



presents

Conspiracy of Silence

A film by John Deery
(U.K., Color, 35mm, 87 minutes)



Secrets, Lies, and Murder . . . All in the Name of God

Official Selection - Taormina Film Festival 2003

Official Selection - Galway Film Festival 2003

Official Selection - Montreal Film Festival 2003

Official Selection - Hamburg Film Festival 2003

Official Selection - Warsaw Film Festival 2003

Official Selection - AFI Film Festival 2003

Conspiracy Of Silence

Short Synopsis

Secrets, Lies, and Murder . . . All in the Name of God

Ripped from today's headlines, *Conspiracy of Silence* is a controversial thriller that dares to ask the question – how far will the Catholic Church go to cover-up its own corruption?

Set in modern day Ireland, *Conspiracy of Silence* begins with two seemingly unrelated events – the unexpected suicide of beloved and well-respected Father Frank Sweeny, and the expulsion of idealistic, young Seminary student, Daniel McLaughlin.

Local investigative reporter, David Foley, aggressively pursues the two stories and begins to uncover a deadly secret that links both incidents and leads directly up to the highest ranks of the Church. His suspicions are confirmed when he receives anonymous threats and is chased by mysterious and shadowy figures. As he digs deeper he unwillingly puts his and his young family's lives in grave danger.

Meanwhile, Daniel is forced to make a decision that could haunt him forever – will he return to the Church and help cover-up its lies and deceit, or will he surrender all dreams of becoming a priest and return to the beautiful girl he left behind.

Gorgeously shot, expertly acted, and crisply edited, *Conspiracy of Silence* is an official selection of the 2003 Taormina Film Festival, Galway Film Festival, Montreal Film Festival, Hamburg Film Festival, Warsaw Film Festival and the AFI Festival in Los Angeles.

Conspiracy of Silence stars Jonathan Forbes, Jason Barry, Brenda Fricker and Hugh Bonneville. The film is written and directed by John Deery and produced by Davina Stanley. Executive Producers are Robert Bevan, Keith Hayley, Charlie Davill, Amanda Coombes, Stephen Margolis and Amit Barooah.

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Conspiracy Of Silence

Long Synopsis

The Vatican, Special General Council Meeting, Rome:

Father Frank Sweeney (Patrick Lynch), an Irish priest, sits in a Special General Council Meeting at The Vatican looking more and more nervous and agitated as proceedings go on. Enraged, he stands up with the banner 'The Church Has Aids' in an attempt to question the church's denial of priests in relationships and HIV. He is restrained, arrested and whisked away in a car. He presses the palms of his hands to the car window which have 'The Church Has Aids' written on them. Photographers capture the moment

Galcranagh, A Small Irish town, Three Years Later:

Daniel McLaughlin (Jonathan Forbes) a young seminarian and local boy, is caught up in the day-to-day happenings at the seminary including prayer and hurling.

While away from the seminary for a break however, Daniel is drawn to his ex-girlfriend Sinead who he has had to forsake for the priesthood's vow of celibacy.

Whilst the music of the local dancehall echoes through Galcranagh, Frank Sweeney prays in his cosy cottage. After putting on his vestments and with his life flashing before his eyes, he takes a shotgun from beside his chair and shoots himself.

First on the scene after local police is journalist David Foley (Jason Barry), hungry to break the story. He questions surrounding policeman and Bishop Michael Quinn (Jim Norton).

Meanwhile Matthew Francis (John Lynch), Sweeney's close partner, discusses the suicide with Father Dowling (Hugh Bonneville). Father Sweeney was HIV positive and Foley is quick to pursue this twist in the story. The first news article by Foley appears in The Galcranagh Gazette, which causes panic amongst the establishment at the seminary.

Seminarian Noel Kinahan (Owen McDonnell), whilst studying with Daniel in his room, makes sexual advances towards Daniel who is shocked and rejects him. Daniel is seen storming out of Noel's room by Father Doherty (Harry Towb), who reports this to the head of the seminary, Rector Cahill (Sean McGinley).

Early next morning Daniel is called into Rector Cahill's office and told he is being expelled from the seminary on the grounds of a perceived sexual transgression with Noel. Daniel protests his innocence to no avail. Back in Galcranagh, his family react in an accusatory way to the shame brought upon the family due to his expulsion. Daniel's father, John (Niall O'Brien), a local farmer, takes personal issue with this as it affects his ability to get a European grant as Rector Cahill sits on the local grant selection board.

Dowling confronts Cahill over the severity of the punishment handed out to Daniel and Noel and pleads for their re-instatement to the seminary. Cahill dismisses this on all counts. Gossip soon spreads around Galcranagh about the reasons Daniel has been expelled from the seminary. Tensions rise in the McLaughlin home.

Bishop Quinn holds a secret meeting, to repress the story, which will damage the church's reputation. Rector Cahill accuses Father Dowling of leaking the story to the press. Foley continues to research the case believing that there is more than HIV to Sweeney's suicide and relentlessly pursues new leads to the detriment of his family life.

