

BROKEN LAW

Production Notes

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Production Information

Synopsis

Broken Law is a crime thriller telling the story of two estranged brothers on opposite sides of the law. Dave Connolly is a respected member of the Garda Síochána but his loyalty to the force gets tested by his ex-convict brother Joe following a botched robbery. Suddenly Dave finds himself embroiled in a cover-up that leads to a secret relationship with Amia, an unhappily married woman who also happens to be the victim of his brother's latest crime.

Loyalty is one thing. Legacy is another.

Broken Law marks a feature directorial debut for Paddy Slattery, an IFTA nominated filmmaker with ten years of award winning short films under his belt. The film was produced by Paddy's company True Line Films in association with Failsafe Films producer, Simon James Doyle (Love is a Sting, Gridlock), with the participation of Screen Ireland.

Broken Law stars some of Ireland's most exciting upcoming cast, including John Connors (LOVE/HATE, Cardboard Gangsters), Gemma Leah Devereux (Get Up & Go, Judy), Ryan Lincoln (Kissing Candice, Cardboard Gangsters).

We're also very proud to present two break out performances by our two leads, Dave Connolly, played by Tristan Heanue (Cardboard Gangsters, In View), and his estranged brother Joe, played by Graham Earley (Cardboard Gangsters, Red Rock).

Veteran Irish actor, Gary Lydon (The Guard, Michael Collins, Brooklyn), turns in a great performance as Superintendent Byrne, a character responsible for much of the unwanted drama in Dave's life.

Key crew include:

Director of Photography: Narayan Van Maele (Gutland, Gridlock)

Editor: John Desay (Ladies of Science)

Sound Recordist: Rob Moore (Wave)

Sound Design: Nikki Moss (Patrick's Day)

Composer: Michael Fleming (Katie)

Post production was provided by Mutiny Sound and Outer Limits.

The Cast

David Connolly
Joe Connolly
Wallace
Pete
Amia McNamara
Superintendent Byrne
Irene Connolly

Tristan Heanue
Graham Earley
John Connors
Ryan Lincoln
Gemma-Leah Devereux
Gary Lydon
Ally Ni Chiarain

The Production Team

Director
Writer
Produced by

Executive Producers
Director of Photography
Production Designer
Editor

Paddy Slattery
Paddy Slattery
Simon James Doyle, Paddy
Slattery
Shane Ryan, Dearbhla Regan
Narayan Van Maele
Tracey O'Hanlon
John Desay

Themes of loyalty and legacy

There are two central themes in this story – loyalty and legacy – and sometimes we can compromise our loyalty in order to uphold a legacy. Particularly if that legacy is born out of a lie.

Dave is a guard, dedicated and loyal to the law. His father was a guard and according to the history books, died heroically in the line of duty. Dave is now proudly following in his father's footsteps and takes great pride in that role.

Dave has an estranged brother, Joe, who is embroiled in a life of crime. Joe went off the rails a few years ago and Dave has no idea why. But he will soon find out.

As fate would have it, both brother's lives collide following a botched robbery and suddenly Dave's loyalty to his brother is tested. Against his better judgement, he decides to hide his brother out along with a bag of money until everything blows over. During that time, he meets and falls in love with an unhappily married woman who also happens to be the victim of his brother's crime.

Following a fight between the brothers, in a fit of rage, Joe tells Dave the truth about his father who didn't die heroically. In fact, he was killed during a drug raid. He was taking bribes in order to turn the blind eye on drugs being imported and this information was covered up by the Garda Síochána because they wanted to avoid a scandal.

As Dave tries to come to terms with this revelation, Joe is caught by the criminals he committed the botched robbery with. They want the money that went missing and threaten Joe's life if Dave doesn't hand it over right away. Now, Dave must turn his back on the law entirely in order to save his brother's life.

The Development

In 2016, writer/director Paddy Slattery set up an Indiegogo crowdfunding page in order to raise finance for his debut feature, then titled 'The Broken Law of Attraction'. He managed to raise online and offline donations and garnered national awareness following interviews on RTE'S Today show, Today FM, The Sunday Independent and numerous media outlets nationwide. This funding was a small but vital stepping stone toward attracting bigger shares of finance from private investors. In order to reach their desired production budget, Paddy contributed the remaining funds required to enter production.

