



OFFICIAL SELECTION
COMPETITION
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

ROUTE IRISH

Directed by
KEN LOACH

Written by
PAUL LAVERTY

Produced by
REBECCA O'BRIEN

Starring
MARK WOMACK
ANDREA LOWE

Running time: 109 minutes

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A UK/France/Belgium/Italy/Spain Co-production

INTERNATIONAL PRESS

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ROUTE IRISH

Liverpool, August 1976. 5-year-old Fergus met Frankie on his first day at school. They've been in each others' shadow ever since. As teenagers they skipped school and drank cider on the ferry over the River Mersey, dreaming about travelling the world. Little did Fergus realise his dream would come true as a highly trained member of the UK's elite special forces, the SAS.

After resigning in September 2004, Fergus persuaded Frankie (by now an ex-Para) to join his security team in Baghdad. £10,000 a month, tax free. Their last chance to "load up" in this increasingly privatised war. Together they risked their lives in a city steeped in violence, terror and greed, and awash with billions of US dollars. In September 2007, Frankie died on Route Irish, the most dangerous road in the world. Back in Liverpool, a grief-stricken Fergus rejects the official explanation, and begins his own investigation into his soul mate's death.

Only Rachel, Frankie's partner, grasps the depth of Fergus's sorrow, and the lethal possibilities of his fury. As Fergus tries to find out what happened to Frankie on Route Irish, he and Rachel grow closer. As he approaches the truth behind Frankie's death, Fergus struggles to find his old self and the happiness he shared with Frankie twenty years earlier on the Mersey.

INTRODUCTION

PAUL LAVERTY – Writer

We are all familiar with the ritual of the body of a dead soldier returning from foreign soil: solemn music, the national flag, escorts and salutes recorded in detail by the nation's media. Words of consolation flow from politicians and generals to broken-hearted relatives, many so young they often clutch infants. It wasn't quite that way for Deely, the sister of Robert, an ex-Paratrooper who was ambushed in Iraq. He was flown back from Kuwait and arrived at Glasgow airport. The undertaker told Deely there were ten bodies on the plane that day, two of which were unidentifiable. Robert's coffin looked "like a big orange crate". There was no fanfare, no Union Jack, no journalists and not one question. His death, as far as we know, wasn't added to any list. The reason is simple. Robert was no longer a Paratrooper, but a private contractor. Some call them private soldiers, or Corporate warriors, or security consultants. Iraqis call them mercenaries.

The business of war is being privatised slowly and deliberately before our eyes. Robert's orange crate of a coffin tells us so, as do the statistics. Patrick Cockburn, a well respected commentator on Iraq, estimated that there were around 160,000 foreign contractors in Iraq at the height of the occupation, many of whom - perhaps as many as 50,000 - were heavily armed security personnel. The conduct of the war, and occupation afterwards, would have been impossible without their muscle.

Thanks to Paul Bremer, the US appointed head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, each and every one of those contractors was given immunity from Iraqi law in the shape of Order 17 which was imposed on the new Iraqi Parliament. (Order 17 lasted from 2003 till the beginning of 2009.)

Nobody is interested in counting how many Iraqi civilians have been killed or injured by private contractors, but there is a vast body of evidence to suggest that there has been widespread abuse. Blackwater's massacre of 17 civilians in the middle of Baghdad was the most notorious incident, but there were many more that went unreported. One senior contractor told me, on condition of anonymity, that he spoke to a South African who told him killing an Iraqi was just like "shooting a Kafir". Other bone fide contractors, proud of their professionalism, told me of their disgust at the violence of "the cowboys". If a contractor was involved in an incident which caused a fuss, they were whisked out of the country by their company. Impunity, by order.

While lowly contractors gambled with lives and limbs on Route Irish, the Chief executives of those same companies made fortunes. Mr David Lesar, chief executive of Halliburton, (former CEO being Dick Cheney) earned just under 43 million dollars in 2004. Mr Gene Ray of Titan earned over 47 million between 2004 and 2005. Mr JP London of CACI earned 22 million. The devil is always in the detail. Private contractors charged the US army up to 100 dollars to do a single soldier's laundry bag. In an official report dated January 2005, the Special Investigator General for Iraq Reconstruction Stuart Bowen revealed that over 9 billion dollars had disappeared in fraud and corruption, and that was only during a very limited period of the Provisional Authority. Financial impunity too.