Award-winning writer and mentor figure, Father Joseph Ennis (Hugh Quarshie), is invited to speak at the seminary. Daniel arrives late and sits in the congregation hoping to go unnoticed and listens to the writer whom he admires. Rector Cahill, who ordered his dismissal from the seminary, demands he leaves the talk and confronts him. He refuses and causes a disruption, while Ennis demands he should have his say. Daniel points out Cahill's unfair dismissal of himself and Noel. Bishop Quinn storms out of the seminary hall followed by Rector Cahill who he berates for letting the situation get out of hand.

Later that day Joseph Ennis and Father Dowling meet with Daniel in a local seaside café to discuss the day's events and his best course of action. They encourage Daniel to speak to the press to help his case for re-instatement and although Daniel is reticent at first, he eventually agrees to speak to David Foley to break the conspiracy of silence enforced by the church.

Later that night, Daniel runs into his old love Sinead (Catherine Walker) at the local dancehall. He is drawn into a local bar room brawl and she comes to his rescue. Events progress and later that night Daniel and Sinead make passionate love admitting they are no longer able to deny their true feelings for one another.

Foley is put in touch with Father Matthew Francis, who has now decided he must go on the record to speak about the hypocrisy of the church. He asks if Francis is aware of Frank having an affair with someone high up at the Vatican, which Matthew denies but reveals that he was in a relationship with Frank. He claims that although he has left the priesthood, he has not lost his faith and recounts their time in Rome a few years previous to Frank's suicide. Flashback to Vatican Scenes. Francis then reveals that later a sympathetic photographer had sent Frank the image of his hands on the car with 'The Church Has Aids' inscribed on them. Matthew gives this photograph to David Foley.

On behalf of the Catholic Church, Monsignor Thomas (Fintan McKeown) confronts Jim O'Brien (James Ellis), editor of The Galcranagh Gazette, warning him not to run further stories on the incident. Later that day whilst in the car with Daniel, Foley notices his car is being followed. Daniel jumps out of the car to give chase to the driver, who speeds away.

Foley pours over his latest article on his computer. O'Brien confronts Foley in the office and tells him he cannot run his next piece on the dead priest and the controversy surrounding it. They men argue and Foley storms out with the disk containing the story in his hand. O'Brien reads the hard copy of the story left on Foley's desk and having a change of heart calls the editor of The Irish Times, encourages him to run the piece and faxes it through. The piece runs in The Irish Times the next day and sends shock waves through the community and the seminary.

Bishop Quinn meets with Monsignor Thomas and Father Hennessy (Christopher Dunne) to discuss The Irish Times leak. Monsignor Thomas states that he had warned O'Brien, who promised not to run anything. Confusion as to the source of the piece continues.

Quinn demands that all information that can be used against the McLaughlin and Foley family is dug up and used to ensure Rome does not become involved.

After the fight with his editor the previous night, Foley awakes to find his wife Liz and daughter gone. Daniel calls him to alert him to the article in The Irish Times, which he has no knowledge of.

Bishop Quinn summons Dowling to his office to inform him he is being forcefully transferred to another parish. Dowling questions Bishop Quinn and Cahill over their behaviour towards Daniel and comments about Quinn's questionable dealings with Father Sweeney. Cahill states his conscience is clear. Quinn remains impassive and silent.

Later the next day Joseph Ennis gives Matthew Francis a letter Frank Sweeney had entrusted him with just before his death. Francis reads the letter and breaks down.

Quinn decides that he will confront Foley on a live TV debate held in Dublin with Father Thomas. Foley leaves for Dublin after receiving a threatening silent phone call.

After the shockwaves of The Irish Times article, chaos ensues in the McLaughlin Family. Daniel's father John and mother Annie (Brenda Fricker) condemn his newly rekindled relationship with Sinead and his father becomes embittered when his claim for a European grant is denied. A fight between the McLaughlin family members explodes which is broken up just in time.

The next day, as technicians prepare for the live broadcast Bishop Quinn confronts Daniel for his co-operation with the press. He attempts to bribe Daniel with re-instatement to the seminary if Daniel admits he behaved inappropriately. He also mentions that he could have his Father's grant application reconsidered if he were to not appear on the show. Foley receives the burnt remains of his daughter's doll with a phone number attached to its dress. Furious, he rings the number and is told the safety of his wife and daughter will be threatened unless he retracts everything.

As the TV programme begins, all of Galcranagh watches intently. Talk Show host (Gay Byrne) speaks to Foley who stalls and is obviously shaken from the threatening phone call and its implications. Daniel and the show audience are left puzzled at Foley's silence. As Foley continues to stall, Daniel is brought into the debate not only questioning celibacy, but also claiming he wants to be a priest and marry the woman he loves (Sinead). He then questions Bishop Quinn in regards to whether he leads a celibate lifestyle. Quinn hedges in answering this and as he does this, Matthew Francis stands up and with great emotion reads Father Sweeney's suicide letter. The letter details an affair in Rome between Father Sweeney and Bishop Quinn and Quinn's subsequent blackmail threats should Sweeney not continue this relationship back in Ireland. Matthew Francis breaks down and Bishop Quinn storms out of the studio. The studio guests are left speechless at the poignant events that have unfolded in front of them.