Our then line-producer, Simon Doyle (Failsafe Films) came on board as a lead producer and encouraged us to hold off on production and redevelop the script with script editor Rioghnach Rún Ní Ghrioghair, concentrating on the strongest elements of the story; a fractious relationship between two brothers.

By this time, we had our principal cast signed up and eager to commence work. These included some of Ireland's most exciting emerging talents like John Connors (LOVE/HATE), Ryan Lincoln (Kissing Candice), Gemma-Leah Devereux (Judy), and estranged brothers-to-be, Tristan Heanue and Graham Earley (Cardboard Gangsters).

Production

Once we were happy with our script, now titled 'Broken Law', Failsafe Films reached out for support from a highly talented crew who were willing to get behind the project, despite the fact that the financial odds were stacked against us. The passion and commitment shown by everyone involved was infectious and further strengthened our bond and determination to see this project through.

Following 2 months of pre-production in June/July 2018 we commenced principal photography for 16 non-consecutive shooting days during August/September 2018 in and around the East Wall in Dublin city. A further 4 days of pick-ups were shot during May 2019.

Post Production

During post-production we had exhausted our budget and applied for Completion Funding from Screen Ireland which enabled us to get our film over the line in time for a premiere to a sold out IMAX theatre at the Virgin Media Dublin International Film Festival.

Simon James Doyle - Producer – Getting our film made

Having met Paddy numerous times over the years at different festivals we had always said we would do something together, so when the chance to work on BROKEN LAW I jumped at it. Already a strong crime drama, together we were able to distil the story down to what was most important the journey of the two opposing brothers. Although we had a very low budget both Paddy and the story resonated with people and we were able to attract a top Cast and crew, and feel incredibly luck to go on this journey with the film.

The Screenplay

Paddy Slattery – I had a first draft of this script completed on June 25th 2009. The reason I remember this was because it was my first feature screenplay to write and I wanted to celebrate that night, however, the occasion was overshadowed by the untimely death of Michael Jackson. The script then sat on a shelf as I went ahead and wrote/directed and produced a series of short films over the subsequent 8 years in order to learn the trade and build up a credible reputation along with a network of filmmaker friends. When I felt I was ready to direct a feature, I pursued producers in 2017 and from there the script went through a sequence of rewrites and script editing until we were happy with the final product.

Casting

Casting Dave

Paddy Slattery - Having worked with Tristan Heanue on several short films, I knew I wanted him to be our Dave character. In fact, Tristan and I developed the character over a number of years until we felt the character was a living breathing person. I always thought of Tristan as a young version of Henry Fonda. Not just in terms of the classical looks, but he can convey an internal dialogue just with his eyes and no other physical animation. I love actors who can say so much without actually verbalizing anything at all.

Casting Wallace and Amia

I had also previously worked with John Connors and Gemma Leah Devereux – both actors I really admire and both actors on a steady incline in the film industry. They have different approaches to their work, which fascinated me

as a director, learning how different personalities approach different characters. As a writer, it also impressed me how we collaboratively developed the characters through forensic inquiry. When you feel the characters come to life through these actors, suddenly the story you're telling takes on a whole new meaning and potential.

Casting Joe

I still hadn't found our Joe character yet, until John Connors sent me a link to a film he had recently worked on called Monged. Graham Earley was a co-lead in it with John and his performance gave me a whole new reason to be excited about watching the film. He was incredible and one scene in particular in a basketball court made me sit up and say "I think we have our Joe". A few weeks later we shot a short promo for our feature in order to raise more funds and I decided to cast Graham as Joe, but as far as he was concerned, it was just for the promo, with no guarantees of starring in the feature. I think secretly we both knew this was his audition and from the first scene to the last, he was brilliant, and more importantly, there was a tangible chemistry between him and Tristan. That evening when we wrapped outside of Tristan's apartment, Tristan, Graham and I stood in the dark street and decided there and then that we finally had our Dave and Joe characters cast.

