWEN: Because he told me that if I didn't Green Property, your under-bidders, would get the land and not you. Which was in nobody's interest, neither yours nor mine. You would have to go to them then to buy it – and the price would have been a hundred thousand an acre, not seventy. It's all a fucking game, Tom, these shower of bastards are only interested in screwing as much money as they can out of developers. And you have to play the game or else you get nowhere. I know, I've been playing the game all my life.

TOM: So Bertie Ahern is on your payroll?

OWEN: Yes. And plenty more I could name. Look, you have to keep in with the likes of Pdraig Flynn, Albert Reynolds, Bertie Ahern if you want to make any progress. Money talks in this town, Tom – you should have learned that by now

TOM: (To the audience) I did get the loan from AIB in the end - £8.5 million. However, they made it clear that they wanted O'Callaghan brought in on the project, and the only way I could get the loan was to agree to this. I eventually signed an agreement giving him a twenty

five percent stake in the company and control of the daily decisions in relation to the project, for which O'Callaghan said he could deliver on site rezoning/planning and designation. It was now late 1990; after two years of vicious dog-fighting this was all I had to show for it. . Owen had got what he wanted, a substantial stake in my company without investing a penny of his own money. I didn't know it then but that was only the beginning of my troubles.

SCENE 6

We hear a few more lines of the song OL' MAN RIVER sung by Paul Robeson. Lights up to reveal Liam Lawlor, Owen O'Callaghan, Padraig Flynn in conversation.

LAWLOR: This rezoning application is going to be discussed at a council meeting in a few days.

FLYNN: Will it go through?

LAWLOR: Yeah. I reckon it will. There's plenty of support for it

FLYNN: And so there should be. There's going to be lots of jobs coming with it.

OWEN: And plenty of them jobs for the boys, eh! The only problem is this. My advisors have estimated that the site would have a value of twenty million when rezoned. This would make it possible for Gilmartin to get a loan anywhere to cover his debts, pay me and the bank off, and be back in the driving seat again.

LAWLOR: And none of the rest of us getting a penny out of the fucking thing. This is my pension plan we are talking about here.

OWEN: You haven't done so badly out of it so far, Liam. Out of me.

LAWLOR: I worked for that fucking money. You wanted...things done, decisions made in your favour, I made sure they were.

OWEN: I'm not complaining. I'm just saying it's the way things are, that's all.

LAWLOR: I never got a penny from that tight bastard, Gilmartin – for all my efforts.

OWEN: You didn't do so bad then, Pee. You managed to squeeze fifty K out of him.

FLYNN: That was for the party.

OWEN: I hear tell they haven't seen any of it yet.

FLYNN: A minor detail. It will all be sorted soon.

LAWLOR: Tell Bertie that the cheque is in the post.

All three laugh.

FLYNN: Bertie is a cash only man. I don't even think he has a bank account.

LAWLOR: Not in this country anyway!

FLYNN: He's been pleading poverty ever since the wife left him.

OWEN: I hear she's very high maintenance!

LAWLOR: She won't get much out'a Bertie. He's a cute hoor alright.

More laughs.

OWEN: I've been thinking. Maybe I should ask the bank to call in Gilmartin's loan.

FLYNN: How will that help?

OWEN: Well, it's the best part of nine million, and I know he hasn't got the money – and won't have until the site is rezoned. What if the bank threatens to call in the loan unless he signs a re-drafted agreement giving me the major share in the company? Then when we get the rezoning I'll be in control, not him.

FLYNN: Will the bank agree?

LAWLOR: Of course they will. (*he nudges Flynn*) It's good to have friends in high place, eh Pee?

FLYNN: I don't see how I could help...

OWEN: No need to worry yourself about it. They have already suggested something along those lines themselves. They want me in control of the project. Have done from the beginning...

LAWLOR: Better the devil you know.

OWEN: They don't trust Gilmartin with their money. In fact, the plan is already in motion. He should have already received a letter from the bank. Let's see.

He picks up a phone and dials. We can see the 4 men during this exchange; Lawlor, Flynn and O'Callaghan in a group at one end of the stage, Tom at the other end. Tom answers the phone

TOM: Hello

OWEN: It's Owen. I suppose you've had the bad news?

TOM: AIB threatening to call in the fucking loan? Yes. What are they playing at? Listen to this; (*he reads from a document*) 'Unless we reach an acceptable agreement that would facilitate this rezoning process, which is critical for the development of the plan for the shopping centre at Quarryvale, we will require you to discharge your obligations to the bank and Mr O'Callaghan immediately...' I thought we had an agreement?

OWEN: They are panicking a little bit. What with the vote coming up shortly...

TOM: I thought you had all that taken care of. You're the man with the contacts you told me.

OWEN: I don't see any problem in that department. But you know what banks can be like.

TOM: It's fucking blackmail, that's what it is! It's three days before the vote. Where do they think I'm going to get five million in that time?

OWEN: I'm sure you can come up with some kind of agreement that suits them...

TOM: Yeah. If I sign this re-drafted 'heads of agreement'. Have you seen it? *(laughs drily)* But of course you have. That shower won't piss without the nod from you. You'll have 44%. 44% of my company. No, it won't be my company any more will it? You'll be the major shareholder. In the driving seat.

OWEN: I can't see that it matters who's driving.

TOM: It's what you wanted from day one.

OWEN: You will still make a lot of money out of it, Tom

TOM: Fuck you O'Callaghan.

He slams down the phone. The others dance a jig of delight Tom speaks to audience.

TOM: Of course I had no choice but sign this new agreement. I was out of money and out of options. As soon as the zoning was approved they brought in a public relations expert, Frank Dunlop, who used to be a political bagman for FF in his previous life, and they gave him a slush fund – all without my knowledge – of thousands of pounds to smooth the way of the development. Many palms were greased in the process; five K here, ten K there, Lawlor receiving another twenty five K for his latest 'help' – whatever that was. O'Callaghan had the Dublin councillors and many of the politicians eating out of his hand. He had what he wanted, control of the project. Well, maybe not all that he wanted; he wanted me out of the picture completely, and the way things were turning out I was beginning to rue the day I had ever come to Dublin in the first place. But it wasn't finished yet. Not by a long shot. It was only beginning in many ways.