In the beauty of the natural countryside of Galcranagh and below the Cross erected in a local field, Sinead and Daniel embrace and declare their undying love for one another.

Conspiracy Of Silence

Production Notes

Set in modern day Ireland, *Conspiracy Of Silence* is a controversial thriller inspired by real-life events surrounding the Catholic Church. Based on the shockwaves sent through a small community after the suicide of a local priest, *Conspiracy of Silence* highlights the debate on the relevance of celibacy in the Catholic Church and the struggle that faces a church in need of reform in the twenty first century. Written and directed by John Deery and produced by Davina Stanley, the film is a collaborative project that has been nurtured through several years of development.

John Deery's initial inspiration for writing the script was his Catholic faith and the debate surrounding the relevance of the Catholic Church leading up to the new millennium. After completing a Guardian screenwriting course, he began researching the project "like a journalist", meeting and speaking to priests and organisations in the UK and Ireland." Some of the events and characters in the film are based on real people I have met. They have asked me to respect their anonymity. For dramatic reasons I have made changes to these events in order to make a story that people could identify with." John says. John was compelled to write the script on several levels but mostly as it was "a real labour of love." He continues, "All first films are mountains, but this is a particularly high one and I'm sure it's not the sort of film a lot of first time directors would chose due to the controversial nature of its subject matter. I would not have gotten through this had I not been absolutely committed and passionate about it. Something inside me compelled me to write it."

Central to the issues of the script itself were celibacy in the priesthood and the two-tier system that has been set up within the Catholic Church. Although Anglican priests are allowed to join the Catholic Church as priests with wives, those brought through the Catholic Church as priests have to take a vow of celibacy. Deery states, "As a practicing Catholic myself, I believe we have to look at the notion of celibacy, because celibacy is the single issue that will destroy the Catholic Church in the twenty first century. A lot of priests are either practising heterosexuality or homosexuality." The Vatican brought celibacy into the priesthood in the Twelfth Century, thus preventing priests leaving land or money to their first-born and ensuring a power base for the church as a whole. Deery continues, "Eleven hundred years after Christ, priests were allowed to be married and then the Vatican decided that was the end of it. For political reasons I would argue that they brought this in for power and money."

The Catholic Church, although the biggest church in the world, has lost over 100,000 priests in the last 25 years. For the first time in it's history, in the year 2000, there was no intake in seminaries in Ireland. Although he feels a debate is timely for the survival of the church, John still believes passionately about the positive nature of the church. "The fundamentals of the teachings of Christ as taught through Catholicism: purity, love, and unselfishness, are a great way to live your life in practice" comments Deery. He states, "I certainly think my experience of Catholic priests and of practicing Catholics has been positive. I think there is a lot of good on the ground, but the politics higher up with the Vatican and the way it conducts itself: the money and the opulence, need to be looked at.

You've got money, power and wealth and if you add the suppression of human nature there is a huge amount of hypocrisy that goes on."

He concludes, "I think it would be a great shame that through hypocrisy, abuse of power, wealth and money, that the Catholic Church implodes and destroys itself."

Central to the making of the film made was the intensive development process, which was led by producer Davina Stanley. Davina worked on developing the project for over two years with John and comments on the creative process, "I was instrumental in focusing John's mind towards a finished product that would be both a well rounded story and engage an audience. I'm very much a storyteller and an ideas person." John comments, "The whole development process took five years, which at times was both an arduous undertaking as well a huge personal and financial risk. We decided to do what a lot of people don't do in the British film industry, and that was to hire a drama script editor. We chose Christopher Penfold from ScriptWorks, who was instrumental in focusing the core story of celibacy. In the end we created a multi-layered story and it was a tremendous learning curve for me as a writer".

Conspiracy Of Silence went on to win the Hartley-Merrill International Screen Writing Award 2001, given to an outstanding script and chosen from over 2000 submissions from 16 different countries. As a result of this award it was developed further as a part of The Sundance Screenwriters' Lab and John states, "It was an endorsement of the project, a tremendous boost and most importantly was instrumental in the financing of the film."

Davina has a very close working relationship with Deery and has commented, "Working with John is an absolute joy because he is so open and listens to everyone around him. I feel in working with him, I have worked with someone who listened and took on board what I had to say and we worked together as a team. He is totally collaborative in every way."

Because the project was so personal to both John and Davina, it was crucial that the key cast reflected the requirements of the script closely. Stanley states that they cast the actors that would, "reflect the true nature of the characters, rather than who would draw in the box office alone." Deery continues, "I agree with Robert Altman who says that if he gets the casting right he can sit back and enjoy the show. 90 per cent of this film is in the casting and the other 10 per cent on the day is just me fine tuning of performances for camera."