The look of the film – Cinematography

From the get-go we knew we were hampered by budget and although this should never affect the actual look of the film, it certainly determined the nature of the shots we'd realistically have time to achieve – therefore, no fancy elaborate crane shots or long tracks that required long set-up times. We were essentially running and gunning.

With that said, Narayan (DOP) and I still have a clear vision in terms of texture and tone. We wanted the film to feel gritty and organic, but also vivid and colourful. Each character existed in a particular visual style and tone and when those characters collided, so too did their aesthetic worlds.

We shot in Dublin's East Wall, which provided a plethora of backdrops ranging from colourful street art to run down industrial buildings, churches, modern expensive apartments and housing estates, all connected by train tracks and construction cranes; a full spectrum of economic wealth and exactly the world we felt these characters existed in.

The look of the film – Production Design

Tracey O'Hanlon - From the get-go, this film was going to be energetic and fast paced so as the designer I wanted to focus on getting as much of the detail as realistic as possible (within our tight budget!) so as not to distract

from the action. It's all set in contemporary Dublin - and from a design perspective myself and Paddy wanted to create two opposing worlds - Dave's ordered, controlled environment - contrasting with the chaos of his brother's world. We shot almost everything on location and used nicely rundown parts of the city for scenes with Joe and Wallace. I wanted to push this rundown look so sets like Doyler's gym and the pub were roughed up with graffiti and grimy graphics. By contrast, the "Credit Centre" set was made look as clean and slick as possible to reflect Dave's straight laced character. As we shot in an actual credit union, I had to take great care to mask existing branding and replace with my own mocked up version. Myself and Paddy originally spoke a lot about the feel of the film on the phone but it was on our location scouts that we nailed down the look and style he was going for. So I prepped from home in Wexford and relayed progress to him remotely and then, once filming began, we all had to work with what we had and work around any issues that arose. Myself, Paddy and Naryan (DoP) had an open dialogue the whole way through the filming process and between us, we always came up with a solution.

The sound of the film – Soundtrack / Score / Design

Because we were going for a visceral look to the film, we also wanted the sound design to feel organic with a sense of naturalism throughout. Nikki Moss brought every scene to life giving us the feeling that we were there, living and breathing with the characters.

In terms of a soundtrack, we also wanted it to feel raw and unpolished, just like the visual world. But with music that felt appropriate for the characters and energy of the film. So the music was quite abrasive and urgent at times, but reserved and introspective when needed. Rory McPartland and Dina Coughlan provided us with incredible access to artists, considering the limitations of our budget.

Scoring the film with Michael Fleming was fun but also tricky because we knew it wasn't a film charged by score, but subtly enhanced in ways that never wanted to draw attention to itself and sometimes this can be harder to do for a composer. You're basically brushing with invisible strokes. But we're delighted with how our score turned out, especially considering the limitations of our budget.

All in all, we're proud of how these three sound elements come together in the film to enhance the overall look and feel of the experience.

NIKKI MOSS – SOUND DESIGNER - I was privileged to be involved with this film for over 5 years of its decade long birth. Lengthy discussions, musings and planning came into sharp focus when it was finally in production, and from the first rough cut it was clear I had a fantastic canvas

to work with, and performances that completely embodied the characters they portrayed. It was my job not just to provide a detailed immersive aural landscape that reflected and informed the visuals, but to also to support and in some cases enhance the emotional content of each scene without overtly dictating what the viewer should feel. As is my wont, I spent months throwing the virtual kitchen sink, sound wise, at the film, and then began the marvellous months of working with Paddy to strip away and strip away, then add a little, then try alternates, until we had sculpted the Sound Design for Broken Law and finally took it to Mark in Mutiny Sound to do the Final Mix and tease out every last detail incorporating the brilliant source music songs and Score from Michael Fleming.

How BROKEN LAW reflects Irish Society (pre-Covid19)

'Broken Law' is set in pre-covid19 but post-recession Ireland in a Dublin suburb held firmly in the clutches of austerity, despite the high-rise cranes littered on the horizon of their community, employed to build expensive rental apartment accommodation in the financial district of Dublin's fair city.