SCENE 7

Tom and Owen Callaghan are talking

TOM: Have you seen this *(He waves a copy of the Sunday People)*

OWEN: Yeah. I saw a copy earlier.

TOM: *The People!* That Sunday rag.

OWEN: They say you owe the Inland Revenue seven million pounds in tax. Is that true?

TOM: No, of course it's not true. Someone is trying to ruin me.

OWEN: So where did they get the story from?

TOM: Well it's true that they are looking for that sum off me, but that doesn't mean I owe it. We had agreed a sum of a hundred and twenty thousand a little while ago for a property deal I had completed in Milton Keynes and that was it as far as I was concerned. I did mention the demand to some officials at AIB recently. I expect some bastard there sold me for thirty pieces of silver.

OWEN: Maybe that's your trouble; you're too trusting. You let people take advantage of you.

TOM: I take people at face value. That's the way I was brought up. *(he shakes his head)* I don't think I'm cut out for this sort of life.

OWEN: They say you could be made bankrupt.

TOM: Yeah, I could be. And I will be if I can't sort it out.

Owen exits as Tom speaks to the audience

TOM: Poverty is nothing new to me. I had a bellyful of it growing up in Sligo under Mr De Valera. He made paupers of half the small farmers in Ireland with his 'me fein' policies. So I had to emigrate. I had seen it again in Luton recently, when the young were once again forced to leave. Now I was experiencing it myself again; courtesy of a plot hatched up in Dublin which had the English tax authorities demanding seven million in back taxes that I didn't owe. I tried to argue, but I was forced into bankruptcy; everything I owned was seized, including my car. We were left literally penniless. My Wife, Vera, who had been battling multiple sclerosis for a number of years, but until then a mobile and hard-working wife and mother, was placed under extraordinary stress as she tried to look after the home without even being able to draw social welfare benefits. Occasionally, despite all her efforts, there was nothing in the fridge. My son, Thomas, still at school, gave what he had saved up over the years, including his Holy Communion money, to help us. The ordeal triggered a marked decline in Vera's health, her illness gradually overcoming her.

It took me three years to emerge from the bankruptcy process. The English revenue boyos eventually realised their mistake and told me they had been misled with information from Dublin. I didn't owe them anything but £120, 000, a sum that we had previously agreed on.

But it destroyed any chance of keeping control of my business in Dublin. I could not even afford the price of the air fares to attend the board meetings of Barkhill in Dublin. They went ahead without me of course – with Owen in sole charge - and all sorts of deals and decisions were made, decisions which I knew nothing about.

By now Bertie Ahern was the man in charge of the country. Talk about pass the baton! The few short years I had been in Dublin had seen Haughey come and go – a resignation of course for some skulduggery or other. Albert Reynolds had gone the same way; Bertie stepping in for a short time as Taoiseach before an election was called. Fine Gael won that election leaving FF in the political wilderness for a few years, but now they were back in power again and Bertie was in the driving seat.

INTERVAL

Act 2

prologue

Same as prologue in act 1. B/w images of Paul Robeson on backdrop. Paul is singing SHENONDOAH. Tom Gilmartin is slowly pacing the stage singing along with him

Oh, Shenandoah, I long to hear you
Away, you rollin' river
O Shenandoah, I long to hear you.
Away I'm bound to go
'Cross the wide Missouri.
'Tis seven long years since I last saw you
Away, you rollin' river
'Tis seven long years since I last saw you
Away I'm bound to go
'Cross the wide Missouri.

TOM: I remember seeing that fillum several times the year it came out. 1965 it was, the same year I married my Vera. James Stewart reminded me a bit of my father, a stubborn small farmer determined to do things his way. Father always said there was no education worth a damn for people like me in the country, so I left school at the age of thirteen. Still, I persevered, and went to night school, coming first in a civil service examination for a job in the department of agriculture. However, the job was given to somebody who had a well-placed relative in the public service. I was saving the hay when I heard the news. “It’s the way things are, boy”, my father said to me. “I’ll be in England tomorrow, so” I said. “You go to England and you need never come home again”, he said to me. I went anyway, because I didn’t want to live in a country where honesty and hard work meant so little.

He sings a few more bars of the song as the lights slowly fade.

SCENE 8

AIB Bank premises, Dublin

Tom is on the phone when O'Callaghan enters. He is clearly hungover.

TOM: Jesus! What's the matter with you? Not spying on me are you?

OWEN: Bit of a hangover from last night, where I had to smile at the likes of Ray Burke, Flynn and the rest of that shower.

TOM: I thought they were all your buddies

OWEN: Only as long as there's something in it for them

TOM: I'm beginning to realise there's not an honest politician in the whole of Dublin.

OWEN: Took you a long time to work that out.

TOM: I came over here with the best of intentions. I was going to provide work for hundreds of people I thought, not pensions for that gang in the Dail

OWEN: Boots for the footless.

TOM: What?

OWEN: It's an expression they have here in Dublin. Boots for the footless. It means you were wasting your time. Once they smelled the money – the big money involved – the vultures were always going to swoop down on you. That's what I was trying to tell you all along, only you wouldn't listen. If you had, you wouldn't be in the place you are now.

TOM: You mean broke?

OWEN: At least you got your good name back. Her Majesty's tax man cleared you, I hear.

TOM: No thanks to the likes of yourself.

OWEN: I had nothing to do with what went on.

TOM: Somebody did, somebody here in Dublin put the boot in. Someone in this bank I'm pretty sure. Why? I was only trying to do some good for the country.

OWEN: Don't tell me you were in it out of the goodness of your heart? You planned to make millions out of it just as much as I did.

TOM: At least I put my own money where my mouth was. Five millions of it. What the fuck have you put into it?

OWEN: You'd be surprised. When you add everything up...

TOM: Jesus, I thought this sort of behaviour only went on in places like Venezuela...or...or...

OWEN : Where's there's money there's muck, Tom.

