

INT. COPPER KING SALOON - NIGHT

A Pinkerton Op walks into a bar in Butte, MT, in 1917. He's looking for someone.

The Op bears a striking resemblance to Dashiell Hammett, the future crime novelist. He is in his early twenties, tall, slender and rather handsome. There's a tough grace about him. He has sharp eyes and he carefully crafts his words. He's probably a little too sensitive for the job. And he also dresses a little too well.

In Butte, he goes by the name of FRANK MIDDLETON.

The bar is packed, raucous, smoky and loud.

There's a band playing Irish music and people are stomping and drunk and the spirits are high. People are singing along.

IRISH BAND

(singing)

I met my love by the gas works wall.
Dreamed a dream by the old canal...

There's an old guy sitting at the bar, drinking alone, glaring at everyone else. He looks like a cop, dressed in a long black coat, and he hasn't even taken off his hat. He looks mean as fuck. That must be the one he's looking for. He pushes his way through the crowded bar towards the old guy.

IRISH BAND (CONT'D)

(singing)

I kissed my girl by the factory wall...
Dirty old town.
Dirty old town...

MIDDLETON

You Morrissey? I'm Middleton.

ED MORRISSEY (mid 40's) is the Chief of Butte Detectives and also openly on the payroll of Anaconda. He's 43 years old going on 60. He comes from Ireland but he's come of age in Butte. He tries hard to be an American but sometimes his accent still betrays it. His jaw is broad and his forehead narrow. His receding hair makes these proportions worse. He has mad eyes, absolutely crazy, and he's as scarred as the Butte hillside.

Either Morrissey has no idea who Middleton is, or he's too drunk to care.

MIDDLETON (CONT'D)

Baltimore sent me to work with you.

Still nothing. For a man supposedly working, he's been doing a lot of drinking. He looks trashed.

IRISH BAND

(singing)

Clouds a drifting across the moon.
 Cats a prowling on their beat.
 Spring's a girl in the street at night.
 Dirty old town.
 Dirty old town...

Morrissey looks past Middleton, towards a KID handing out handbills to people in the bar. The kid is 14, 15 tops.

Morrissey talks to Middleton as if they'd been talking all along.

MORRISSEY

Get me one of those.

Middleton slowly makes his way through the crowded bar towards the man before finding a handbill, tossed to the floor.

He picks it up and reads it.

The handbill says: "War is Hell! Don't register to kill or be killed for the benefit of the money powers! Don't fight for a nation that has riveted the chains of slavery around Ireland!"

Middleton pushes his way back through the crowd.

When Morrissey reads the handbill he sits upright as if jolted by epinephrine. There is a terrifying, animalistic look in his eyes.

MORRISSEY (CONT'D)

I need to talk to him.

It's almost as if he's talking to himself.

MORRISSEY (CONT'D)

I need to talk to him now.

By now the kid has noticed Morrissey too. Everybody in town knows who is.

The kid bolts for the door.

Morrissey runs after, pounding through the crowd like a linebacker, Middleton close behind.

IRISH BAND

I'm going to make a good sharp axe.
 Shining steel tempered in the fire.
 Will chop you down like an old dead tree...

The words trail out of the bar and into the open air.

IRISH BAND (CONT'D)

Dirty old town.
Dirty old town...

EXT. COPPER KING SALOON - MOMENTS LATER

Out on the street, the kid has started running. The lights from the bars cast angular shadows on the brick walls.

They follow him down an alley, where he quickly scales a fence.

Morrissey is fat and drunk and gets tripped up on the fence.

Middleton, who's young and fit, jumps it no problem.

The kid has fallen on the other side of the fence and is struggling to get up. It seems like maybe he broke his ankle coming off the fence.

Middleton quickly grabs him anyway and holds him down there.

KID

(in a thick Irish accent)

Please don't hurt me. Please. I think I broke it
my ankle.

The kid is struggling against Middleton. He's clearly in pain.

KID (CONT'D)

I think I broke my ankle.

Middleton lets him go and backs a couple of steps off.

MIDDLETON

It looks bad.

KID

I think I broke it.

The kid can't stop saying it.

Morrissey smiles.

MORRISSEY

(reaches into his jacket, pulls out
a truncheon)

Fucking slacker. Stupid fucking slacker.

Begins to beat the hell out of the kid, who's begging him to stop. You can hear his bones breaking.

KID

Please, no, please...

Morrissey pauses the lashing then stares across at Middleton.

MORRISSEY

And what about you? What the fuck are you here for anyway?

Not waiting for an answer, Morrissey resumes the beating.

Suddenly, a WOMAN FROM the BROTHEL comes running at Morrissey, barely dressed, screaming for him to stop.

WOMAN FROM BROTHEL

You're going to kill that kid. You're going to kill him...

She throws herself between them.

Morrissey stops. Steps back.

WOMAN FROM BROTHEL (CONT'D)

You fucking psycho. He's just a kid.

More and more women and coming out of the back door of the brothel and they are growing angry.

SECOND WOMAN FROM BROTHEL

What's wrong with you?

THIRD WOMAN FROM BROTHEL

He's just a kid, you cunt.

FOURTH WOMAN FROM BROTHEL

You fucking psycho. What's wrong with you?

The women begin to surround Morrissey in a menacing way. These aren't the sort of women to make angry.

MORRISSEY

It seems I've pissed off the whores again.

He walks off quickly, concealing a measure of fear with hollow triumph.

The third woman from the brothel, one of the toughest looking of the bunch, looks at Middleton in disgust.

THIRD WOMAN FROM BROTHEL

And what about you? What the fuck are you standing here for anyway?

Middleton walks off after Morrissey, more in humiliation than fear.

EXT. TRAIN STATION, BUTTE, MT - EARLIER THAT DAY

Frank Middleton steps off the train in Butte, Montana.

Middleton is there on the dime of the Anaconda Copper Mining Company to help stop a strike before it starts. The US has just entered the "great war". The war machine is hungry for copper. Butte has the richest mines in the world. The city of poor immigrants is a stick of dynamite.

EXT. UPTOWN DISTRICT - MOMENTS LATER

Middleton walks from the train station along the main drag to the heart of uptown.

He's carrying a small bag with case files, two changes of clothes, and a small second pistol. Two boxes of bullets. His main weapon, a revolver with a 5 inch barrel, remains in a holster under his long coat.

He walks out of the buzz of central uptown and up the hill along Anaconda road.

In his head, he's already writing his first report.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

Butte's a tough town. It's also a filthy town to look at. Even the gaudy little rich neighborhood at the base of the hill is permanently grimy. A thin layer of dirt covers everything. It falls out of the sky like ash from a volcano.

He continues walking from the station into the heart of uptown.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

Up the steep hill, pierced with black steel gallows, are the miners' tenements. Up there, people live on top of each other. The sewage runs open in the streets. What you can see of the sky is the color of soot. There are 40,000 people crammed into those slums.

He turns and looks back down at the flats. He can make out the broad quiet streets in the distance.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

There are fewer than 1,000 resting all spread out with their feet on the table, down in the spacious flats.

EXT. ANACONDA ROAD - MINUTES LATER

Middleton has reached a spot along Anaconda Road where he can see from one side of the valley to the other. The vista is impressive, if not beautiful.

Middleton's gaze traces the strange geography of Butte. From west to east, from base to peak: first, the rich neighborhood at the bottom of the hill, through the commercial district and uptown, further up the hill with its past modest family homes, and all the way to the top of the Butte, where the shanties gather around the mines.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

The town is upside down. The poor look down
on the rich from high.