Our story is centered on two estranged brothers, Dave and Joe Connolly, living on opposite ends of the law. Their lives are a stark reflection of the Ireland we have grown accustomed to in 2019.

Joe is just out of prison and finds himself hanging out with Wallace and Pete, the kind of friends that got him into prison in the first place. But they're not hardened criminals. They are unemployed petty thieves feeling disenfranchised by a government that they believe has side-lined the interests of their own people. These men believe the only hope for them to survive is to either emigrate or take the money back from the system that took it from them in the first place – they choose the latter and decide to rob a credit union.

Dave is a respected member of An Gardai Siochana who is struggling to pay his own rent during a housing crisis and finds himself ineligible for a loan. His widowed mother, Irene, encourages him to move back in with her so he can save money, however, Dave is too embarrassed by the notion of living with his mother at this stage of his life so he declines her offer.

Sadly, stories of gardai corruption are too familiar for comfort in our society today, hence our title 'Broken Law', and in this story, we decided to examine the circumstances that can lead ordinary decent people down a path of crime, using our current economic climate as a backdrop.

Despite Dave's best efforts to stay on the straight and narrow, his position as a guard is compromised when his brother Joe needs help following a botched

robbery. Dave suddenly finds himself presented with an opportunity to keep the money that was displaced by that crime.

He also discovers the truth behind the death of his late father, who was also a guard, but didn't die heroically in the line of duty as Dave was led to believe, but was "on the take" and killed during a drug raid. The gardai covered it up and fabricated the heroics of his father in order to avoid a public scandal. Irene was secretly compensated by the guards in exchange for her silence and has lived with the guilt of that lie ever since.

There is also Amia, the unfortunate employee of the credit union, who gets caught up in the middle of the robbery and later becomes acquainted with Dave. It's implied in the story that her and her husband are well set up with two jobs, a car and a house in one of those up-market 'Celtic Tiger' housing estates. We soon discover that the good times were not so good and Mr. and Mrs McNamara were keeping up appearances. No doubt this would have put an indelible strain on their relationship, leading to her affair with Dave and inevitable separation from her husband.

Unfortunately, this is not the most positive depiction of Irish society but it's a very realist one that people all across the country will identify with.

The Central Characters

Tristan Heanue on Dave Connolly

With the character of Dave, myself and Paddy chatted at length in the months before the shoot and we were very much on the same page. He was very open to suggestions and we created a detailed back story which fed into character choices and behaviour later on. I had been attached to the project for quite some time so when the actual shoot came along most of the work had been done and we hit the ground running.

The process during the shoot was very collaborative and open. Paddy is a real actors director and I have learned a great deal from him which I have taken into my own films. He isn't precious or overly protective of text and encourages you to follow what feels right for the character in the moment.

Graham Earley on Joe Connolly

APPROACHING CHARACTER

I found Joe a fairly understandable character. He reminded me a lot of several guys I knew growing up & during my teen years so it wasn't difficult to get into his head space. I do think he's a good guy, He's just one of those

characters that still hasn't sorted his life out in his late 20s. He makes bad impulsive choices following those around him, just like when he was younger. He has a kind of gamblers impulsive nature, but he's not interested in Cards. He'd rather take huge risks to improve his life rather than getting a steady job. Kind of an inability to see the bigger picture of consequences for his actions He Sees, He Does! A grown man still with the mindset of a 16-17 year old lad. Makes for a fun character to play

WORKING WITH DIRECTOR

Paddy and I did ALOT of talking about the character Joe & the script leading up to the shoot. Luckily I was attached to the role long before filming began so we had lots of back & forth conversations through phone calls & emails about the mindset & choices of Joe. You usually have very little time to work on a character for film but that wasn't the case here. We were both on the same page as to what the character was & how he should be played. Paddy like myself had grown up around "Joe type" personalities. The good guy who makes endless bad choices & fails to realise his swagger is out dated at this point in his life. By the time we were on set I pretty much had a good grasp on what Paddy was looking for so we didn't really need to over talk anything about the character. We would just find little quiet moments on set to have a quick discussion about what we were trying to achieve in the next scene. It all flowed pretty smoothly. I believe Paddy as the Writer/Director liked the Joe character, as I did too.... This isn't a nasty character, he's actually a decent guy, maybe a bit of a chancer, and a little selfish perhaps. But we're all looking at life through our own windows & it's events in Joes past that have moulded him to be the way he is. Paddy and I were on the same page about that during the shoot.