TOM: Anyway, I am sick of the whole lot of it. I told the bank as much. I am considering an offer from a British TV company to co-operate with their investigation into planning corruption in Ireland.

OWEN: You told the bank this?

TOM: Too right I did. I took great pleasure in telling them the good news.

OWEN: No wonder they're worried. They wouldn't want anything to jeopardise their negotiations with Grosvenor Holdings.

TOM: It would have been nice to have been informed.

OWEN: But surely you knew?

TOM: How would I know? Did anybody bother telling me? Did you?

OWEN: You were the one approached them in the first place.

TOM: Yes I did. And Marks & Spencers, John Lewis, Top Shop, Debenhams and more. And they are all at the table now.

OWEN: Yes they are. Don't think we aren't thankful, Tom.

TOM: Shove your thanks Owen. You and your cronies tried to ruin me. You cheated me out of my company. And I once thought you were like me! Now all I want is to get my money back and never see any of your faces again. My Vera is in a wheelchair. Do you know that? She needs full-time care now for the rest of her life. The bankruptcy business was just too much for her to cope with.

OWEN: I am sorry that your wife is unwell. I wouldn't wish that on anybody. Do you really mean that you would sell your stake in the company?

TOM: Yes, I do. Put a package together and I will look it over. It's what you always wanted, Owen. Go on, you can admit it now.

OWEN: What I always wanted was for us to work together. To be partners.

TOM: Lies, Owen. All bloody lies. But to be honest, I don't care anymore. Come on, celebrate, you've won.

Tom speaks to the audience.

TOM: And that was the end of my involvement with Barkhill, the company I had set up with such high hopes. I eventually walked away with just over eight million, which was only a fraction of what the development would eventually be worth. But I couldn't wait any longer; my family had lived like paupers for the last few years, we needed to get back to a normal life again as soon as possible. Maybe I was naive or stupid, or both, but I was an honest man. I had been badly treated by the other shareholders, including the bank; the situation regarding some of the matters was bordering on criminal. My solicitor advised me to take legal proceeding against them; he said the bank had used duress against me, I was an 'oppressed shareholder' – whatever that was - and he advised subpoenaing four or five Dublin councillors to give evidence. But at that moment, I just wanted to get the hell out of Dublin, rest and recuperate in my own home in Luton. I told him I would give it consideration

SCENE 9

Preliminary discussions with Tom in Luton about attending THE MAHON TRIBUNAL (established in Oct 1997 to enquire into CERTAIN PLANNING MATTERS and PAYMENTS. Tom is talking with Maire Ann Howard, the tribunal solicitor.

Tom speaks to the audience.

TOM: And so we come to the tribunal, set up in 1997 to look into certain planning matters and payments. Bribery in other words. Ironically, it was Bertie Ahern who was instrumental in setting it up.

Enter MAIRE ANNE HOWARD, the tribunal solicitor. They shake hands

MAIRE: Mr Gilmartin, pleased to meet you. We were hoping you would come to Dublin to talk to us.

TOM: I don't ever want to see the sky over Dublin again to be honest. I lost my money, my good name, my wife's health because of my association with that damn place. She is now in a wheelchair, something I blame on the stress of the five years of my life I wasted over there.

MAIRE: That's something I hope we can put right. Not your wife's health of course, and for which you have my heartfelt sorrow, but your treatment in our Capital. This is the tribunal's terms of reference.

She hands him a document, which Tom reads. He laughs.

MAIRE: What's so funny?

TOM: I've heard a lot of Irish Jokes over the past forty years in England. Some of them were corny, some were offensive, and some of them were funny, but this is the funniest of them all. This takes the biscuit.

MAIRE: It's no joke Mr Gilmartin. I am deadly serious. I wanted to assure you of both my own and the tribunal's determination to get to the truth of the allegations we have received.

TOM: Pardon me for doubting you, but I see your tribunal is chaired by a judge probably appointed by Charles Haughey? Now you hand me a letter saying that you are hired by the same people who caused me all these problems in the first place, and that you are to report back to them. That's the funniest thing ever. Although I did once think Bertie Ahern was an honest man, which is almost as funny.

MAIRE: There's nothing funny about a judicial enquiry, I can assure you. It was initially set up by Mr Ahern in his capacity as a government minister, and is wide-ranging in its remit.

TOM: A man who is now himself being investigated. A little bit ironic to say the least.

MAIRE: You must give us a chance. I am, as you know, the tribunal solicitor, and my job, essentially, is to gather every bit of information you have regarding the problems you came up against.

TOM: Problems! I would describe them as a bit more than problems. Requests, demands, threats; all sort of skulduggery to get me to part with my money. It could be a long interview. And some of it goes back a long time – maybe six years – and my memory might not always be accurate.

MAIRE: Nevertheless, I want you to tell me everything, first hand, second-hand, hearsay, phone calls and stories of other corrupt practices you heard about. Take your time. To begin. Why did you fail to co-operate with the Garda investigation into your complaints back in...*(she looks at her papers)*...1990?

TOM: It was clearly nothing but a whitewash. And because I received a phone call from a woman describing herself as a senior Garda, who told me to drop my complaint and 'fuck off back to England'.

MAIRE: Did you report this at the time? Or take legal action?

TOM: No.

MAIRE: Why not?

TOM: It would be like going into law with the Devil himself - and the court in Hell!

MAIRE: It's a pity you didn't. We might be able to corroborate what happened if you had.

TOM: Chief Supt Sreenan made a right ba...mess of the inquiry as far as I was concerned. He interviewed me three times at my Luton home; and whilst Sean Haughey and a few others were also spoken to, and another investigating Garda spoke to Owen O'Callaghan in Cork, Liam Lawlor was never spoken to at all, nor Redmond. Very careless of them, I thought.

TOM. And what were the final conclusions of his enquiry? That there was no evidence to suggest that Redmond – now retired – had committed any crime. It also found that no evidence of criminal conduct by Liam Lawlor had emerged.

MAIRE: I agree that it sounds...unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, we are still hoping you will agree to come to Dublin for the hearings.

TOM: How long is this...enquiry likely to last?