Jim Norton was cast to play the role of Bishop Quinn, the local Bishop in the centre of the controversial events. Formerly best known for his roles in Sam Peckinpah's *Straw Dogs* and Tony Kaye's *American History X* as well as classic television performances in *Father Ted* and Simon Massey's *Ballykissangel*, John and Davina realised straight away he was perfect for the role. Stanley comments that, "His character is very intelligent, very controlled and has a lot of depth behind his eyes. Jim has all these qualities and he doesn't have to speak to express the sentiments of the character that are running through his head." Deery continues, "Quinn has a coldness and callousness about him, he represents more of the politics of the church as opposed to the caring nurturing side. Jim has an incredible acting ability and can tap into something fearsome and frightening without having to say too much."

Norton was drawn to the role on several levels. He felt that the script itself was a very well written thriller. Jim also enjoyed the challenge of bringing humanity to what is essentially a very bad character stating, “The system that allows him to behave in the way he does is the real baddy. Although there’s the element of the psychopathic in Quinn, he wants to bury the fact that he is living a lie and is very much in denial.”

Having come from an Irish Catholic background himself, Norton has an intrinsic knowledge of the political issues raised in the film. “Priests are fallible human beings and at times it seems the church is selective in choosing to show mercy to it’s own flock. Celibacy leads to all sorts of psychological and physical problems and eventually I don’t think it leads to emotionally healthy people,” says Norton. Jim thoroughly enjoyed working on the film and has stated, “There’s an old adage in our business that preparation is all and John has done a tremendous amount. There’s no question in regards to your character that he doesn’t have an answer for or isn’t prepared to discuss and in addition to this the script is an amazing story of real events happening around us today that effect our lives whether we realise it or not. *Conspiracy of Silence* is a fascinating thriller that gives the chance for good acting and writing to shine through.”

John Lynch was then cast to play Father Matthew Francis, a priest who is openly homosexual and has left the church, as he is sickened by the way the church has buried the issue of celibacy and the suicide of his partner Father Frank Sweeney. Lynch is remembered for his starring roles in films such as *Sliding Doors* directed by Peter Hewitt, John Sayles’ *The Secret of Roan Inish* and *Best* directed by Mary McGuckian.

Lynch has stated on his interest in the film, “ I was very attracted to the power of the script, the power of the story and to the strength of Francis’s faith. Priests in general do a tremendous amount of good work and have recently been under tremendous pressure.” He feels his character is torn with, “the constrictions and restrictions he found within the priesthood. On one hand preaching love acceptance and tolerance but on the other seeing that in practice this is often patiently not the case.” He continues, “ I suppose on a deep level this doesn’t tally with what he feels Christianity and Catholicism should be about. Ultimately he really believes that faith and the love of God means tolerance with all things and in all people. Eventually he could not equate or marry this discrepancy within himself and feels that he must leave the church.”

Davina comments that Lynch brought to the role a sensitive quality, “ akin to a wounded animal that has suffered a great injustice and has suffering almost sewn on his face.” Deery continues to state, “ John has an incredible depth and humanity about him, and it’s this deep soul and sadness that he brings to Father Matthew Francis. It was a great thrill for me to work with an actor of his calibre. Lynch was impressed by John Deery’s “quiet and sure nature” and especially the strength of the script which he felt, “ captured a strong sense of the Irish community and all the multi-layered qualities this represented, including boisterousness, passion, violence, power and faith.” On this issue raised in the film Lynch comments, “ I think celibacy is something that needs to be looked at and a greater tolerance must take root in the church. I think this is a very good opportunity for the church at the beginning of the new millennium to re-assess this.”

Central to the script is the role of Daniel McLaughlin, played by newcomer Jonathan Forbes. Jonathan appears in his first starring role in *Conspiracy of Silence*, having first acted in film in a supporting role in John Forte’s *Mad About Mambo*. Forbes himself characterises Daniel as, “ A very good example of what the church should be and the sort

of character that would attract young people to return to the church. He's passionate about life and has a genuine spiritual calling." John Deery sees the character of Daniel as, "Representing all things to all men, combining innocence and intellectual ability but not someone who is too good or pure." Davina was impressed with Jonathan's ability to "both create a new character and carry the film". On his working relationship with Deery, Jonathan states that he is, "open minded and very easy to work with. The script was very strong and it's strength came from its simplicity. The more we worked with the script the more impressed I was at the power at its core."

Forbes was moved by the themes of the film, which he sees as, "a very earnest question rather than someone pointing a finger in an accusatory fashion."

Jason Barry plays David Foley, the journalist who uncovered the death of Father Sweeney and opens a can of worms in his local community. Remembered for his roles in James Cameron's *Titanic* and *Noose* directed by Ted Demme, Barry was attracted to the role because of the realism of the character. He states, "He's the kind of guy who's still young enough to dream about working for The Irish Times, he's always looking for the next story, the next scoop. I'm fascinated by journalists and policemen because it's real, you are creating a realism from everyday life." Davina comments that Jason brought believability to the role as well as "an incredible depth". Deery feels the character of David Foley is 'a big fish in a small town. He's got integrity and ambition but often at the expense of his family life.' Barry found his working relationship with Deery and Stanley very refreshing stating, "John Deery used to be an actor and he really understands actors. He's willing to listen to ideas and change dialogue, which is fantastic. His energy on set is incredible and I can understand the incredible pride he feels in the project." Jason is from an Irish Catholic background himself and is very vocal on the issues raised in the film. "These stories have to be told, it will probably cause a lot of trouble when the film comes out, but it will be the right kind of trouble. The Catholic Church has changed from an institution of great power to a joke. Ireland is such a young country, the church's outdated ideals are becoming a bit of a laughing stock. People do still want religion, but one that's user friendly. Sadly, for the young people today church is a nightclub and God is a DJ," he says.