Gemma Leah Devereux on Amia McNamara

I met Paddy back in 2016 where he offered me the role of Amia. I loved the script and thought Amia was a very strong female lead. Being stuck in a marriage where she is not happy and then to go on this crazy journey throughout the film, from falling in love to being taken hostage meant Amia has a huge arc, which I am always drawn to when reading character. It all just depended on funding and timing which worked out perfectly in the end. As a result, I have been with this project for a very long time. When I approach any role, I create a book for that character. It's my go-to for the whole process. It's where I keep the characters thoughts, background, scene breakdown etc,. It means everything I need is in one place. Paddy and I have always been on the same page creatively with Amia and our vision of how we wanted her to be played. We had many discussions about her and her background. When we got to filming, we had fun letting Amia come alive. I would film a scene, then Paddy would give notes and then I would try something new. Paddy trusted me to do that so I really loved the whole the process from script to filming. I got to play on set and try different things

which is so freeing when you're filming. I also have worked with Tristan and John before, I know Graham and Ryan as well from Cardboard Gangsters; so it really was like a coming together of family who know each personally and professionally, making something we all really believed in. It was such an enjoyable job.

BIOGRAPHIES

CAST

Tristan Heanue – Dave Connolly

Tristan Heanue is an Actor, Writer and Director from Connemara, Co. Galway. He began acting relatively late in life aged 30 and has since gone on to appear in TV shows such as Game of Thrones, Vikings, Finding Joy and Fair City.

Film work includes Cardboard Gangsters, In View and Dark Justice. He will next appear in the RTE/BBC series Smother playing the role of Ronnie Dillon. As well as acting he has also carved out a successful writing/directing career making four short films so far. His most recent titled 'Ciúnas' won the Academy Award qualifying Cork Film Festival in 2019 along with numerous other awards both nationally and internationally.

<https://www.independent.ie/entertainment/movies/tristan-breaks-through-the-clouds-35906982.html>

Graham Earley – Joe Connolly

Graham Earley is a Dublin based actor. He has appeared in feature films The Light of Day, Monged in association with Filmbase MSC Productions, Harry Hamlet & I, Be Good or Be Gone, and Graham played the role of Evers Dempsey in Mark O Connors feature film Cardboard Gangsters. He has also appeared on TV3s Red Rock. Graham has appeared in award winning short films The Shadow Boxer, Tank, Fat Freddy's Drop, Small Talk, One Thousand Yards, Solid, Numb, Any Last Word. Graham appeared in the Gaiety Theatres production of Borstal Boy with Verdant productions and played the role of The Rain Man in Conflict theatres original production of Neon Western for which he reprised the role multiple times. Most recently Graham appeared in short film Three Brothers Two, written & directed by Craig Moore. He also recently appeared in The Abbey Theatres online digital series Dear Ireland, with the piece "Dear Ireland im Fucking Riddled with Anxiety" written by John Connors. Graham is set to work with John Connors again later in the year with feature film Bless Us Father

John Connors – Wallace

John (LOVE/HATE) has made a name for himself in Ireland, on and off the screen. He is a two time IFTA winning actor/activist who is extremely passionate and committed to his craft and we believe his performance as Wallace in 'Broken Law' will show audiences a whole new level to his acting talent.

www.irishtimes.com/culture/stage/john-connors-acting-killed-my-depression-on-the-spot-1.3610395

Ryan Lincoln – Pete

Ryan was recently nominated for a Discovery Award at the Dublin International Film Festival for his incredible performance in Kissing Candice. Having also picked up roles in Michael Inside and Cardboard Gangsters, it's clear to see that Ryan has a very bright career ahead of him.