MAIRE: Who knows? It depends on what we dig up and who we call.

TOM: Bertie Ahern? Pádraig Flynn? Liam Lawlor?

MAIRE: Nobody will be excused if we think they have information we need to hear.

TOM: So it could take years?

MAIRE: Possibly

TOM: Mr Ahern is the Taoiseach.

MAIRE: Nevertheless, he is still subject to the laws of the land like the rest of us.

TOM: I said before that I have no wish to see the sky over Dublin again. I certainly don't wish to see it for several more years. That is a phase of my life I wish to forget.

MAIRE: You would be only required to attend occasionally. Whenever issues relevant to your complaints were being looked at.

TOM: In that case, my solicitors have advised me to seek immunity from prosecution by the Director of Public Prosecutions first. I don't believe I need it as I have done nothing wrong, but they insist.

MAIRE: So you will come then if you have a guarantee of immunity?

TOM: I don't know. There's my family to consider. I'll have to have a long think about it.

MAIRE: Thank you, Mr Gilmartin.

She exits.

SCENE 10

TOM: What really made up my mind for me was Padraig Flynn's appearance on the *Late Late Show*. When Gay Byrne asked him about the £50K he received from me he was very evasive.

FLYNN: (on Late Late show) Well now, Gay, I want to tell you about that. I've said my piece about that. In fact I've said too much because you can get yourself into the High Court for undermining the Tribunal, so I ain't saying no more about this...except to say just one thing, and this I'll say: I never asked nor took money from anybody to do favours in my life.

TOM: (To Flynn) And I never asked for you to do me any favours in the first place. No, the money was given to you for the party and you kept it all for yourself. That's the crux of it. He then said his good name was being dragged through the mud because of me. Gay then asked him if he knew me.

FLYNN: (on Late Late show) Oh yeah, yeah. Though I haven't seen him for some years now. He's a Sligo man who went to England and made a lot of money... He came back...wanted to do a lot of business in Ireland. Didn't work out for him. Didn't work out for him. He's not well. His wife's not well. Not well at all. And he's...he's out of sorts.

TOM: Not well! I was a lot weller than him, the tub of lard! But it was what he said about my wife Vera that really upset us. Particularly Vera, who didn't want her medical condition discussed by every Dick and Harry on the *Late Late Show*. She wasn't very happy, I can tell you

My sister, Una, did phone up the show about Flynn's remarks. Gay, to his credit, did mention it before the show ended, and Flynn said he accepted that I was not sick and had never been seriously sick as far as he knew. He also apologised about his remarks about Vera. But the harm was already done. I made my mind up there and then to give evidence to the tribunal

SCENE 11

DUBLIN CASTLE. THE MAHON TRIBUNAL.

Backdrop can be a blow-up image of the Scales of Justice, a sculpture which adorns the entrance to Dublin Castle.

A court of enquiry Bertie Ahern, Judge Flood, Liam Lawlor etc are called at various times (Liam Lawlor is defending himself).

LAWLOR:(to Gilmartin) You are sitting in the middle of a glasshouse, and by the time myself and others are finished dealing with your lies, I respectfully suggest there won't be too many panes of glass left, and I hope as it splinters it doesn't inflict too many deserved wounds on you. *(he looks at the gallery)* We are all out of step except Tom Gilmartin; he left the west of Ireland in his proverbial bare feet and trousers in a bad condition. He came back

to save the country by driving a coach and four through the 1974 development plan. We were expected to discard the plan to facilitate his greed...

TOM: It's a bit rich you talking about greed, Mr Lawlor. (*pause*) You talk about me leaving Sligo with no arse in my trousers and in my bare feet. You accuse me of throwing stones even though I live in a bigger glasshouse than most people. And as for barefoot Irish in Luton, most of them are doing pretty well. It's an insult and a put-down of decent people who did more for this country than you and your ilk. And they never asked what was in it for them, which is more than you and your cronies can say. You're entitled, is that it? Entitled to what? Entitled to screw the country, and those not involved in your cosy cartel – big-time? I know all about 'the system', and how it worked.

LAWLOR: What system? You've lost me there.

TOM: The system whereby a nexus of councillors, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, and some independents, offered their support in terms of signing motions, for consideration during the course of the Development Plan, and in terms of support via votes in the Chamber. In return for cash of course.

LAWLOR: It's all a figment of your imagination. Either that or you're just slinging mud in the direction of hard-working councillors hoping that some of it will stick to them. (*quotes*) I labour by singing light/Not for ambition or bread/Or the strut and trade of charms/Of the ivory stages/But for the common wages/ Of their most secret heart...

TOM: You can quote all the poetry you want at me, but it doesn't change anything.

LAWLOR: That's be Dylan Thomas. A grand poem.

TOM: I know what you are, and what you are up to. You want to discredit me, bring me down a peg or two, unnerve me. Go ahead, do your worst. (*he smiles*) You have already been to jail twice and fined thousands for contempt of court in refusing to disclose your financial affairs to this tribunal. So I will take no lectures from you on the matter of motives or anything else.

Maire Ann Howard the tribunal solicitor speaks.

MAIRE: Mr Gilmartin, could you explain what your original plans were regarding this ...development at Quarryvale?

TOM: I had no intention of building anything in Dublin. My intention was to acquire sites then bring in investors to develop my vision for a major retail complex that would transform the north inner city...

LAWLOR: So you're no philanthropist then? Not another Bill Gates?

TOM: I never pretended to be a philanthropist or anything else. Just an honest man. Seeing what I thought to be a good investment, and the chance to provide some work for my struggling countrymen.

MAIRE: When did you first meet Bertie Ahern?

TOM: I first met him at the Department of Labour in October 1987.

MAIRE: Mr Ahern says he has no recollection of that meeting

TOM: All I know is I was there. And I seem to have an awful problem with some people of either being invisible, or some form of ghost that turns up. However, to be fair to Mr Ahern he has since recalled meeting me on three separate occasions

MAIRE: And Mr Lawlor, what role did he have as regards the Quarryvale project?