Cast as Father Dowling, Hugh Bonneville sees his character as, "a liberal voice within the seminary and all too aware that the church is losing its grip on the congregation." A mentor figure for many of the younger seminarians, Father Dowling has a very important role in encouraging Daniel to question his expulsion from the seminary. Previously known for his roles in *Notting Hill* directed by Roger Michell and Richard Eyre's *Iris*, Hugh was immediately drawn to the provocative subject matter and the fact his character in his own words, "is a great spiritual man with a deep faith and calmness about him. He's incredibly passionate and I was very drawn to his benign qualities. I enjoy the challenge of working on a nice character, as they are often difficult; they say the devil always has the best tunes." Bonneville was impressed by the script and experience of working on the film and comments, "The writing is very direct and the arguments about celibacy and all the issues in the film are very concise. What I really responded to with John was his willingness to allow actors to bring their own qualities to the piece ensuring they are a lot more than just mouthpieces of argument. You can tell he's put his heart and soul into the film, and this gives a terrific atmosphere on set." In terms of the film itself, Bonneville feels it, "serves to bring up debate but doesn't suppose to answer all the questions. It highlights the debate whilst telling a really good

story. The film highlights the fact that faith is vital and it's not faith that's the problem, but the structure that it works within."

Sean McGinley, known for his performances in Michael Winterbottom's *The Claim* and Neil Jordan's *The Butcher Boy*, was cast as Rector Cahill, the public face of the seminary and in a position of authority within the church structure. Deery feels this character is focal as he represents the modern church's dilemma. "Cahill knows that change has to come about in order to keep the Catholic Church alive but can't quite bring himself to support that change," says Deery. With the combination of, "both a menacing quality and an incredible vulnerability which gives him a great presence on camera." McGinley was an obvious casting choice in this pivotal role. Sean was drawn to the role as he states,

"People of my generation who rejected the church also threw out the baby with the bathwater in terms of spirituality, and this has cut off a lot of people from healthy questioning which this film represents. I think it's important that this story is told." He continues, "The tragedy of all this is there are so many decent people in the church, who teach and really try to make a difference. Ironically, instead of the priesthood being an institution that embraces the world in practice it is the exact opposite: a gradual shutting out of the world and a narrowing view of life." On the making of the film he comments, "It's all very grown up and I was very impressed with John Deery's sincerity and passion. He's been profoundly affected by the stories he's heard from priests and organisations close to the subject matter and has taken on the responsibility to try and tell these stories correctly and faithfully through the film."

Conspiracy Of Silence was shot on location in London and Cornwall. Producer Davina Stanley was drawn to the similarity between Callington in Cornwall and small working towns in Ireland. Through painstaking research the locations team ensured that all pub signs and town landmarks were in keeping with contemporary Ireland. The production was also shot in the Painted Hall at the Royal Naval College in Greenwich, which served as an accurate double for Vatican Scenes. Coined 'The finest dining hall in the Western World', The Painted Hall originates from the court of King William and is adorned by the celebrated murals of painter James Thornhill.

John Deery hopes the film will have a wide appeal as it includes, "The universal themes of love, betrayal, joy and hypocrisy that we can all relate to as people. My job as a writer is to find that common denominator and weave real life events into an engaging narrative thread." He continues, "I think the film works on several levels as a love story, political commentary and as a thriller. Davina Stanley believes the film will draw in a very wide audience stating, "it is a film that will attract people of lots of different levels. It's a great love story, thriller and deals with issues that are very pertinent to all of our lives."

When asked to encapsulate the film's essence Deery states, "The film can be summed up in a few short words: Daniel loves the church, he also loves Sinead - he can't have both. The core of this is celibacy. When you suppress human nature and human sexuality it has to come out some other way. When you are in a position of authority the inevitable consequence of this is hypocrisy."

As *Conspiracy Of Silence* deals with direct comment on the current state of the Catholic Church, their official reaction to the film is awaited with interest. "I think by now the powers that be in the Catholic Church have the script. I know for a fact that within the

Vatican there are people who want change, I've had a couple of calls from people who are part of the Vatican who have said they support what I am saying in the script 100% and want change to be brought about" says Deery. Davina Stanley expands on this stating, " People can see this film as an attack on The Catholic Church. Or they can see it as it actually is, a film about hope. There are lots of people within the Catholic Church that acknowledge the need for change and a need for open debate."

On his hopes for the eventual impact of the film Deery exclaims, "I'm not naïve enough to think because I've written and directed a film it will bring about huge change, but what it may do is make people think and question and add to the whole debate about celibacy."

Conspiracy of Silence hopes to shed light on the debate of celibacy and hypocrisy within the priesthood and the need for reform to ensure the survival of the Catholic Church in the twenty first century. It's compelling fiction, based on the very real crisis facing the church in a modern age.