As one contractor told me, the "place stank of money". Little wonder poorly paid soldiers and elite Special Forces left in such numbers to join these private military corporations, as they saw their chance of a lifetime "to load up".

These men "load up" with more than cash.

We are now used to seeing images of carnage and slaughter "over there." We are accustomed to stories of missing billions, corporate greed, abuse, torture, and secret prisons. *The Lancet's* detailed estimate of 654,965 dead as at June 2006 is almost beyond the mind's capacity to grasp. It all seems now at a safe distance in time and place. Iraq fatigue, we are told, is upon us.

But "over there" is on its way back home. Iraq is inside the heads of "our boys".

I was stunned to learn from the charity Combat Stress that deals with ex-soldiers suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome that on average, it takes approximately 17 years for PTSS to manifest itself. They are bracing themselves (as is the US army) for a massive surge in the years to come.

Norma, a gentle nurse on the point of retiring who had spent years with ex-soldiers, opened the way for this story when she told me "many of these men are in mourning for their former selves." An ex-soldier showed me a painting he had done of himself. "I just want my old self back."

Order 17 may have been revoked in Iraq but its spirit still reigns supreme: the stink of impunity, the lies, the contempt for international law, the undermining of the Geneva conventions, the secret prisons, the torture, the murder...the hundreds of thousands of dead. As I imagine the intellectual authors of the above, Bush, Blair, Rumsfeld and co, collecting their millions in after dinner speeches and setting up their interfaith foundations, I cannot help but think of the nurses in Falujah assisting the births of babies born with two heads and deformed faces thanks to the chemical bombs rained on that city. Our gift to the future.

So we wondered about Order 17 back home.

Iraq, in an English country garden.

PL – 11th May 2010.

KEN LOACH – Director

The challenge is always to find the microcosm that suggests the bigger picture: the unresolved conflict, the contradiction that, when explored, reveals the landscape.

REBECCA O'BRIEN – Producer

After LOOKING FOR ERIC we felt it was important to make something serious and uncompromising and our French partners on that film, Pascal Caucheteux at Why Not and Vincent Maraval at Wild Bunch, were willing to support us fully. It was excellent to be able to work with them again, the financing became simple and straight forward and it gave me the opportunity to concentrate on the production. Our other regular European partners came on board along with North West Vision in the UK.

We filmed in Jordan for the Iraq scenes – not only did The Royal Jordanian Film Commission prove very supportive in setting up the production but there are many Iraqi refugees there who were able to work with us as supporting cast. Their truly harrowing stories brought the truth of what we were filming into close perspective. It was a joy to work in Liverpool again – it's a really manageable city full of wily characters and charm.

FERGUS – Mark Womack

Ken has you do a lot of research. He'll have you meet a lot of people that might be similar to the character. You have a lot of conversations that might be useful and read a lot about the world the character lives in, so when the scenes are thrown at you, you've met contractors and heard all their stories and you can build the character from that. You also spend a lot of time with the characters you're going to work with and you bond with them. I went to army boot camp with John Bishop who plays Frankie and Trevor who plays Nelson, so I got to know them quite well. We were already comfortable with each other by the time it came to filming. I was upset on the first day to be told John was dead, I felt pretty much how I imagine it feels to lose a friend. John was great because he knew all along and he kept it quiet.

Fergus is on a path of self-destruction like many of the soldiers I met with combat stress. One of the guys I met said you go in the army and they turn you on, but nobody turns you off. How can you go from seeing what you've seen in Iraq and Afghanistan to shopping in Sainsbury's with the wife and kids. Some guys can adjust, but a lot of them can't.

RACHEL – Andrea Lowe

I'd seen most of Ken's films and I thought, like a lot of people perhaps, that they are improvisation based. But they're not, there's a beautiful script. Where the improvisation comes in is in the development of the character.