Middleton walks a block further up the hill, before climbing the steps of a dilapidated Victorian, the BIG SHIP boarding house, and entering.

The Big Ship is almost halfway up Anaconda Road between the small rich pocket and the shanties all over the hill. Middleton goes there on a tip from the home office. It's perfectly situated for his work.

INT. BIG SHIP BOARDING HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The Big Ship is almost nice. It's an old Victorian house, ridiculously skinny and leaning slightly, with decent rooms on 5 different floors. The doors and windows of the house are outrageously tall, vertical, as if made for a species of giants. Middleton will discover soon enough that all the rooms are always either too hot or too cold.

The woman sitting behind the front desk is reading.

She ignores him until she finishes the page.

She carefully places a bookmark in her book before finally putting the book down and greeting her guest.

ANNIE FINN

I assume you're here for a room?

MIDDLETON

I assume you're here to rent me one.

There's something about the woman who checks him in, ANNIE FINN. She's like the building, almost lovely, slightly off kilter. She's ten years older than Middleton, and looks like she's lived. But there's something beautiful and tough about her, and her pale blue eyes read incredibly sharp.

ANNIE FINN

I'm all booked. People like it here.

MIDDLETON

I was told there would be a room.

ANNIE FINN
Who told you that?

MIDDLETON
People who work with me.

ANNIE FINN
I'm all booked.

MIDDLETON
You said that. I was told there would be a room.

ANNIE FINN
You said that. It seems we're caught in a loop.

MIDDLETON
So you really don't have any rooms? I'm exhausted. I've come all the way from Baltimore.

ANNIE FINN
If only you'd said that from the beginning.

MIDDLETON
Said what? Why?

ANNIE FINN
I was holding my last room for a man from Baltimore. Someone called me this morning.

Middleton doesn't change his expression, but you can feel how annoyed he is from across the room.

He bites his lip.

ANNIE FINN (CONT'D)
The man who called didn't leave a name for you. They just said you'd be coming from Baltimore. What is your name?

For a split second, he has to think about it.

MIDDLETON
Middleton. Frank Middleton.

ANNIE FINN
I'll put you in the room with the best view Mr. Middleton, room number one. My impression is that a view of the town might be important to you.

Annie has a look on her face as if she were playing a quiet prank.

ANNIE FINN (CONT'D)

My room is just below yours on the fourth floor. After hours, that's where you can find me. My name is Annie. Annie Finn.

MIDDLETON

I do have a question.

ANNIE FINN

And?

MIDDLETON

What are you reading?

ANNIE FINN

Nothing that you would know.

As she hands him the key he catches a glimpse of the book's spine. *La Bête Humaine*, by Emile Zola.

MIDDLETON

(grinning)

Ah, literature.

ANNIE FINN

Have you read it?

MIDDLETON

No.

ANNIE FINN

Like I said.

She returns to reading.

He begins the long climb up to his room. Somehow, it's numbered one despite sitting at the top of five flights of steps, narrow and steep like a mountain trail.

The stairs creak loudly with every step. It's like the building is wheezing and coughing.

INT. MIDDLETON'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Room one is as strange as the rest of the house. Because it's an attic room, there isn't a straight line in sight. The colors of the rooms don't make sense. Someone must have put a lot of thought into that.

Still, there's a comfortable brass bed and a decent writing desk. Annie was right about the view; the room has windows on two sides of the room.

Middleton walks first to the south-facing window and takes a long look.

He can see the broad streets and the mansions the size of a block.

Middleton crosses the room and looks out the north-facing window.

He can see a web of narrow muddy streets, a forest of gallows, and the miner's shacks gathered like mold.

From one window to the other, it's as if you were looking at two different cities, split by a thousand miles.

INT. BIG SHIP BOARDING HOUSE - LATER

Middleton makes his way back down the steep stairs, creaking again with every step.

On his way out of the big ship, he stops to ask Annie Finn a question.

She beats him to the punch.

ANNIE FINN
I trust you like your room?

Again, she seems to be messing with him.

MIDDLETON
It'll do the trick.

ANNIE FINN
And would the trick be, Mr. Middleton?

She draws out the last name in a way that is subtly mocking.

MIDDLETON
Do you know where I can find a man named Ed Morrissey? He's the Chief of Detectives here.

She suddenly seems irritated with him.

ANNIE FINN
First of all, I know very well who Ed Morrissey is. And he isn't just the chief of detectives.

MIDDLETON
Yeah, what else is he?

ANNIE FINN
He's an abusive scumbag. What business do you have with him?

Middleton is caught of guard. He strikes a condescending pose.

MIDDLETON
That is business between us two men.

She fixes on Middleton. Takes him in. She's openly sizing him up. She doesn't give in. She decides to tell him.

ANNIE FINN

If he's working he's probably somewhere down on the Line. If he's drinking, he'd be at the Crown Room. That's uptown. That's a company bar.

She pauses for a beat, holds it.

ANNIE FINN (CONT'D)

You can pay me later.

MIDDLETON

The Line?

ANNIE FINN

The Line is on Mercury. You'll figure out what it is when you get there. When you walk out the front door just listen for it. You can hear it from here, if the mines don't drown it out.

EXT. ANACONDA ROAD - EVENING

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

In fact, I had heard of the line. It goes by other names too. The black heart of the town. I was told by people in the know that it was the only place I'd find something I'd need.

Middleton walks down the hill past quiet dirty neighborhoods; the sounds are all coming from up the hill, where mining never stops.

And then suddenly he hears something.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

You hear it like the sound of a distant riot.

EXT. THE LINE - LATER

Middleton's enters the neighborhood, walking past building after building, squeezed together like accordions.

There are women standing from the fire escapes, smoking cigarettes.

There are women in the windows too.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

The Line is the black heart of the town. It's a densely packed little enclave that's only a long walk from the workers on the hill while still several blocks clear of the rich. It runs 24 hours, like the mines. On the Line, there's no morning, no night, no yesterday or tomorrow.

Everything is ablaze in flashing lights. The signs flash in rhythms like drumbeats. The world is fake like a mirage.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

For a place in the middle of nowhere, you can get anything there. Every demon can track you down on the Line. The concentration of women working there is the fractured mirror image of work in the mines.

INT. BROTHEL - ANYTIME

Women coming and going through narrow doors into tiny cells in long hallways with doors on both sides. The activity is like a busy office or a factory. There isn't much artifice to it. The activity never seems to stop.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

People say the Line is the only reason the workers haven't revolted like slaves.

A woman gently wipes off her body with a towel. The moment is intimate but not erotic. She takes a deep breath. She is pausing to live.

Activity resumes, and Women are again shown coming and going from their tiny cells.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

The Line is on Mercury. It's brighter at night than the filthy sky in the light of day. Of course there are bars too, and gambling halls.

INT. BARS, GAMBLING HALLS, OPIUM DENS - ANYTIME

People drinking. Smoking and gambling. In the filthiest room, there is a man lying on his side, smoking opium from a long pipe. The people all have a common narcotized look.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

Around the corner, in the tiny Chinatown, you can buy opium and probably nearly everything else too, if you know who to ask.

EXT. THE LINE - MOMENTS LATER

As Middleton walks past a row of brothels, there are women lined up in the windows like laborers, and men trying to coax him in. Those men will promise you anything.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

But it's the brothels are the heart of it. There isn't even any pretense about it.

The men look evil as fuck and the words that come out of their mouths are despicable. Selling drugs. Women. Children. They never look you in the eyes. Their eyes are always shifting somewhere.