Conspiracy of Silence

Cast List

Daniel	JONATHAN FORBES
David	JASON BARRY
Annie	BRENDA FRICKER
Father Dowling	HUGH BONNEVILLE
Father Francis	JOHN LYNCH
Bishop Quinn	JIM NORTON
Rector Cahill	SEAN MCGINLEY
Father Doherty	HARRY TOWB
Jim O'Brien	JAMES ELLIS
Father Joseph	HUGH QUARSHIE
John	NIALL O'BRIEN
Mary	CATHERINE CUSACK
Marie	ELAINE SYMONS
Sean	TOMMY CAREY
Niall	PAUDGE BEHAN
Liz	OLIVIA CAFFREY
Martha	ANNA ROSE FULLEN
Father Sweeney	PATRICK LYNCH
Monsignor Thomas	FINTAN McKEOWN
Father Hennessey	CHRISTOPHER DUNNE
Noel	OWEN McDONNELL
Paul	AIDAN O'HARE
Fitzpatrick	EDWARD MacLIAM
Michael	CIARAN MURTAGH
James	CHRISTOPHER O'DOWD
Molly	LILLIAN PATTON
Sinead	CATHERINE WALKER
Mrs McGlynn	NUALA WALSH
Sergeant O'Donnell	TAYLOR McAULEY
Mickey	PATRICK DUGGAN
Majella	SINEAD KEENAN
Liam	JASON KAVANAGH
Declan	BRENDAN McNAMARA
Mrs McDermott	CARMEL CRYAN
Donal	KEVIN McMAHON
Joe	SID RAINEY
Gay Byrne	AS HIMSELF
TV Director	FERGAL SPELMAN
Assistant Floor Manager	JUSTINE MITCHELL
Professor O'Connor	PATRICK WALDRON
Big Huey	JIM LITHERLAND
Drums	LES BINKS
Keyboards	FRANCIS HAINES

Conspiracy of Silence

Cast Biographies

JONATHAN FORBES (Daniel McLaughlin)

Conspiracy Of Silence marks Jonathan Forbes' first starring role in a feature film. Previously he has appeared in a supporting role in the Irish film *Mad about Mambo*, directed by John Forte. This talented actor has worked on several radio programmes on RTE Radio, including *Children of No Importance*, *The Octoroon*, and *Immortal Longings*. He was awarded the 2001 Carleton Hobbs Prize for his work with the BBC Radio Rep. Jonathan's television work includes the American series *The Magnificent Ambersons* directed by Alfonso Arau and the BBC's adaptation of *Les Miserables*.

JASON BARRY (David Foley)

Jason Barry's film credits include *Noose* directed by Ted Demme and David Keating's *Last of the High Kings*, *Circle of Friends* directed by Pat O'Connor and *Titanic* directed by James Cameron. Jason has also starred in a selection of diverse theatre and television roles. Barry's television credits include *Unsuitable Job for a Woman*, *EastEnders* produced by the BBC, and *The Bill* produced by Thames Television. His theatre career began with the production of *Betrays* performed in the Dublin Youth Theatre. Soon after this he performed in *Love's Labours Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Gate Theatre in Dublin.

BRENDA FRICKER (Annie McLaughlin)

Brenda Fricker's film credits include *Resurrection* directed by Andrew Eaton, *A Time to Kill* directed by Joel Schumacher, Anna Benson Gyles' *Swann*, Pen Densham's *Moll Flanders* and *A Man of No Importance* directed by Suri Krishnamma. Brenda's performance in Jim Sheridan's *My Left Foot* earned her an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress in 1990 and led her to team up with Sheridan again in the film *The Field*. Fricker has worked on several television projects; her most recent works include the mini series *Cinderella and Me* and *Torso*. Brenda is still remembered for her performance of Nurse Roache in the BBC's *Casualty*.

HUGH BONNEVILLE (Father Dowling)

Some of Hugh Bonneville's most notable films include Kenneth Branagh's *Frankenstein*, *Tomorrow Never Dies* directed by Roger Spottiswoode, *Notting Hill*, directed by Roger Michell and *Mansfield Park* directed by Patricia Rozema. Bonneville's most recent work can be seen in *Iris* directed by Richard Eyre. He has also starred in Mel Smith's *High Heels Low Life* and *Blow Dry* directed by Paddy Breathnach.

Bonneville's television credits include *The Cazalets* directed by Suri Krishnamma, Nic Hurren's *Take a Girl Like You*, Tim Fywell's *Madame Bovary* and Dermot Boyd's *Eastenders*, all produced by the BBC. Hugh's theatre work includes *Habeas Corpus* and *The Alchemist* directed by Sam Mendes at The Donmar Warehouse.

JOHN LYNCH (Father Matthew Francis)

John Lynch's film credits include *Hardware* directed by Richard Stanley, *The Secret Garden* directed by Agnieszka Holland, *In the Name of the Father* directed by Jim Sheridan, John Sayles' *The Secret of Roan Inish*, and *Angel Baby* directed by Michael Rymer. Lynch also starred in Peter Hewitt's *Sliding Doors* and *Best* directed by Mary McGuckian. Lynch's television credits include *Peak Practice* and *The Drew Carey Show*. His theatre credits include *Hamlet* directed by Fiona Shaw, *The Tempest* and *The Seagull* directed by Charles Sturridge, performed at The Lyric Hammersmith.