Sometimes you know parts of the script that the other actors don't, but you don't ask them and they wouldn't tell you because we all really enjoy the process. It ensures that your reactions are natural and keeps things fresh and spontaneous and so as an actor you don't over analyse. The essence of Ken's films is the truth in people and this film is about broken people.

When we were working on the back story we established that Rachel had met Fergus first and she's had a bit of a wild past and been into the music scene and travelled around a lot, she's just decided to become a personal trainer and she's into her yoga and they met in a gym. He's dark and moody and she would perhaps have gone for it with him in the past, but she's at a time in her life when that's not what she wants, so there's an unfulfilled attraction between them. Fergus introduces her to Frankie and she falls for him, he's big and light and fun. After Frankie dies, Fergus is in a dark place and can't let her in to save him. They can't rescue each other, it's tragic.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

FERGUS - Mark Womack

British actor Mark Womack is best known for his television roles, starring as DC Mark Callaghan in 'Liverpool 1' (1998), as Jack in 'Sorted' (2006) and also starring in Willy Russell's 'Dancin' Thru the Dark' (1990). Other television credits include 'Hillsborough', 'Moving On', 'Murphy's Law', 'Clocking Off' and 'Playing the Field'. 'Route Irish' is Mark's feature film debut. He will also be seen in the forthcoming thriller 'I Against I'.

RACHEL - Andrea Lowe

Andrea Lowe is a graduate of Goldsmiths College. 'Route Irish' is her first film. She has worked extensively in television, including roles in 'Silent Witness', 'The Unloved' (directed by Samantha Morton for Revolution/Channel 4), 'Shameless' (directed by David Threlfall for Company Pictures/Channel 4), 'The Tudors', 'The Bill', 'Coronation Street', 'Torchwood' and 'Where the Heart Is'.

FRANKIE - John Bishop

John Bishop is a stand-up comedian and Edinburgh Comedy Award (formerly the Perrier) nominee 2009, from Liverpool. He continues his sell out tour throughout the UK performing in large venues and arenas until 2011. His TV appearances include: 'Live at the Apollo' (BBC1), 'Friday Night with Jonathan Ross' (BBC1), 'Michael McIntyre's Comedy Roadshow' (BBC1), '8 out of 10 Cats' (Channel 4), 'Mock The Week' (BBC2) and 'Skins' (E4). More recently John joined sports show 'A League of their Own' as their regular panellist on Sky 1 and Sky HD. In November John's live DVD will be released.

WALKER - Geoff Bell

Bell has appeared in many films including 'Girl with a Pearl Earring' (2003), 'Stardust' (2007), and Guy Ritchie's 'RocknRolla' (2008). One of his best known roles is in 'Green Street', where he appeared as Tommy Hatcher, the main characters rival. Bell's television credits include 'The Long Firm' (2004) and 'Making Waves' (2004). He recently appeared as the sports teacher in 'Tormented' (2009) and he will also appear in the 2010 feature 'Wild Target' alongside Rupert Grint, Bill Nighy and Rupert Everett and also in 'The Heavy.' In spring 2010 Bell appeared in the BBC series 'Five Daughters' as DC Roy Lambert.

HAREM - Talib Rasool

Talib was born in Southern Kurdistan where he trained to be a teacher. He was a member of the Mesopotamia Music Group and as a singer he performed at festivals all over Kurdistan. In 2000 he sought asylum in the UK. 'Route Irish' is Talib's first acting role.

CRAIG - Craig Lundberg

On 22nd March 2007, Liverpoolian Corporal Craig 'Freddie' Lundberg, a sniper in The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, was serving his second tour of duty in Iraq. His platoon was part of an operation to arrest known insurgents in Basra when a neighbouring unit came under heavy attack. Craig and his men immediately tried to draw the enemy's fire.

In the fierce fighting that ensued, Craig took a direct hit in the chest from a rocket-propelled grenade. The impact shattered his left arm and sent razor-sharp fragments of burning shrapnel flying into his face.