LINE HUSTLER

You like 'em young? We've got the youngest girls. Freshest girls.

Middleton tries to ignore him, walks on.

LINE HUSTLER #2

What do you want? Want do you need? Our girls will do anything.

Middleton tries to ignore him, walks on.

LINE HUSTLER #3

I have what you need.

Middleton slows down, makes eye contact with the guy. For some reason he wants to remember him.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

They brothels of Butte are built with the same social architecture as the mine. It's an assembly line. The women are arranged in rows of tiny rooms called cribs.

The women look you straight in the face. They can't trust you enough to look away.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

The women look tough as hell, like they could kick the shit out of you. They also look like they live miserable, humiliated lives.

For someone who considers himself tough, Middleton finds it hard to look at. He keeps looking down. He's avoiding eye contact too.

A few hurried steps on, Middleton walks into the first bar he can find, the "Copper King."

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND BROTHEL - MOMENTS LATER

The WOMAN FROM the BROTHEL stands in the alley behind the brothel she works in. She's dressed in a cheap nighty.

She pulls out a cigarette. Lights it. Smokes it as if it were the finest pleasure on earth. She is pausing to live.

She finishes her cigarette.

As she's about to go back in to work, the kid jumps over a fence, falling and hurting himself on the way down.

Middleton quickly follows and grabs him. Morrissey eventually hauls his ass over the fence too.

The woman watches the whole thing without being noticed.

KID
(in a thick Irish accent)
Please don't hurt me. Please. I think I broke it
my ankle.

The kid is struggling against Middleton. He's clearly in pain.

KID (CONT'D)
I think I broke my ankle.

Middleton lets him go and backs a couple of steps off.

MIDDLETON
It looks bad.

KID
I think I broke it.

The kid can't stop saying it.

Morrissey smiles.

MORRISSEY
(reaches into his jacket, pulls out
a truncheon)
Fucking slacker. Stupid fucking slacker.

Begins to beat the hell out of the kid, who's begging him to stop. You can hear his bones breaking.

The woman runs back into the brothel and calls for help.

WOMAN FROM BROTHEL
(shouting)
It's Morrissey. He's at it again. He's attacking a
kid...

After she gets the attention of several of the women, she runs back outside.
She runs straight at Morrissey, still barely dressed, screaming for him to stop.

WOMAN FROM BROTHEL (CONT'D)
You're going to kill that kid. You're going to kill
him...

She throws herself between them.

Morrissey stops. Steps back.

WOMAN FROM BROTHEL (CONT'D)
You fucking psycho. He's just a kid.

The women who's attention she'd gotten start coming out the back door of the brothel to join her in the alley and they are growing angry.

SECOND WOMAN FROM BROTHEL
What's wrong with you?

THIRD WOMAN FROM BROTHEL
He's just a kid, you cunt.

FOURTH WOMAN FROM BROTHEL
You fucking psycho. What's wrong with you?

The women begin to surround Morrissey in a menacing way. These aren't the sort of women to make angry.

MORRISSEY
It seems I've pissed off the whores again.

He walks off quickly, concealing a measure of fear with hollow triumph.

The third woman from the brothel, one of the toughest looking of the bunch, looks at Middleton in disgust.

THIRD WOMAN FROM BROTHEL
And what about you? What the fuck are you
standing here for anyway?

Middleton walks off more in humiliation than fear.

INT. CROWN ROOM COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

The Crown Room is a company bar. It's not the sort of place the proletariat goes to drink. The velvet wallpaper is the same relentless red as the upholstery. A long mirror backs the ornate wooded bar. You can face it and still watch people coming and going.

Middleton is sitting with Morrissey at the bar. There is quiet discomfort between them.

For some time, they sit and drink without looking at each other, or speaking.

Morrissey almost says something, then turns back to his drink.

Finally, he can't hold back.

MORRISSEY

What exactly are you here for?

Middleton had somehow anticipated the question.

MIDDLETON

I'm here at the request of the Anaconda
Copper Mining Company.

Morrissey's expression indicates he doesn't accept the answer. He throws up his hands to indicate - "And?"

MIDDLETON (CONT'D)

I believe Cornelius Kelly called the office in
Baltimore personally.

Morrissey is starting to get agitated.

MORRISSEY

(speaking deliberately, slowly)

I'm asking you again: what exactly are you
here for?

Middleton is enjoying his irritation.

MIDDLETON

Generally, I'm brought in to gather information.

Everything that Middleton says, seems to make Morrissey angrier.

MORRISSEY

I'm getting tired of your lawyer dodges.

Middleton takes a drink of whiskey. Considers.

MIDDLETON

I'm the intelligence to your muscle.

Morrissey just about loses it. He somehow holds himself back.

MORRISSEY

You arrogant little fuck. How old are you?

Middleton is enjoying this now. He lets Morrissey squirm a bit.

MIDDLETON

Old enough to be brought in to be the
intelligence.

MORRISSEY

Yeah, your also old enough to have the living
shit kicked out of you, you little cunt.

They are not staring at each other the way fighters do in the weigh in, sizing
each other up for what's to come.

Middleton slowly reaches inside his jacket, confirms for to himself the presence
of his revolver.

MORRISSEY (CONT'D)

I've worked my entire life for this company. To
keep this town quiet and the mines running. I
don't need you here. I don't want you here.

Slams his glass. Gathers his things. Rises.

MORRISSEY (CONT'D)

This one's on you.

Morrissey leaves. Middleton is a little shaken, but acts like he doesn't care.

EXT. THE LINE - LATER

Before he heads back to the Big Ship for the night, Middleton has one last thing
to do.

He walks up to one of the hustlers, the men who try to get you in the door by
promising you anything.

It's the Line Hustler #3.

Leaning in, he quietly asks the man a question.

The man gestures to another line hustler, just down the block.

Middleton moves on to the second man, leaning in to ask a quiet question like
with the first man.

The man leans in, whispers something back. Makes a small gesture to suggest
something up the street and around the corner.

Middleton nods and walks in the direction he gestured.

EXT. ALLEY - MINUTES LATER

Just around the corner from the Line, it is quiet by comparison. But don't let that
fool you. The worst things of all are probably happening in there. It's the quiet
streets you have to worry the most about.

The light glows a dim but lurid red. The narrow alley is bathed in that light. There are wooden doors every so often. The alley is empty, but you have the feeling there are people packed in just on the other side.

Middleton finds a specific door. Knocks.

While he waits for an answer, Middleton glances around, checking the alley again nervously.

He notices a SMALL CHILD, staring at him from the shadows across the alley. The child is young. He must be 5 or 6 years old. It's strange he's out here this late alone.

Middleton begins to move towards the child at the same moment a small window slides open on the door. The child scurries off.

He stops and turns back to the door. Someone is looking out at him from behind the window.

MIDDLETON

(hushed)

You come recommended from a man around the corner. He says you could help me out.

There is a sound of locks being released before the door cracks open and Middleton squeezes in.

The alley is quiet like an army of ghosts.

The small child comes creeping back into the alley. He's almost like a feral cat. He takes his position semi-hidden in the shadows.

You can hear the line just over there like some kind of bad dream.

The locks click open again and Middleton squeezes out the narrow opening in the door.

He starts to make a quick exit from the alley when he notices the small kid is back. He stops.

MIDDLETON (CONT'D)

Why are you out here kid, so late and all by yourself?

The kid holds out his hands ask if asking for food or money.

Middleton can see the child more clearly now. He's tiny, filthy, and he looks malnourished.