JIM NORTON (Bishop Quinn)

Jim Norton's film credits include *Memoirs of an Invisible Man* directed by John Carpenter, Sam Peckinpah's *Straw Dogs*, *Face of Fu Manchu* directed by Don Sharp, and Tony Kaye's *American History X*. Norton's most recent television acting includes *Ballykissangel*, directed by Simon Massey, Brain Parker's *The Bill*, Declan Lowney's *Father Ted* and *Love Joy* for the BBC. Jim has also made several notable television guest appearances including Father Matthew Corlon in *Peak Practice*, Narn Image in *Babylon 5*, F.I.G. Newton in *Rumpole of the Bailey* and Albert Einstein in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Jim has also worked at the Royal National & Lyric Theatre where he performed in *Chorus of Disapproval*, directed by Alan Ayckbourn.

SEAN MCGINLEY (Rector Cahill)

Sean McGinley's film credits include *The Claim* directed by Michael Winterbottom, *Angela's Ashes* directed by Alan Parker and Neil Jordan's *The Butcher Boy* and *Michael Collins*. In addition, McGinley acted in Mel Gibson's *Braveheart*, *Simon Magus* directed by Ben Hopkins, *Resurrection Man* directed by Mark Evans, and *The Field* directed by Jim Sheridan. Sean also has extensive experience in television and theatre. His television work includes *Cold Feet* and *Midsummer Murders*. McGinley's theatre work includes *The Iceman Cometh* performed in the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, and *A Long Day's Journey into Night* performed at the Abbey Theatre and The National Theatre.

HUGH QUARSHIE (Father Joseph)

Hugh Quarshie's film credits include *It Was an Accident* directed by Metin Hüseyin, *To Walk With Lions* directed by Carl Schulz and George Lucas' *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace*. Quarshie's many television credits include *Jason and the Argonauts* directed by Steve Barron, Paul Greengrass's *Murder of Stephen Lawrence*, *Titus Andronicus* directed Jane Howell and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by Elijah Moshinsky. Hugh has also made many notable television guest appearances including *Red Dwarf* and *Rumpole of the Bailey*.

CATHERINE CUSACK (Mary McLaughlin)

Catherine Cusack's film credits include *Boxed* directed by Marion Comer, *HO HO HO* directed by J.J. Keith and Juliette Maeve's *Dressing for Breakfast*. Catherine's most recent television appearances have been in *Ballykissangel* and *Cadfael*. Cusack's theatrical performances include *Our Lady of Sligo* directed by Jenny Darnell, *Mrs Warren's Profession* directed by Neil Barlett and John Dove's *Prayers of Sherkin* performed at The Old Vic. She has also appeared in *The Seagull* directed by Lindsay Posner, Robin Lefevre's *Poor Beast in the Rain*, David Levaux's *Les Liasons Dangereuses* and *The Hostage* directed by Nicholas Kent.

CATHERINE WALKER (Sinead)

Catherine Walker is making her film debut with *Conspiracy of Silence*. Catherine's television credits include *The Favourite* directed by John McKay and John Schlesinger's *Sweeney Todd*. Much of Catherine's body of work is in the theatre with two seasons at *The Royal Shakespeare Company*. Her theatre credits include *Richard II* directed by Stephen Pimlott, *Henry V* directed by Ed Hall and *King Lear* directed by Alan Stanford. Catherine has also performed in *Stairs to the Roof* directed by Lucy Bailey and *Blood* directed by Patrick Sutton.

PATRICK CASEY (Father Sweeney)

Patrick Casey's film credits include *The Killing Zone* directed by Ian David Datz, Dervela Walsh's *Cosa Nite*, *The Sweet Life* directed by Nick McCann, *To Kill A Nonce* directed by Heinrich Skistorm and Sir Peter Hall's *Jacob*. Casey's television credits include *The Cloning of Joanna May*, produced by Granada TV directed by Philip Glass, Frank Deasy's *The Courier* and Carlton TV's *Inspector Wexford Mysteries* directed by Mary McMurray.

GAY BYRNE (As Himself)

Legendry Irish chat show host Gay Byrne plays himself for the first time on screen. He hosts a TV debate on the relevance of celibacy in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Conspiracy of Silence

Crew Biographies

JOHN DEERY (Writer-Director)

John Deery is making his Writer-Director film debut with *Conspiracy of Silence*, the script of which won him the *Hartley-Merrill International Screenwriting Award* in 2001. In the same year he was also awarded a fellowship from the *Sundance Screenwriters' Lab* to further develop the screenplay in Utah.