He took on the role of Pete in 'Broken Law' and created a memorable onscreen partnership with John Connors (Wallace) which is sure to entertain audiences from beginning to end.

www.lisarichards.ie/actorsm/ryan-lincoln-actor#.XZc_1GZ7mUk

Gemma-Leah Devereux – Amia McNamara

Gemma-Leah is an IFTA nominated actor whose star is rising fast and her performance as Liza Minnelli alongside Renée Zellweger in the Judy Garland biopic will propel her career even further.

Paddy had previously worked with Gemma-Leah on a short film where they formed a strong working relationship so casting her as Amia in 'Broken Law' felt like a natural progression.

www.unitedagents.co.uk/gemma-leah-devereux

CREATIVE TEAM

Simon James Doyle - Producer for Failsafe Films

Simon is a graduate of The National Film School in Ireland and founder of the production company Failsafe Films. Having produced over 10 short films, Simon was nominated for a Rising Star Award last year at the Audi Dublin International Film Festival, with his the short film 'Gridlock' winning over 50 awards worldwide and long-listed for the Academy Awards® in 2018.

Simon produced his 1st feature film 'In View' in 2016, which enjoyed a successful festival run and gained national acclaim when its lead actress was nominated for an IFTA Award, subsequently securing a national theatrical release. Last year, Simon has produced his 2nd Feature Broken Law which is due for release in May 2020 with distributor Break Out Pictures, as well as having one feature film in late development with Screen Ireland.
www.failSAFE.film

Paddy Slattery – Producer for True Line Films – Director - Writer

Paddy Slattery is an IFTA nominated filmmaker who fell in love with filmmaking during an uncertain time in his life, following a serious car accident. He subsequently remains quadriplegic. Having since written, directed and produced over 10 short films, Paddy's work has collectively screened at over 100 film festivals worldwide, been broadcast on Sky Arts and RTE 2 and picked up over 40 awards including two Royal Television Society Awards and a John Boorman Special Achievement Award presented by the multi-Oscar nominated filmmaker himself.

Paddy's debut feature 'Broken Law', which received Completion Funding from Screen Ireland, had its World Premiere at VMDIFF20 in front of a sold out crowd in the IMAX and went on to win a Special Jury Prize by the Dublin Film Critics Circle. Later this year the film will be released in cinemas throughout Ireland and an International sales agreement has been made.
www.standmantra.com

Narayan Van Maele - Director of Photography

Narayan graduated from Irish National Film School in 2009 with First Class Honours in Cinematography. His latest feature GUTLAND, starring Frederick Lau and Vicky Krieps, premiered in Toronto, won Best International First Feature at Galway Film Fleadh and represented Luxembourg in the Oscar race in 2019.

He was subsequently nominated for Best Cinematography Luxembourg Film Prize in 2018 for 'Gutland' and 'Foreign Affairs'. Won Kinsale Sharks for 'Dulux' in 2017 and 'Soar' in 2018. Best Cinematography in a short film 'Gridlock' at El Cultura 2017. Best Cinematography for 'Lives Move Forward' at Creative Floor Awards 2018.

www.narayanvanmaele.com

Tracey O'Hanlon - Production Designer

Tracey O' Hanlon is a production designer and art director with nearly 20 years of experience in film & television. She lives in County Wexford with her partner and two daughters.

She studied art & design, and then moved on to a degree in film & television, specialising in production design. Her career started out in art department graphics but over the years has been building her resume with designing and art directing roles on feature films and high-end tv drama. Her most recent feature film is Paddy Slattery's feature; Broken Law, which premiered at the DIFF 2020. She has also served as production designer for 3 seasons on the multi- IFTA-winning Red Rock for TV3 & Element Pictures. Tracey's broad experience has spanned the arc from contemporary feature films to children's tv to period pieces set in medieval Britain and 1940's Denmark.

Gwen Jaffares - Costume Designer

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John Desay - Editor

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Nikki Moss – Sound Designer

Nikki Moss is an International Award Winning Sound Designer for Film & Television, with more than thirty years experience working worldwide. Born in Dublin, lives in Wicklow, with wife Tracey and cats Bonnie & Clyde.