MIDDLETON (CONT'D)

You need something to eat kid.

The child doesn't answer at first. He's too scared or maybe he doesn't even understand Middleton. He just keeps holding his grimy little hands out.

Finally, the child says something. His voice is tiny and weak, almost feral too.

SMALL CHILD
Onko sinulla suklaata?

MIDDLETON
(confused, in a gentle voice)
What? What did you say?

SMALL CHILD
Haluan suklaata.

Middleton has no idea what he is trying to say.

Middleton starts to reach into his pocket for money but at that exact moment two men, drunk and talking loudly, stagger into the alley.

The kid scurries off again, like a mouse.

Middleton doesn't know what to do. For a second, he thinks about chasing after the child. But it's late. He walks out of the alley and into the night.

You can hear the drunk men pounding loudly on a door back in the lurid dark alley.

EXT. BIG SHIP BOARDING HOUSE - MORNING

Middleton walks down the hill from the Big Ship to the heart of central Uptown, the commerce district.

He walks towards the tallest building in the city, a couple of blocks off. The building is only six stories high.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)
Up there on the 6th floor, in a city as small as Butte, a man could have 360-degree views of his grimy banana republic.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

On the ride up the elevator, the operator keeps glancing at Middleton in a way that makes him wonder if the kid's a union fink, keeping tabs.

INT. OFFICE OF CORNELIUS KELLY - MOMENTS LATER

A man sits behind an almost comically enormous desk that dominates the office.

The desk has an equally oversized name plate: "Cornelius Kelly, Vice President, Anaconda Copper Mining Company".

A large bison head is mounted above the desk and there is a grizzly standing in the corner. There is a disproportionate amount of copper on objects and fixtures in the room.

The man behind the desk gestures them in. Not warmly.

KELLY

Gentlemen.

The questionable decorating is a direct expression of CORNELIUS KELLY. He's 37 years old, slim, freckled and fair. His hair is parted awkwardly down the middle of his head in an attempt to disguise his balding pattern. He dresses as if he's unsuccessfully trying to project taste and power.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

I'd read about Con Kelly. He grew up in the town. He worked his way from water boy on the hill to vice president of the most powerful company on earth. Local boy made good. He didn't do it on hard work and thank you cards. He's left a trail of dead.

KELLY

I believe you're here from Baltimore?

MIDDLETON

(nodding)

Middleton. I got here last night.

KELLY

I expected you several days ago.

MIDDLETON

I came when they bought me the ticket.

KELLY

Well you're here now. And what do you think of the town?

MIDDLETON

Leaves a bit to be desired.

KELLY

I suppose it doesn't measure up to the fine city of Baltimore.

MIDDLETON

I suppose it doesn't.

KELLY

Have you a sense of things here yet, the lay of the land?

MIDDLETON

I have the sense the land's been laid here pretty good.

The joke isn't going over. He smiles to cover.

MIDDLETON (CONT'D)

I mean, things seem a bit unstable.

KELLY

Are we funny to you? Do we seem quaint here?

There is an awkward silence.

MIDDLETON

I just meant that things seem unstable.

KELLY

It's the slackers who are stirring things up. And the strings are being pulled by foreign agents, to disrupt mining and undermine the war effort.

MIDDLETON

I take it that's what I'm here for?

KELLY

Do you understand what's at stake here, Mr. Middleton? We're talking about the fate of Democracy. There is Butte copper in every single bullet fired by Allied guns. They are trying to disarm our boys.

MIDDLETON

(slightly smirking)

From what I understand, there's Butte copper in a few German bullets too.

Kelly is moving from irritation to anger.

KELLY

That's a slanderous lie, Mr. Middleton, foreign propaganda, and if you aim to work for me you shouldn't bring that shit into my office.

Middleton isn't smirking anymore. He's gotten the point.

MIDDLETON

I didn't know you were paying me not to hurt your feelings.

KELLY

I'm paying you to do exactly what the fuck I tell you to, you insolent little fuck. Your focus should be on the slackers. Who they are and who's behind them. Seditious is spreading like disease here.

INT. MIDDLETON'S ROOM - LATER

Back in his attic room in the Big Ship, Middleton reviews his case files, which are laid out in front of him on his desk.

He's smoking. And he's drinking.

Images of the city's history flash by like a cartoon nightmare.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

Anaconda owns everything. They own the mines and the miners. For now, they even own the union. They own the only high rise and they own the shanties. They own the power and the water and the air. They own the cops and courts and they own all the papers. With all that money of course they own the ballots too.

The industrial development of Butte, from an idyllic wild valley, indigenous migration, through initial settlement, the beginnings of industry...

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

And who owns Anaconda but the Rockefellers themselves. How the Rockefellers came to own everything is also how Kelly climbed to the penthouse office.

The hillside is transformed from a scattering of amateur mines, into an industrial powerhouse. Apocalyptic transformation...

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

Marcus Daly was the founding copper baron of Anaconda. The Rockefellers seized on his death to take over the company. But Anaconda owned only 1/3 of the mines in Butte. The Rockefellers set out to take over the rest too.

Money, drugs, weapons, power, the totality of the earth...

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

Kelly, then a young lawyer working for Anaconda, came up with a scheme to engineer a panic to drive down the price of copper. They then bought up the shares of their rivals at pennies to the dollar.

Headlines, traders, conspiracies and laughter...

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

Thousands of small investors lost every cent. At least 30 of them killed themselves.

A man throws himself from a balcony. Then another...

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

The Rockefellers now owned every mine on the hill and Cornelius Kelly got his new office.

Middleton closes the files on his desk and drains his whiskey.

INT. BIG SHIP BOARDING HOUSE

On the way out of the Big Ship, Middleton bumps into Annie Finn.

She looks like she had a long night too. Her lipstick is uneven, and she looks like she slept in her clothes.

She cuts to the chase.

ANNIE FINN

You're a rat, aren't you, Mr. Middleton?

She asks without the slightest apprehension. She's mocking his name again.

MIDDLETON

You ask a lot of questions, don't you Ms. Finn?

ANNIE FINN

It's my business, how the Ship stays afloat, knowing things.

MIDDLETON

I had the impression your business was working in a shithole flophouse.

ANNIE FINN

I don't work in this shit hole flophouse.

Middleton looks confused.

ANNIE FINN (CONT'D)

I own it. And the way I was able to buy it, instead of spreading my legs down on the Line, is by knowing things.

Middleton looks slightly embarrassed.

ANNIE FINN (CONT'D)

So I'm asking you, as you are staying in my very own shithole, are you a rat or not?

MIDDLETON

(hinting at a grin)

Let's just say I'm also in the business of knowing things. Whispers can be worth more than gold.

ANNIE FINN

Middleton, you have a way of telling me things I already know.

There is an awkward pause.

MIDDLETON

Then tell me something I don't know.

ANNIE FINN

Such as? I'd settle for a little gold.

MIDDLETON

Who do you think is behind the anti-war groups?

ANNIE FINN

What do you mean 'behind?'

MIDDLETON

I mean, do you think there are German agents here, stirring up anti-war sentiment, trying to muck up the mines?

She looks at him like he's an absolute rube.

ANNIE FINN

I know for a fact there are more Company spies staying in my shit hole than there are German agents in Butte.

She pauses, smiles.

ANNIE FINN (CONT'D)

You're wracking up quite a tab with me.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

The very next day, her position would be put to the test.

EXT. CENTERVILLE - MORNING

Middleton and Morrissey are standing at a distance from a group of anti-war protestors, gathering to march. The marchers are mostly miners and their families.