Originally trained as an actor, John has worked up through the film industry to first assistant director, working with a number of notable directors including Hugh Hudson, Gerard de Thame and Stephen Poliakoff. Deery has also completed the *National Film and Television School's Short Course Unit for Directors* and three screenwriting courses. Due to talent and experience he is a commissioned writer for Elton John's *Rocket Pictures*. Deery's previous credits include writing, producing and directing films for the Labour Party, most notably the film that launched Labour's 1997 General Election campaign. He has also made films for some of the UK's largest unions including; Unison, T&GWU, MSF and the TUC. In addition, John made a documentary film for Japanese broadcaster, NHK, about the current situation in Northern Ireland.

Conspiracy of Silence is the first film to be made through John's production company, *Flick Features*, based in London.

DAVINA STANLEY (Producer)

Davina Stanley started her theatre career whilst still at university, working as a producer on Bob Fosse's *Chicago*, a co-production with the Bristol Old Vic. Her work in film started with the short film *Election* and working as Commissioning Editor on *I-dent Magazine*. Davina's work as commissioner continued in her appointment as programmer for the *London International Film Festival*. Working for the *Jewish Film Foundation* as executive director she worked with Michael Grade, Alan Yentob, Sir Jeremy Issacs and Dominique Green and served as the *British Film Institute's* director of *The London Jewish Film Festival* for three years. After working as development producer for various independent London-based film companies, Davina went on to found her own company, *Mogirl Films* in 1997. *Conspiracy of Silence* is the first feature to go into production from a modest slate of three.

JASON LEHEL (Director of Photography)

Jason Lehel has worked in the film industry since 1977, getting his first break as director of photography shooting additional material on the film *Gorillas in the Mist* directed by Michael Apted. As DoP, one of the short films Jason worked on, *The Childeater*, directed by Jonathan Tammuz, was nominated for an Oscar and another short film, *The Harmfulness of Tobacco*, won 1992's BAFTA award for Best Short Film. Jason also received much acclaim for his photography on *Robin Hood* for Twentieth Century Fox and Working Title. In addition to these awards Jason has also worked extensively in commercials and was awarded a *Bronze Arrow* at the 1995 British Television Advertising Awards.

JAMIE TREVILL (Editor)

Jamie Trevill has been working in the Film & TV industry for fourteen years. He started his career at Ealing Film Studios with the BBC and graduated from The National Film School. *Conspiracy of Silence* is Jamie's fifth feature film he has also cut numerous TV productions and short films. Feature credits include "Another Life" directed by Philip Goodhew. Jamie also edited "The Tichborne Claimant" which won the audience prize at the Edinburgh Film Festival and the short film "Punch" which won best film at the British Short Film Festival and was nominated for an Oscar for director David Yates.

SUSIE BRUFFIN (Casting Director-C.D.A)

Susie Bruffin started work as a Casting Director at Granada Television in Manchester. Her first project was *Coronation Street* and after doing many productions at Granada went to India to work on the prestigious dramas *Staying On* and *The Jewel In The Crown* by Paul Scott. Further work for Granada includes the *Sherlock Holmes* series starring Jeremy Brett, *Small World* and the comedy *Watching*. After leaving Granada, Susie has been involved in eighteen Catherine Cookson adaptations for television, *Bramwell*, *The Crow Road*, *My Fragile Heart*, *Messiah* and *Monarch Of The Glen*. Comedy includes *Pat and Margaret* and *Dinner Ladies* with Victoria Wood, *Sex and Chocolate* and *Murder Most Horrid* with Dawn French. Films include *Prisoner Of Honour* directed by Ken Russell, *Mister Johnston* directed by Bruce Beresford and Gavin Millar's *Complicity*.

JOHN EBDEN (Production Designer)

John Ebden's film credits include *Waking Ned* directed by Kirk Jones, *Dan Dare Pilot* directed by John Henderson, *The Pope Must Die* under the direction of Peter Richardson and Aki Kaurismaki's *Leningrad Cowboys Meet Moses*, *La Vie De La Boheme* and *I Hired A Contract Killer*. He again worked with Peter Richardson for the Channel Four Feature, *The Strike* that won the Best Comedy Golden Rose of Montreux.

John Ebden has also been involved in award winning commercial production. Gerard de Thame's *Mercedes* advertisement won the AICP Award in the Production Designer Category and Tony Kaye's *B.P.* (British Petroleum) advertisement won the D & AD Silver Award for outstanding Set Design.

SUZANNE CAVE (Costume Designer)

Conspiracy of Silence is Suzanne Cave's second feature in the capacity of costume designer, the first being *The Countess Cathleen*, directed by Paula Bergin. Suzanne has worked as a costume designer on several short films including that of BAFTA nominee for Best Short Film, 2000 - *The Tale of the Rat That Wrote*, directed by Billy O'Brien.

Suzanne's television credits include *The Cassidys*; a sitcom for RTE directed by Justin Miomikov and *Dance* – a film for the Channel 4 "Shockers" series, directed by Richard Clarke. Jason Byrne's *Hamlet* and Gavin Quinn's *The Four Note Opera* are among her theatre and opera credits. As Assistant Designer, Suzanne worked on *Plunkett and Maclean* directed by Jake Scott. Her television credits include *David Copperfield* directed by Peter Medek and *Ransom* under the direction of Graham Theakston.