

THE SPECTRE OF STILLSBURY LANE

1

EXT. STILLSBURY LANE - MAITLAND - DAY

1

Insert: September, 1939.

Stillsbury Lane is a short, dirty delivery lane that leads to a gate at the rear entrance of the Imperial Hotel.

A gnarly pepper tree shades the lane from the fence-line.

JACK CLAYTON (40')s, a big man in overalls, with broad shoulders, lays on the ground in an alcoholic daze.

A newspaper is spread out, over his suit.

A boot gently kicks his shoulder.

His eyes open, and he turns over.

JACK CLAYTON

Piss off!

A vagrant stands over him.

VAGRANT

Ow's your mate?

Jack Clayton throws the newspaper off and gingerly sits up.

He glances at the back of a well-dressed man, on the ground lying next to him.

Jack Clayton stands, stretches and loudly FARTS.

JACK CLAYTON

(to the figure)

Car'n mate. Ya can't stay here all day.

Jake Clayton rolls the man onto his back.

As the body turns, the intestines spill out and onto the ground.

There is a gaping, bloody gash from the man's waist to his rib cage.

The face of the man is frozen, distorted in terror.

VAGRANT

Geez, a Nippo!

JACK CLAYTON

Shit! Shit! Shit!

Jack turns in a circle, muttering.

Jack takes a crumpled, handkerchief from his pocket and lays it over the man's staring eyes.

2 INT. MAITLAND TOWN HALL - DAY

2

Super: Three months earlier.

JOHN O'NEILL (37), tall and fit, stands at the back of the room, reading from a page in his hands. He is a little nervous, but has a job to do.

A crowd of one hundred or so raucous men, stand in groups around the room.

John pushes his way through the crowd.

He stops in front of his father, SYLVESTER O'NEILL (87), a pale and be-spectacled man, with a bald head and tufts of white hair lining his face.

He tenderly extends his hand, and his father shakes it.

SYLVESTER O'NEILL
It's your business now, Son.

John makes his way to the podium.

John places one finger in his vest pocket, and faces the crowd.

JOHN O'NEILL
My father came out here from County Clare seventy years ago. Now I won't talk too much about it, but the impropriety alleged by Reverend McDonald, did not occur.

John pulls a page from his inside coat pocket, and glances at it.

JOHN O'NEILL (CONT'D)
The transaction was examined by the Courts, and I can tell you that every horse was delivered to the Japanese.

A HECKLER (60's), half drunk, in a suit and vest, stands.

HECKLER
(shouts)
Why is ya selling good horse-meat to the Japs? We'll bloody well be at war with them, soon enough.

John glances down at the page, folds it and replaces it his coat.

JOHN O'NEILL

With us tonight is Mr. Shin Okada, representing the Japanese Trade Ministry. I can assure you that our animals are purchased by our Japanese friends, not only for recreation, but also for the Imperial Japanese Army.

A MURMUR of disquiet ripples through the room.

LATER

On stage, a Japanese man in a suit and hat, bows and hands a cheque to John.

He lifts a wooden presentation case off the table, opens its lid and tilts it for the crowd to see.

Inside in an ornate, engraved sword, with colorful ribbons ties around its handle.

John accepts the sword, and closes the lid.

3

EXT. STILLSBURY LANE - DAY

3

Uniformed, Senior Constable RAY NELSON (50's), burly and in charge, strides towards the body on the ground.

Constable CLIVE ALLEN (30's), tall and slim in uniform, rises from the body and stands in front of his boss.

CLIVE ALLEN

Senior, it's pretty bad. Stinks to high heavens!

RAY NELSON

Get a grip man! What do we know?

Constable Ray Nelson leans over the body.

CLIVE ALLEN

He's one of those Japanese blokes. Look at that slash. All the way from his groin almost to his neck. Obviously intended to kill him.

Constable Ray Nelson bends over the body, and examines the cut.

RAY NELSON

Who found him? Has he been moved?

Constable Clive Allen nods at a man standing beside the fence, smoking.

CLIVE ALLEN

Jack Clayton, the odd jobs man is
over there.

RAY NELSON

Any weapon at the scene?

CLIVE ALLEN

(shakes his head)

Oh, and John O'Neill, the manager
of the Imperial Hotel said he was
out walking early this morning;
said heard nothing unusual.

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