Morrissey has a filthy cigar between his fingers. He's been chomping on it for hours.

MORRISSEY

There's going to be trouble.

MIDDLETON

Seems harmless enough.

MORRISSEY

I'm telling you, there's going to be trouble.

MIDDLETON

Well, you must know something I don't know.

MORRISSEY

Of course I do. You don't know shit. We have a man inside Pearse-Connelly. He told us they were behind the handbills. He says there's going to be trouble today, for sure.

MIDDLETON

Why would there be trouble? Those look like families to me.

MORRISSEY

It's the deadline for foreigners to register for the draft. Same day as the march for Irish independence. You may not know shit about this town, but that's a formula for trouble. The company knows it. That's why they called in the Guard.

Morrissey points to the hill opposite the marchers where a small number of National Guardsman is organizing itself.

MIDDLETON

I thought the company called in the Guard because you told them there would be trouble?

Morrissey is caught in his own cyclical logic. He knows it, and bails.

MORRISSEY

Like I said, you don't know shit about this town.

He returns to chomping on his cigar.

EXT. CENTERVILLE - MINUTES LATER

The march begins calmly enough.

The group is large, several hundred, and there all almost as many Finns as Irish. There are a good number of American born too. Their families join the miners.

Everybody is dressed in their Sunday best, which is still pretty modest, as if they're going to mass.

There are signs and banners in three languages: English, Irish, and Finnish, that say: "Don't die for your slave masters," "War is a racket." "No blood for the banks."

The marchers are followed by dozens of regular Butte cops and a small contingent of Guardsman.

Morrissey and Middleton march behind at a distance, openly spying.

The group begins to march towards the Courthouse, on the other side of uptown.

The banner at the lead of the march says, "You can no more win a war than you can win an earthquake."

The march is loud, but calm.

As they march through town, people line the streets to see what the commotion is.

The marchers urge other people to join them.

FIRST GROUP OF MARCHERS

War isn't the answer!

SECOND GROUP OF MARCHERS

The Germans love their children too!

Little kids are running alongside, handing out to passersby the same leaflets as the older kid who was beaten by Morrissey.

The groups size begins to swell and the chants get louder and louder.

THIRD GROUP OF MARCHERS

No war! No war! No war!

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - MINUTES LATER

By the time they arrive in uptown, a large group of additional cops is waiting for them, massed in front of the courthouse steps. They are joined by a phalanx of detectives and more Guardsman.

The marchers walk directly to the edge of the police line.

The atmosphere is very tense as the speeches begin.

One speaker after another steps up on a soapbox, set up in the middle of the street.

The speeches are of the boilerplate pacifist variety.

A priest steps up on the soapbox.

PRIEST

I'd like to share some of the brave words spoken by Congressman La Follette in his speech opposing US entry into the war: "The poor, sir, who are the ones called upon to rot in the trenches, have no organized power, have no press to voice their will upon this question of peace or war..."

There is polite affirmation from the crowd.

A war widow is brought to the soapbox,

WAR WIDOW

I don't know what to say. The war has taken my husband from me. It's taken my children's father from them.

She's handed one of her children. The child looks terrified.

WAR WIDOW (CONT'D)

Can you even tell me what this war is about?
Can you?

She doesn't know what else to say. People are quiet. She's had an effect on the crowd.

A representative of the Pearse-Connelly club, the organizers of the march, takes to the soapbox.

PEARSE-CONNELLY MAN

(in an Irish accent)

It's wonderful to see so many of you here. Standing up against this terrible war. To the men here of draft age I urge you not to register. Those of us from Ireland know what it's like to be a colony of England.

(MORE)

PEARSE-CONNELLY MAN (CONT'D)

They enslaved our people. Tried to starve the whole country. We won't fight for the Crown that put our people in chains. No war for the crown! No war for the crown! No war for the crown!

The crowd is getting riled up.

A Finnish Workers Club representative takes the soapbox too.

FINNISH WORKER

(in Finnish)

We stand in the streets with our Irish brothers who work alongside us in the mines. The war isn't for workers. It's a war for bankers. The workers just do all the dying.

He switches to English.

FINNISH WORKER (CONT'D)

No war! No war! No war!

The majority of the crowd is baffled by his speech but joins in the chanting at the end.

One of the most radical speeches comes at the very end. In fact, people are already starting to thin out.

A WOBBLY stands on the soapbox. He's big and strong. Better than 6 foot 2. He is more charismatic than handsome.

He has a completely different manner of speaking than everyone else. He looks at everyone. Sizes them up. You have the distinct impression he's done this before.

SHANNON

My name is Joe Shannon. I'm here representing the Industrial Workers of the World. We stand for One Big Union uniting all the workers.

The crowd is losing interest. He's taken them a bit too far.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

We're here to stop the war. We should be. The war is an absolute human atrocity. It's one of the worst things human beings have ever done, and human beings have done a lot of terrible things.

People are beginning to gather their things.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

But if we're really here to stop the war, there's really only one way to do it. Because a system caused the war. And it will keep causing them. And they're just going to get bigger and worse. So the only real way to stop war is to change the system that causes it.

It's quickly obvious why Shannon was placed so late in the order of speakers.

He's greeted mostly with silence, a handful here and there clap or shout affirmation. Suddenly, you can hear a pin drop. The agitator has brought the rally to a screeching halt.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

Working folks have all the power in the world. They just don't see it. Nothing moves without them, not ships or trains or mines. And wars too. Wars can't be fought without workers. The bankers never fire a gun..."

Suddenly, there's a commotion in the middle of the crowd.

A bunch of the marchers turn away from the speakers and begin concentrating on the cops and soldiers.

From behind the front line of protesters, you can hear someone shouting in Irish.

A few of them get right up against the police line and begin shouting at the cops, addressing them as fellow workers and asking why they're betraying their own kind.

Suddenly, objects start flying out of the crowd, near where the shouting was heard coming from.

A SQUIRRELY LITTLE MAN comes darting out of the slackers. He's small and his clothes seem too big for his body. He's got a hat pulled way down almost over his eyes.

He heaves a giant chunk of a brick right at the line of cops. It hits one of the cops square in the face and he collapses like a rag doll.

One of the other cops start shooting in the air.

A bunch of others do to, as the rest of the cops start attacking the crowd with batons. It's absolute chaos.

Meanwhile, the squirrely little man disappears into the crowd, unscathed.

The National Guardsman, who are younger than the cops and seem even more overwhelmed, stand there not knowing what to do. At best, they keep onlookers from entering the fray.

Morrissey takes the chance to crack a few skulls.

Middleton spends his time memorizing faces.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

In the end, 21 slackers are arrested. Twice as many have their noses broken or their teeth kicked in.

INT. OFFICE OF CORNELIUS KELLY - THE NEXT DAY

The next day, Morrissey and Middleton are both called back to the penthouse office of Cornelius Kelly.

When they walk in, he's still reading his own newspaper's account of the incident.

At first, he doesn't say a word. He's obviously fuming.

They stand there for a miserable while.

Still staring at the paper, Kelly finally begins reading aloud.

KELLY

'The demonstration was organized by outside agitators working in the interests of Germany. This, at the very same time our boys are fighting a holy war against the Huns, making the world safe for democracy.'

When he finally looks up, his hair is mussed and his eyes are plainly blood shot. You don't imagine they got that way from tears.

KELLY (CONT'D)

This is what they are saying in the papers. In the papers.

He emphasizes the last word.