TOM: Mr Lawlor was a member of parliament, and I was not 100% enlightened as to what the circumstances were, or how business operated in Dublin, so I saw it probably naively, but I believe Mr Lawlor was just there to screw money out of us. I could not see what possible role he could play in anything to do with the scheme. He had no input to the scheme itself. He had no input into the acquisition of properties itself. He had no input in any negotiations going on...the only other possible thing was that he might have some political clout.

LAWLOR: I facilitated a lot of meetings, brought people together, made things happen...

TOM: For which you were well overpaid.

MAIRE: Were the payments to him political contributions?

TOM: Certainly not! He was employed by Arlington as a consultant and he was paid a consultancy fee. By Arlington

LAWLOR: I said there were no bribes involved.

TOM: No bribes were paid by me. But plenty were requested. And paid by others.

LAWLOR: Any money requested I was entitled to. Consultancy fees, expenses. Was I expected to work for nothing?

TOM: £100 thousand here, £50 thousand there, £ 30 thousand for this. £20 thousand for that. You wouldn't get out'a bed for less than £20 thousand.

LAWLOR: You want something done, you pay for it. That's the way it works.

TOM: You were a paid Member of Parliament...

LAWLOR: These were...extra-curricular activities, carried out in my own time, entirely separate from my parliamentary duties...

TOM: And here was me thinking that being a TD was a full-time occupation...

MAIRE: You are a discredited witness Mr Lawlor. Not only have you disobeyed the orders of the highest court in the land, you are now trying to muddy the waters in this investigation. Do you know how many bank accounts you have had over the past twenty years?

LAWLOR: Offhand, no.

MAIRE: One hundred and ten. A hundred and ten bank accounts, in various countries from Liechtenstein to the United States. What, in the name of God were they all for?

LAWLOR: I like to spread my money around.

MAIRE: Hmmh! You are either a fool or a knave. How many times have you been jailed by the Supreme Court for contempt of court to date?

LAWLOR: Three times.

MAIRE: Are you expecting a fourth?

LAWLOR: We'll see who blinks first. A man's financial matters are his own business and nobody else's

MAIRE: Thank you, Mr Lawlor. You may step down.

MAIRE: Now, Mr Gilmartin, tell us about the demand for £5 million.

TOM: It came just after my meeting with Mr Haughey and his ministers in Leinster House

MAIRE: In the country's parliament?

TOM Yes.

MAIRE: Who was present?

TOM: Albert Reynolds, Bertie Ahern, Gerry Collins, Brian Lenihan, Pdraig Flynn, Liam Lawlor...

MAIRE: Almost a full house in fact. You spoke with Mr Haughey.

TOM: Yes. He asked me where I was from and I said Sligo, and he said 'You're not one of them Gilmartin's from Lislary?' I said I was. And then he said to me, 'I've just come back from there, and if you think this is a tan, it's not,- it's bloody rust'. I think he thought it was funny. Then he asked me if Liam was looking after me, which I took to mean Liam Lawlor.

MAIRE: Did anybody else contribute to the discussion?

TOM: Not really. They just greeted me when I came in. Shortly afterwards I was in the corridor when this woman approached me and gave me a piece of paper. It had details of a Bank of Ireland account on the Isle of Man on it. The woman told me to deposit £5 million in the account.

LAWLOR: You should be writing novels, Gilmartin.

MAIRE: You didn't pay the demand?

TOM: £5 million! Are you joking me! Besides I would not bribe anybody. I felt it despicable that you come into a country that is on its knees, and there's queues down the American embassy and elsewhere with the kids leaving and walking the streets of London. Absolutely despicable that the people who run this country have no interest whatsoever in those people - other than feathering their own nests.

MAIRE: You had a meeting with Pádraig Flynn a few days later – did you mention this to him?

TOM: No, because I didn't know what it was all about. I didn't know who was involved. It was after coming out of a meeting of ministers, or having been introduced to the Taoiseach, and I wasn't quite sure what the overall game was. I did complain to him later, when I realised the extent of the corruption I was encountering, and it was at this point he suggested a substantial donation to the party might be the answer to my problems.

MAIRE: This was when you wrote him the cheque for £50 thousand pounds?

TOM: Yes.

MAIRE: Made out to him?

TOM: It wasn't made out to anybody.

MAIRE: Why not?

TOM: Mr Flynn was in a hurry, he was late for some meeting or other, so he said just leave it on his desk and he would deal with it later.

MAIRE: And it was a £50 thousand pound donation to the Fianna Fail party?

TOM: Yes.

MAIRE: Not a personal donation to Pádraig Flynn?

TOM: Certainly not!

MAIRE: And did Fianna Fail ever receive this...donation?

TOM: Not to my knowledge.

Pause for a moment. A few bars of OL MAN RIVER can be heard before fading

MAIRE: Have you received threats since your decision to give evidence to this tribunal?

TOM: Yes. Many. The first one said that if I turned up in Dublin to give evidence to remember Veronica Guerin, and I would know what was waiting for me. But in very strong language. The second phone call my son answered it and he was told in no uncertain terms to tell me if I gave evidence I would not be coming back. The others were along much the same lines.

MAIRE: And what was your reaction?

TOM: I told them all the same thing: ‘Just remember one thing. You’d better make a good job of me’

Tom is now being questioned by Bertie Ahern’s barrister Conor Maguire.

MAGUIRE: Mr Gilmartin, there was no meeting at all with Mr Ahern and the other ministers in Leinster House, was there? This is Mr Ahern’s diary which shows him handing out certificates in Glasnevin at the time you say he was at the Dail.

He places an opened diary in from of Tom

What I am suggesting, Mr Gilmartin, is as follows. I’m suggesting to you that the evidence is that in fact at the time you are talking about, and from the description that you have given to the tribunal, that Mr Ahern was elsewhere at the time.

TOM: I’m not aware - I know he was present at the meeting in the Dail. He greeted me, on first-name terms. He had three meetings before that with me, so he wasn’t exactly a stranger.

MAGUIRE: His diary says otherwise.

TOM: Well, it’s not entirely Hong Kong, is it?