MIDDLETON

I suppose it shouldn't be surprising that the paper you own would express your views.

MORRISSEY

(beginning to lose his temper)
Middleton. Shut the fuck up.

A tense pause, all around.

KELLY

It seems to me that you are failing to understand the gravity of this situation.

He looks right at both of them.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Both of you.

MIDDLETON

People tell me this has nothing to do with German spies. And everything I've seen suggests they are right.

MORRISSEY

(even more angrily)

I suggest, like I already did, that you shut the fuck up. Our man inside Pearse-Connelly is 100% certain. You don't know your ass from a mine shaft.

MIDDLETON

I keep hearing about this man inside Pearse-Connelly. You're basing an awful lot on him. Who is he anyway? I'd like to hear what he has to say for myself.

MORRISSEY

Fuck you Middleton, you piece of shit brat. You hear what I let you hear.

He's relishing his condescension.

KELLY

I'm too busy to sit here listening to your pissing contests.

After an irritated pause.

KELLY (CONT'D)

I trust I've made myself clear today. The next time I see either of you, I want some concrete progress. I want names and I want bodies. Back East is beginning to squeeze my balls. They are beginning to question my competency. And like me, they couldn't give a shit less about either of you.

INT. MIDDLETON'S ROOM - LATE AT NIGHT

Middleton is going over his notes.

He writes something down in a small notebook, places it in his jacket pocket.

He pours a tall glass of whiskey from a bottle on the desk.

He reaches into his jacket again, pulls out a small vial and places several drops into his drink.

He checks how much is left of the vial, then returns it to his jacket.

He downs the glass like cold water. Then rises and leaves.

INT. BIG SHIP STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Middleton walks down the noisy steps. It's impossible not to make sounds.

He can hear movement from Annie Finn's room. He senses she's awake too, and watching him from the other side of the door.

EXT. ANACONDA ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Middleton walks towards uptown. The streets are empty but he's making sure that no one is following him.

The stretch of Anaconda road is very dark but Middleton notices a small animal sitting near the edge of the road.

He stops. Tries to make it out. It's a cat. Just sitting there in the road, looking at Middleton.

Middleton walks off into the darkness.

EXT. FINLEN HOTEL - MINUTES LATER

Middleton's hat is pulled down low and his jacket collar is up. He's avoiding eye contact with anyone he sees.

He enters the building.

INT. FINLEN HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Middleton is at the public phone in the hotel.

He checks something in the notebook, then makes a call.

Briefly, he talks to someone. He's keeping his voice down. He doesn't want to be heard.

Middleton checks his watch, then walks straight towards the hotel bar.

INT. FINLEN HOTEL BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Middleton orders a drink. Downs it. Then orders a second.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)
 Morrissey isn't the only one keeping an informant to himself. It was time to meet mine.

Middleton finishes the second drink as quickly as the first.

Without a word to anyone, he leaves cash on the bar and heads back outside.

EXT. UPTOWN - MOMENTS LATER

Middleton is walking as before, hat pulled down, collar up. He looks like he's trying not to be noticed.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)
 He came with the highest recommendations from the home office in Baltimore. He wasn't inside Pearse-Connely, or even the Finns. He was in deeper.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL FLATS - MINUTES LATER

Middleton is out of the buzz of the commercial district. He's now on a quiet residential street in the rich flats.

On a dark block, otherwise completely deserted, he passes a man who is dressed almost identically to himself, hat pulled down, collar up.

After walking past Middleton on the sidewalk, the man stops and turns.

INFORMANT
 You Baltimore?

MIDDLETON
 You smoke?

Middleton hands the informant a cigarette. Lights it. Does the same for himself.

The two shadows stand smoking in the darkness. They have the look of conspirators, trying to mask it and failing.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)
 In fact, the man has worked with the agency across borders and industries, in mines, timber fields and harbors. He's been in Butte since before the war started. He goes by three different names in the case files.

The two are now talking in voiced hushed just above a whisper.

The fat mansions are squinting at them all the time, trying to make them out in the dark.

MIDDLETON

What can you tell me about Pearse-Connelly?

The informant doesn't seem to understand the question.

INFORMANT

What exactly do you want to know?

MIDDLETON

Morrissey believes they are behind the anti-war movement and that the Germans are behind them. They think it's all a conspiracy to gum up the mines.

The informant considers the question while taking a long drag on his cigarette.

INFORMANT

If I were a Company thug, I wouldn't worry too much about Pearse-Connelly or the Finnish Workers Club.

MIDDLETON

I'm in Intelligence, not muscle.

INFORMANT

Either way.

MIDDLETON

Well either way, what would you be worrying about, if not Pearse-Connelly?

INFORMANT

I'd worry about the Reds.

He says is as if it's as clear as day.

Middleton is dumbfounded.

INFORMANT (CONT'D)

Don't bother with the Nationalists, either the Irish or the Finns. They are liberals. They can be bought off.

MIDDLETON

I haven't heard so much as a whisper about the Reds. From everything I've seen, they've been wiped out.

Middleton is beginning to wonder whether the informant knows anything or whether he's just gotten used to the rat stipend.

INFORMANT

There hasn't been a raise in years, no matter how much money the company pulls in.

(MORE)

INFORMANT (CONT'D)

Company profits are up 4 times over but the miners haven't seen one extra cent. They are pushing the miners harder and harder. The quotas keep being increased, sometimes every month, sometimes every week...

Middleton is getting impatient.

MIDDLETON

I don't need a sociology lecture from right now. I need facts.

INFORMANT

You're not listening to me.

Now the Informant is getting impatient.

INFORMANT (CONT'D)

The conditions on the hill are getting worse all the time. To get that rock out of the mines, every safety rule is being ignored or skirted. There are accidents almost every day now. The mines are a tinderbox. It isn't the nationalists. It's the reds that get it. All it will take is a spark. You can feel it up there, even of you and your friends can't feel it down here."

MIDDLETON

I didn't come from Baltimore to make friends.

INFORMANT

You're doing a terrific job at it.

Middleton has the impression this late night meeting was a useless bust.

INFORMANT (CONT'D)

Take my word for it. Pearse-Connelly is either a distraction or a set-up. It's about the Reds. And all it's going to take is a spark.

He finishes the cigarette and walks off into the darkness.

Middleton stands there for a beat or two, not knowing what on earth to do or who to believe.

EXT. ANACONDA ROAD - MINUTES LATER

Middleton makes his way from the meeting back to his room at the Big Ship. The streets are quiet. Deserted.

Middleton is startled to notice that the same cat from before is still sitting there in the road, now several hours later.

He stops. He moves closer.

The cat doesn't move. It just sits there staring at him.

From the darkness, the voice of an old man.

OLD MAN
I was surprised to see it.

Middleton is startled. An old man steps out of the darkness. He's smoking a cigarette.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
The cat. I was surprised to see it.

Middleton is completely confused.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
You aren't from Butte, are you?

Middleton finally answers.

MIDDLETON
No. Why?

OLD MAN
Locals know cats don't do well here.

MIDDLETON
I don't get you.

OLD MAN
Because of the dust from the mines. When they clean their fur, it makes them sick. You don't see many cats here.

MIDDLETON
Is that what's wrong with him? Why is he just sitting there in the street?

OLD MAN
I think he got run over. I think he broke his spine.

Middleton looks closer. The animal isn't right. He looks to be in shock. Strange that Middleton didn't notice before.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
I noticed him a while back. It's a pity. Not many cats here anymore.

MIDDLETON
Can we do something?

OLD MAN
There's nothing to be done.

MIDDLETON
He doesn't look good.

OLD MAN
And you can't discharge a firearm in city limits.

Middleton is briefly baffled. Then he gets it.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
It is a pity. I do love cats.

The both stand there for a moment, not saying anything.

The Old Man finishes his cigarette.

Night.
OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Middleton tips his hat. The man walks back into the darkness. You can hear a door open and close.

Middleton stands there for a beat longer, staring at the pitiful creature lying there terrified.

He removes his coat. Kneels down.

Middleton wraps the animal in his coat like a blanket, then gently picks it up.

MIDDLETON
I'm sorry my friend.

He stares into the animal's eyes. The animal stares blankly, in deep shock.

Using the coat to protect himself, Middleton wraps his hands around the cat's neck and snaps it sharply.

He then carries the cat off the road and gently lays it onto a patch of dirt in front of the apartment building.

He pauses for a beat, then puts his jacket back on and walks off into the black.

INT. BIG SHIP STAIRWELL - MINUTES LATER

It's well past three o'clock in the morning when Middleton gets back the Big Ship and begins climbing the noisy five flights back to room one in the attic.

Middleton has barely started up the fourth flight when Annie Finn's door cracks, and her eyes peek out into the hallway and up the stairs looking at Middleton.

MIDDLETON
 (tipping his hat)
 Evening Miss Finn.

He looks like a teenager caught by his mother coming home too late.

ANNIE FINN
 Could you please keep it down Mr. Middleton
 when you come home so late?

Her door closes, and he creaks his way back up the last flight of stairs to his room with two views.

EXT. WALKERVILLE SHANTIES - MORNING

MIDDLETON (V.O.)
 The next afternoon, a group of detectives
 begins a series of raids on the homes of men
 suspected known to be active in Pearce-
 Connelly or the Finnish Workers Club.

A group of men including Middleton and led by Morrissey kicks in the door of a miner's shack in one of the main shanty towns in Walkerville, in the shadows of the mining gallows. They are looking for a member of Pearce-Connelly, one of its leaders.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)
 The aim is to find the German connection
 while at the same time crushing the anti-war
 movement before it grows by a single man.

There are a bunch of kids in the house. Some of them start screaming but most just try to hide behind their mother. She's completely terrified too, but fights right back.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)
 Everything is dirty. The streets are dirty. The
 houses are dirty. The water is dirty. The air is
 dirty. The children are dirty. And you could
 swear they are sleeping 15 to a room.

The man they are looking for is sitting at the kitchen table, smoking and drinking.

He takes a swing at Morrissey. Morrissey ducks and he misses.

MORRISSEY
 You'll regret that soon enough lad.

Morrissey takes out his truncheon and smacks him in the knees.

He falls to the ground.

One of the kids keeps screaming non-stop.

INT. POLICE CELL - HOURS LATER

Morrissey is there. And Middleton too. They have the Pearse-Connelly man in a chair. He's bleeding badly. He's been roughed up for hours. Morrissey is holding the truncheon.

MORRISSEY

I'm really getting tired of asking you. Do you remember when I told you that you'd regret it?

He just stares at Morrissey. His eyes show nothing but hate.

MORRISSEY (CONT'D)

I know who your cunt wife is. I know where to find her.

The man rises slightly out of his chair. Who knows what he thinks he'll do.

Morrissey starts beating the hell out of him.

EXT. STEEL BLOCK BOARDING HOUSE - NIGHT

The same group of men enters a four story boarding house.

INT. STEEL BLOCK BOARDING HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

There's a woman sitting at a small desk. She looks absolutely terrified.

They ask her about the man they are looking for.

She gestures to the end of the hall.

BOARDING HOUSE CLERK

(whispering)

Room 103.

The men kick in that door too. They drag out a man.

INT. POLICE CELL - HOURS LATER

Morrissey and Middleton are there again. Morrissey is holding the truncheon. This time, their suspect has his hands bound, hanging from the ceiling. He's being stretched out and his wrists are bleeding just as much as his face. He's being brutalized.

MORRISSEY

(looking at Middleton)

You're so fucking useless.

He resumes beating the suspect.

EXT. WALKERVILLE SHANTIES - MIDDLE OF NIGHT

The men kick in another door.

It's another packed house, kids everywhere. The family is Finnish everybody is tough as hell.

The wife, sister, little kids all yelling at them, throwing everything at them they can get their hands on. It's pretty clear the neighborhood has heard about the raids.

Middleton has his gun drawn and starts pointing it all over the place. He looks like he's about to freak out and kill someone.

MORRISSEY

(at Middleton)

Calm down you fucking idiot. You are such a pussy.

As they are dragging the father out of the house, the wife blocks the door and tells them something in Finnish. It has the look of a grave threat.

INT. POLICE CELL - HOURS LATER

Middleton is holding the guy down on his back, feet above his head, while Morrissey pours a bucket of ice cold water down his throat. He's desperately gasping for breath. When he can catch his air, even for a second, he curses them in Finnish.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

For all that, we get nothing. Nobody seems to know anything about German agents no matter what you do to them.

INT. SPECULATOR MINE - NIGHT

Using a thick rope, a crew of miners lowers a heavy power cable into the mine. The rope breaks from the weight, and the power cable plunges thousands of feet underground.

INT. CROWN ROOM COCKTAIL LOUNGE - SAME TIME

Middleton wants to talk to Morrissey, so it's back to the Crown Room.

Morrissey isn't there, but Annie Finn is. She's sitting at the bar, drinking alone. Her posture suggests she isn't interested in socializing.

He sits down next to her without an invitation.

ANNIE FINN

I'm not in the mood.

She never once looks up.

MIDDLETON

I wouldn't have pegged you to drink in a company bar.

She ignores him completely.

MIDDLETON (CONT'D)

Your glass is empty. Let me buy you this one.

He gestures to the bartender to bring two more of what she is drinking, Jameson neat.

INT. SPECULATOR MINE - SAME TIME

Four men are trying to retrieve the power cable, deep underground. They are struggling to fasten it to a cage, to bring it back to the surface.

One of the men is holding a lamp. The lamp causes a spark, which sets the power cord on fire. The men try to put it out, but it's no use.

INT. CROWN ROOM COCKTAIL LOUNGE - SAME TIME

MIDDLETON

You were right of course. About the German agents.

She finally looks up at him. She seems more sad than drunk.

MIDDLETON (CONT'D)

And you're also right that I owe you.

ANNIE FINN

You can pay by leaving me alone.

MIDDLETON

I'll pay you properly soon enough. Right now I need to add a little to my tab.

ANNIE FINN

I told you, not now.

MIDDLETON

Do you know who our man inside Pearse-Connelly is?

He finally has her complete attention. She looks at him like he's an idiot. She's hinting at a smile.

ANNIE FINN
How can you possibly not know that?

She's incredulous.

MIDDLETON
Morrissey won't tell me. He doesn't trust me.

ANNIE FINN
You don't need Morrissey or anybody else to tell you. It's as plain as day.

Middleton is off balance.

MIDDLETON
I don't understand you.

ANNIE FINN
This is your lucky day. I'm not going to add to your tab.

Abruptly, she gathers her things and rises to leave.

At that moment, Morrissey walks in and sees that Middleton and Finn have been sitting together.

He pauses for a second and makes mental note.

As she leaves the bar, they pass each other and nobody says anything.

Middleton watches everything in the mirror over the bar.

Morrissey walks over and sits in the seat Finn had just gotten out of.