MAGUIRE: What do you mean by that, Mr Gilmartin?

TOM: I’m just saying Glasnevin...Leinster House is not a thousand miles away

MAGUIRE: Hmm. Did the Inland Revenue make you bankrupt?

TOM: The Inland Revenue in England did, on a false claim, supplied by one Mr Frank Dunlop, The Government press secretary, and Mr O’Callaghan’s sidekick

MAGUIRE: You seem to portray yourself as a victim at every stage in relation to this. The Inland Revenue took proceedings against you and bankrupted you, is that correct?

TOM: That’s correct, on false information, and I can prove it. I lost a £20 million pound deal in Milton Keynes, as well as an office block that I had already built and paid for, due to a false claim. And the law in England is, when it comes to an Irishman you’re guilty until proven innocent. I didn’t get justice there, and I didn’t get justice here.

MAGUIRE:I don’t say this lightly Mr Gilmartin, but you’re an embittered man, aren’t you?

TOM: No, I’m not embittered. I was never bitter. I always thought that if the Lord meant me to have something that I’d have it. If not, well, the only bitterness I have in my life is the way my wife has wound up and what was done to her and done to me by Mr Owen O’Callaghan and his crooked politicians.

MAGUIRE: I want to suggest that your evidence is less than frank – in other words that you're shifty and that you have given dishonest evidence. It's not the first time you have been called shifty, is it?

TOM: I was never shifty. If you want to know a little bit more about me, Mr Maguire, enquire about a lot of the people from your own county. There's thousands there will tell you about me, and one thing is sure – they found me reliable.

MAGUIRE: Do you recall your agreement to purchase the land at Neillstown owned by my client Mr O'Callaghan?

TOM: I do

MAGUIRE: (*passing a document to Tom*) Can you confirm that this is a copy of the agreement?

TOM: That's a falsified agreement.

MAGUIRE: I know that's what you keep on saying.

TOM: I know, and I will prove it.

MAGUIRE: Just stick to the facts, if you would please.

TOM: I am sticking to the facts. That's not the agreement I signed.

MAGUIRE: Tell me, is it the case that the very first time that you told the tribunal that this is not the agreement you signed is in the course of this hearing?

TOM: This is not the agreement that was originally drawn up. It's a forgery. Oh, Mr O'Callaghan is very good at this sort of thing. He's well known as the cuckoo. He's managing to get...take over other people's nests.

MAGUIRE: I suggest you're motivated by begrudgery because he is successful and you are not. All your criticism now has come about because you were given £8 million when you sold your interest in Quarryvale, and it's motivated by bitterness because you've seen how successful the Liffey Valley development was without you. Do you know how much it is worth now?

TOM: Yes. A lot more than I was paid for my share.

MAGUIRE: It's worth somewhere in the region of one hundred and fifty million, I believe. So, isn't that the reason for your motivation?

TOM: No, it was motivated after Mr O'Callaghan had defrauded me, and the bank with him, to get control of my company. It was motivated by...I was not going to allow my money to prop the deal up, because Mr O'Callaghan had no money in it, and, as a matter of fact, with the help of the bank had stolen £1 million and a half to pay for the crooked politicians that he bought, and they were numerous.

SCENE 12

Bertie Ahern, the Toiseach is now being questioned by the Tribunal solicitor, Maire Ann Howard.

MAIRE: Mr Ahern, what is a dig out?

BERTIE: In what context are you talking about?

MAIRE: I ask the questions, Mr Ahern. I am sure you are familiar with the phrase. It's a phrase you coined yourself.

BERTIE: Ah, you mean my dig-out

MAIRE: I do, Mr Ahern.

BERTIE: It refers to a time when my friends got together and raised a certain amount of money to help me out. They dug me out of a hole. Financially, I mean.

MAIRE: Thank you Mr Ahern. How much was the sum involved?

BERTIE: I think it was probably around thirty thousand pounds.

MAIRE: Thirty-thousand-pounds! You do have very generous friends, don't you?

BERTIE: I do. I am very lucky.

MAIRE: Couldn't you have gone to your bank for a loan. That's what most of us do when we are financially strapped.

BERTIE: At the time I didn't have a bank account.

MAIRE: You, a minister of state, and no bank account! When was this?

BERTIE: It was the period after my separation from my wife. The late '80's to the mid '90's

MAIRE: You mean for a period of five or six years you had no bank account?

BERTIE: Yes.

MAIRE: But why, Mr Ahern?

BERTIE: It suited me that way.

MAIRE: But how did you cash your salary? I presume the government didn't give it to you as a wad of cash in a... a brown envelope?

BERTIE: I was paid by cheque. My secretary cashed it for me and gave it to me in cash.

MAIRE: In her bank?

BERTIE: I believe so, yeah.

MAIRE: Which you kept...where?

BERTIE: Usually in a safe at my constituency office. I merely drew what I needed for my living expenses.

MAIRE: And left the rest to accumulate in the safe?

BERTIE: Yes.

MAIRE: How much ...accumulated in this safe over the period?

BERTIE: I think it was approximately fifty thousand.

MAIRE: Fifty-thousand-pounds. And this was during the period of your famous dig-out?

BERTIE: Yes

MAIRE: So you had fifty thousand in your safe, and your friends collected thirty thousand for you because you were hard up. So you had, in fact, eighty thousand in cash?

BERTIE: Well, there wouldn't have been fifty thousand there at the time I received the thirty thousand.

MAIRE: Nevertheless, you weren't hard-up at all, were you?

BERTIE: I was. I had a lot of expenses, with the separation going through and all that.

MAIRE: I would have thought that a bank, where your money would have earned interest, would have been a better solution than a cupboard in your constituency office. And when did you resume normal banking practices.

BERTIE: I believe it was late 1993.

MAIRE: Did you have any more 'dig-outs' after that period?

BERTIE: No.

MAIRE: What about the £100K you received from people during the period of 1993/1994?

BERTIE: What I got personally in my life, to be frank with you, is none of your business. If I got something from someone as a present or something like that, I can use it.

MAIRE: So it was a present from a friend?