He looks at Middleton as if about to say something, then turns to the bartender and orders a Bushmills, neat.

He looks down and notices Finn's untouched Jameson.

He downs it like a shot.

MORRISSEY
What the fuck are you doing here, Middleton? Haven't we seen enough of each other in last few days? Give me a break from your college shit.

MIDDLETON
I wanted to ask you something Morrissey. I don't want to anymore. And I didn't go to College, you prick. I dropped out of school when I was 13.

Staring off into the mirror behind the bar, Middleton notices a man entering the bar looking for someone. He knows the man is somehow familiar, but can't quite place it.

Then, an instant later, Middleton gets it. It's the little squirrely man who'd started the riot. It's definitely him.

At exactly the moment Middleton remembers, Morrissey sees him too, and then the little squirrely man sees them both. He quickly turns and leaves.

Morrissey suddenly seems nervous.

MORRISSEY

Let me buy the next round. You've earned it these last few days.

He's trying to distract Middleton as if he were a moron.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

Annie Finn was right for a second time. It was plain as day who the man inside Pearse-Connelly was.

INT. CROWN ROOM COCKTAIL LOUNGE - HOURS LATER

It's now around 2 o'clock in the morning. Outside you can hear shouting, a commotion.

Morrissey and Middleton rise from their seats but then someone runs into the bar, shouting.

MAN FROM THE STREET

It's the Speculator Mine. There's been an accident. It's bad.

He runs back into the street, shouting the same thing.

Middleton readies to leave but Morrissey sits back down.

MORRISSEY

Have your drink. Who gives a shit?

Middleton sits back down too.

He reaches for his drink. But halfway there, he stops, returns his arm to his side, then quickly makes his way to the door.

MORRISSEY (CONT'D)

Fucking bleeding heart.

He helps himself to Middleton's drink.

EXT. SPECULATOR MINE - MINUTES LATER

The scene at the top of the hill is apocalyptic. The whole thing is lit by fire shooting like a geyser out of one of the shafts.

The hillside is covered with families, waiting for word like ghosts in the shadows.

The other mine entrance is buzzing with action, there are dozens and dozens of bodies piled outside. Most aren't even covered with anything.

There are the sounds of fire, of shouting, of women and babies crying.

Middleton is standing on the hillside, stunned.

A woman comes up to him.

WOMAN ON HILL
(in a thick Irish accent)
Aren't you a human being?

He doesn't know what she means.

WOMAN ON HILL (CONT'D)
They need men.

Still confusion.

WOMAN ON HILL (CONT'D)
To bring out the bodies. How can you just stand there doing nothing?

He doesn't even think about it. He just starts walking down the hill towards the entrance to the mine, stripping out of his outer clothes.

As he nears the mine threshold, a man offers him a tin cup full of whiskey.

Middleton is a little confused, but takes the cup, drinks it, then walks on into the mine.

INT. CROWN ROOM COCKTAIL LOUNGE - SAME TIME

Morrissey downs another round back at the Crown Room, gestures for yet another. He's talking loudly.

MORRISSEY
I don't give a shit.

The only other person who's still in the bar is the bartender. He won't say anything because it's Morrissey.

MORRISSEY (CONT'D)

Half of them are disloyal cockroaches anyway.
I don't give a shit.

INT. SPECULATOR MINE - SAME TIME

It's as if Middleton were descending into hell.

The metal cage opens. They bring out the bodies.

Middleton climbs into the cage with a dozen other men. No one says anything.

They plunge more than 2,500 feet underground, down to the level of the accident site.

The smoke gets thicker and thicker. It's getting harder and harder to breath.

The sounds of the fire, of the elevator, of the frenzied rescue, just keep getting louder. The sounds of metal are like a beating drum, chilling.

The cage opens and they walk into a narrow passageway, mostly pitch black, and choked with smoke.

They make their way under light of a single lamp.

The darkness is punctuated every so often by single lamps leading other groups passing back and forth from the accident site back to the surface. They are carrying a steady stream of victims and the dead.

Nightmarish images flicker: men desperately grasping at air; faces disfigured by terror and fire.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

And who could begin to describe the smell?

He finally arrives at the spot where most of the bodies are.

Across the narrow tunnel, the fire is raging. Those are the flames that are spewing into the air.

There are men slinging buckets trying to put it out.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)

They might as well be throwing pebbles at the sun.

In the elevator shaft, where the fire is hanging, the metal cage is still hanging there, though fire is tearing through it like a volcano.

The charred remains of men are hanging in the cage too. There's no way to get to them for now.

Everyone who survived is already out. They are just bringing out bodies now. Most of them are piled against an escape door, locked by the company to cut down on theft.

Middleton and another man take the head and feet of a victim and begin the long walk back through the claustrophobic tunnel then back into the cage.

In the intermittent light, Middleton notices the man he's carrying out has no skin left on his fingers. He must have worn them to the bone trying to claw his way out.

The ride back up seems like a million years. But you can feel yourself rising up and out of hell. The surface beckons like a paradise, even while he's holding a corpse.

The cage finally opens and they drag the man out.

A lot more people have gathered at the site. The cops are starting to show up, and the young Guardsman are up there too. They're trying to keep a line of separation between the recovery area and the growing crowds of families and gawkers.

It isn't working. People are breaking through the line constantly. You can hear crying in a hundred different directions and it's the worst sound you could ever hear.

As soon as they exit the mine, setting the body next to dozens others, another woman breaks through the line, rushing towards the man they'd just brought out, her husband.

She screams something incomprehensibly, and then collapses.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)
Heaven and hell are as upside down as the town.

He turns around and strides back into the mine.

He pauses just long enough to down another whiskey.

INT. CROWN ROOM COCKTAIL LOUNGE - SAME TIME

Back down the hill, Morrissey downs another drink too. He's completely wasted now.

He gets up and staggers out of the bar without paying a dime.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF CROWN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Morrissey climbs into his Model T and starts it up.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

He then drives his Model T up the narrow winding road to the Speculator, several times nearly swerving off the road.

EXT. SPECULATOR MINE - MINUTES LATER

As Morrissey finally staggers onto the scene, Middleton is coming out again with another body. He's filthy and completely spent, almost collapsing from exhaustion.

Word spreads that there are no more bodies to bring out. There are almost 200 corpses laid out as the sun first rises above the surrounding hills.

Because he's stripped down, filthy, and black with smoke and soot, Morrissey doesn't recognize Middleton at first. When he finally does, he starts laughing in a mocking way.

MORRISSEY

Like I said, bleeding fucking heart.

He laughs even harder.

By now, everyone is stone silent. All you can hear is the sound of the fire and Morrissey's cruel laughter.

One of the other men pulling bodies out of the ground is Joe Shannon. He strides over to Morrissey.

He's been pulling bodies out for hours non-stop and he's caked with filth and death but he's suddenly full of energy again.

He looks like he might just kill Morrissey then and there. He looks like he could do it.

Instead, he turns to the crowd of surviving miners and speaks loudly enough for everyone to hear.

SHANNON

Not one more pound of copper will come out of this mine. Not one filthy ounce.

He throws his lamp on the ground at Morrissey's feet.

First one man follows suit, then another, then another, until dozens of men do the same.

The sound of Morrissey's laughter is silenced by the sounds of mining tools piling at his feet.

Morrissey stands there like an idiot, stunned.

MIDDLETON (V.O.)
And just like that, Chief of Detectives Ed
Morrissey helps trigger the very strike he's
paid to prevent.

BLACK.

END CREDITS.