BERTIE: Yes. It is a debt of honour which I fully intend to pay back. It was given as a result of financial difficulties and encounters following my legal separation.

MAIRE: How is a present a debt of honour?

BERTIE: It was given as a present, but I felt it was a debt of honour that should be paid back.

MAIRE: I see.

BERTIE: Look, I am not answering what I got for my Holy Communion money, my Confirmation money, what I got for my birthday, what I got for anything else. I am not into all that. I gave all the details of everything to do with my life to the tribunal, but I am not under investigation for any of these things.

MAIRE: How many friends gave you ‘presents’ in total?.

BERTIE: I don’t know. Maybe ten or twelve.

MAIRE: Did they all give you £50K?

BERTIE: No. The amounts varied

MAIRE: These are political friends?

BERTIE: Some are in politics. But all are close friends, people who have been close to me most of my life. They are not political friends, they are personal friends. They are long-standing friends.

MAIRE: And yet you appointed many of those people to public office, including as paid members of state boards?

BERTIE: I might have appointed some, but I appointed them because they were friends, not because of anything they had given me. Look we are talking of the difference of somebody taking millions and hundreds of thousands in exchange for contracts, and what is relatively small contributions from friends who had a clear understanding that I would repay in full. When they gave me this money, I said I would take it as a debt of honour, that I would repay it in full – and that I would pay tax on it – I know the tax law, I am an accountant.

MAIRE: I am sure you know your law, Mr Ahern. And did you pay them back?

BERTIE: I haven’t paid the money, because they refused to take it.

MAIRE: We could all do with friends like that.

BERTIE: I think they will now, because they see the difficulty, but I offered them a number of times to repay it. Look, I got into trouble financially, I borrowed some money from friends like any common man, that’s all there is to it.

MAIRE: It’s a long time since Bertie Ahern was a common man. You’ve been driven around this country since 1987. You never put your hand in your pocket at a forecourt to fill the car with petrol. You’re earning more than £250K per annum, so there is no point in comparing yourself to the man who got into trouble and had a whip-round.

Mr Haughey's collection started as a whip-round as well, and it was purely an accident that it came out. And now you are telling us that during the period you were Minister for Finance that you had no bank account in this jurisdiction!

BERTIE: The answer to that question is no. I had no other accounts whatsoever, either inside or outside the state. I operated for a fairly long period without a bank account and did keep the money in my own possession during that period. I had no other accounts

MAIRE: Thank you Mr Ahern

Maguire now turns to attacking Tom

MAGUIRE: Isn't it true that you made up stories about the Taoiseach receiving £50K and £30K, from Owen O'Callaghan, the so-called 'Quarryvale' payments. You are making up new allegations almost daily.

TOM: No sir. I am only repeating what Owen O'Callaghan told me. If they were not true then he is the one making up stories. But the money went somewhere, over a million pounds taken from the company. He was the one who said it was used to make corrupt payments.

MAGUIRE: And you stood by and let it happen? It was your company.

TOM: It happened during the period I was bankrupt. I hardly had enough money to feed my family, never mind fly over here to keep an eye on matters. I was frozen out; O'Callaghan had a free rein to do what he liked. He was, and is, a crook, pure and simple.

OWEN: I object to this...this calumny. I am suffering increasing levels of despair and frustration at the hands of Tom Gilmartin, who has since May this year been engaged in a tormented marathon of lies and bitterness under the dubious protection of Tribunal privilege and, more seriously, immunity from prosecution which was issued to him by the DPP on 1st October 1998.

I am supposed to have been hiding in broom cupboards at the AIB bank; I am supposed to have people tell him to leave Dublin; I am supposed to have handed vast swathes of cash to our Taoiseach and a former Taoiseach...it is deeply disturbing that in modern civilised democracy a form can exist where an individual can peddle such monstrous and clearly obvious lies with impunity and immunity.

MAGUIRE: Mr Gilmartin, would you say you are difficult and irrational? Or incoherent and paranoid?

TOM: Excuse me?

MAGUIRE: I only ask because your bank manager, described you as such, didn't he?

TOM: He was making a comment as he saw it, and I would take no offence whatsoever, because he couldn't believe that what I was saying could happen.

MAGUIRE: Saying? What were you saying?

TOM: Well about all the corruption I had found in government and in the people that were running Dublin.

MAGUIRE: He didn't believe it was true?

TOM: I think he found it difficult to accept...yeah.

MAGUIRE: He said you were paranoid?

TOM: That was one word he used, yeah

MAGUIRE: Did anyone at any time advise you that you should get some sort of medical treatment for this, this...paranoia, incoherence, irrationality?

TOM: Well, I'm here, amn't I?

MAGUIRE: Did anyone advise you?

TOM: Do you think that I need some treatment now?

MAGUIRE: I'm asking you a question

TOM: I spent ten years...I have spent ten years on and off in this arena, now I have been reading all sorts of labels put on me, by the Dail, numerous other people, constantly I'm reading about this. Now that you know me a bit ... just for yourself...do you think I need medical treatment?

MAGUIRE: I am not going to answer questions that you put to me, Mr Gilmartin. The question that was put to you was 'Were you advised by anyone at this time to get medical treatment?' That's the question. If you weren't, just say so.

TOM: No, I wasn't advised, because I never needed medical treatment until I had my...the bypass operation was the first time I ever needed any, but psychologically – well, psychologically I never believed that I ever needed any such treatment.

MAGUIRE: Did you ever get any psychological or psychiatric treatment in relation to these matters?

TOM: Why would I do that?

MAGUIRE: Sorry, you are asking me a question. I just want you to answer the question. You can answer it one way or the other, Mr Gilmartin.

TOM: But why? Why would I get medical treatment for a condition...

MAGUIRE: Do you understand the question?

TOM: For a condition that didn't exist?

MAGUIRE: Well then, the answer is no, if you didn't.

TOM: No, the answer is absolutely no, because I never needed any such treatment.

MAGUIRE: Thank you Mr Gilmartin.

SCENE 13

Padraig Flynn is being questioned by MAIRE

MAIRE: Now, Mr Flynn, your contention was that Tom Gilmartin gave you a cheque for £50K as a personal contribution to your election expenses?

FLYNN: That is correct.

MAIRE: How well did you know Mr Gilmartin? I mean, was he a personal friend?

FLYNN: I...knew him

MAIRE: And the day he gave you the cheque, how long had you been acquainted with him?

FLYNN: I had met him a few times and we had spoken often on the phone.

MAIRE: Hardly a close relationship. And yet, he waltzes into your office and waves a cheque for fifty thousand under your nose, saying ‘there you are Padraig, that’s for your election expenses.’

FLYNN; I am not sure I would put it like that.

MAIRE: And what way would you put it?

FLYNN: We probably talked about ...things for a while

MAIRE: So you talked for a while and then he made out the cheque to you, is that it?

FLYNN: I suppose so. It was a long time ago.

MAIRE places a photocopy of a cheque in front of him. Would this photocopy be a true copy of that cheque?

FLYNN: It looks like that. Yeah.

MAIRE: There’s a problem though. The amount, the date and the signature are Mr Gilmartin’s. But the ‘pay 50 thousand pounds to Padraig Flynn’ is not. It’s in different handwriting. Is it your handwriting, Mr Flynn?

FLYNN: No, it’s not. I don’t know whose it is. Look, am I on trial here or what? This sounds like a witch-hunt to me.

MAIRE: You are not on trial, Mr Flynn. But you are a witness giving evidence under oath. Just bear that in mind. This cheque has been round the houses, but I guess you know all that. Let me tell you what we know about it. It was paid into the personal account of your wife, Dorothy, in Allied Irish Bank, Castlebar. The address for this account was 3 Northumberland Road, Chiswick, London. It was a bogus non-resident account set up to avoid deposit interest retention tax – a common practice by thousands of bank depositors in Ireland at the time, I believe.

MAIRE. The money later found its way into your daughter's bank account, where it was used to purchase offshore unit-trust investments for you and your wife. With the proceeds you bought a hundred acres of forestry land which gave you an annual dividend over twenty years. This scheme was meant for small farmers who grew trees on their land, provided they derived at least a quarter of their income from farming. Are you a small farmer Mr Flynn?

FLYNN: It's my wife's farm.

MAIRE: My apologies. It's in your wife's name... I mean, it is your wife's farm. Your hands are clean. What about your conscience?

Tom speaks to audience

TOM: I was partly funding that fucker's lifestyle! It emerged that between 1986 and 1993 Flynn had opened three non-resident accounts, depositing more than one hundred and fifty five thousand pounds, using London addresses, and at an address in Brussels after he became a member of the EU Commission. God knows how many more he ripped off. Anyway, the Tribunal finally concluded that he had corruptly obtained the 50K from me, so despite all his lies I was vindicated. He hasn't been prosecuted to date, and won't be unless the police bring criminal charges, which I can't see happening. They look after their own this shower.

All the other actors leave the stage as Tom speaks to the audience

All quiet on the western front again. Bertie has gone. Resigned. Hoisted by his own petard, as they say. He resigned on May 7th 2008. I guess it was inevitable. Well, he was an Olympic class liar; he lied to the Dail, to the Tribunal, and to the Irish people; you couldn't believe a word that came out of his mouth. His convoluted excuses and his half-explanations for the large amounts of money he had lying around...well all I can say is he must think people are fools. He had no bank account for four or five years was used as one reason, so he dealt only in cash...Hah! His friends clubbed together and gave him large amounts of money when he was financially strapped – this at a time when he admitted to having fifty thousand in readies in his office safe. And one 'friend' who gave him money was somebody he didn't even know!

And Owen O'Callaghan, who had told me many times of the thousands of pounds he had paid Bertie to facilitate planning and zoning ...well Bertie hadn't had as much as a glass of water from Owen down the years.

Liam Lawlor is gone too, killed in a car crash somewhere on the road to Moscow. He was still ducking and diving, still refusing to co-operate with the tribunal as to the whereabouts of his bank accounts and his money. Now he has carried his secrets to the grave.

And as for the others, they are all walking around the country as free as birds

My late father fought in the war of independence, and I remember the sacrifices made by that generation of Irish republicans. They didn't fight for their country for a shower of shysters like this lot to run it. They shame Fianna Fail. They shame and stain the name.

TOM. What will be done about this corruption? What good is it to me? I got nothing but abuse and a load of lies told about me. My company and business are gone. My family are shamed and demeaned. What did I ever do to Ireland to deserve this?

But maybe this whole tribunal can ensure that no one else will be the victim of such a conspiracy. If it does, that is worth the time and effort, but I wouldn't bet my house on it. The people who caused the rot are walking away scot-free. It's a great little country, isn't it?

There will be those going round clapping them on the back. *Ah, shure they are characters!* No they aren't. The likes of Liam Lawlor, Padriag Flynn, George Redmond, Bertie Ahern...they were all a fucking shower of thieves and swindlers, not fit to run a bingo session, never mind a government.

As he finishes we hear OL MAN RIVER in the background. Tom stands motionless as it rises in volume for a few moments, then fades as the lights slowly go down.

Curtain

End

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Tom O'Brien is a native of Kilmacthomas Co Waterford and is a full time writer, playwright and poet.

Performed plays include **Money from America, Cricklewood Cowboys, On Raglan Road. Johnjo, Gorgeous Gaels, Brendan Behan's Women Down Bottle Alley, No Blacks, No Dogs, No Poles**, etc

Books include **Letters To Mother and Other Dead Relatives, Cricklewood Cowboys, The Shiny Red Honda, The Missing Postman and Other Stories**, etc

His two collections of poetry - '67' and '67+' - are available online. www.amazon.co.uk

All his books are available on http://www.amazon.co.uk/Tom-O'Brien/e/B0034OIGOO/ref=sr_tc_2_0?qid=1388083522&sr=1-2-ent

Website: <http://gorgeousgael.com/>

<https://twitter.com/gorgeousgael>

<https://www.facebook.com/#!/tom.obrien.5851>

Tom has lived in Hastings UK since 2000.