Craig lost his left eye instantly and his right eye was damaged beyond repair. Incredibly, he tried to continue fighting: "I got up and demanded my rifle, but it had been bent by the force of the blast. My mate got me another rifle and I tried to carry on firing. But I only managed a few steps before I collapsed." Doctors couldn't save his sight and Craig was flown back to the UK knowing he would never see again. He plays football for England in the European Blind Football Championships and last October he climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro. 'Route Irish' is his first acting role.

NELSON - Trevor Williams

Trevor Williams has worked extensively on television over the past year – starting with appearances in 'Cold Feet', 'Clocking Off', 'The Cops' and more recently appearing in some of the best UK drama productions including 'The Street', 'Shameless', 'Coronation Street', 'Life on Mars' and 'Bradford Riots'. 'Route Irish' is his first feature film role.

HAYNES - Jack Fortune

Fortune has narrated many documentaries for Horizon (including the Emmy award-winning 'Fall of the World Trade Centre'), and other productions include 'Beslan' for 'Dispatches' and 'Wonders of the Solar System' for BBC World. His television appearances include the Channel 4 series 'Dunkirk', 'North Square', 'Doctors' and 'Casualty' for the BBC, 'Serious and Organised' for Company Television, 'Taggart' and 'To Play the King'. Theatre credits include the international and UK tours of the National Theatre of Scotland's 'Black Watch' and 'King Lear' at the Bristol Old Vic.

CREW FILMOGRAPHIES

KEN LOACH - Director

ROUTE IRISH (2010), LOOKING FOR ERIC (2009), IT'S A FREE WORLD (2007), THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY (2006), TICKETS (short film) (2004), AE FOND KISS (2003), 11'09'01 (short film) (2002), SWEET SIXTEEN (2002), THE NAVIGATORS (2001), BREAD AND ROSES (2000), MY NAME IS JOE (1998), CARLA'S SONG (1996), LAND AND FREEDOM (1995), LADYBIRD LADYBIRD (1994), RAINING STONES (1993), RIFF-RAFF (1991), HIDDEN AGENDA (1990), FATHERLAND (1986), LOOKS AND SMILES (1981), BLACK JACK (1979), THE GAMEKEEPER (1979), FAMILY LIFE (1971), KES (1969), POOR COW (1967)

REBECCA O'BRIEN – Producer

ROUTE IRISH (2010), LOOKING FOR ERIC (2009), IT'S A FREE WORLD... (2007), THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY (2006), TICKETS (2005), AE FOND KISS (2004), 11'09'01 (2002), SWEET SIXTEEN (2002), THE NAVIGATORS (2001), BREAD AND ROSES (2000), PRINCESA (2000), MY NAME IS JOE (1998), BEAN (1997), LAND AND FREEDOM (1995), HIDDEN AGENDA (1990), FRIENDSHIP'S DEATH (1987)

PAUL LAVERTY – Writer

ROUTE IRISH (2010), EVEN THE RAIN (2009), LOOKING FOR ERIC (2009), IT'S A FREE WORLD...(2007), THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY (2006), CARGO (2006), TICKETS (2005), AE FOND KISS (2004), 11'09'01 (2002), SWEET SIXTEEN (2002), BREAD AND ROSES (2000), MY NAME IS JOE (1998), CARLA'S SONG (1996)

GEORGE FENTON – Composer

Credits includes: BOUNTY HUNTER (2010), LOOKING FOR ERIC (2009), FOOL'S GOLD (2008), IT'S A FREE WORLD... (2007), THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY (2006), MRS HENDERSON PRESENTS (2005), AE FOND KISS (2004), SWEET HOME ALABAMA (2002), SWEET SIXTEEN (2002), MY NAME IS JOE (1998), THE CRUCIBLE (1996), LADYBIRD LADYBIRD (1994), LAND AND FREEDOM (1994), GROUNDHOG DAY (1992), THE FISHER KING (1991), DANGEROUS LIAISONS (1988), THE COMPANY OF WOLVES (1984)

CHRIS MENGES – Director of Photography

Director of Photography credits include: LONDON BOULEVARD (2010), THE READER (2008), NOTES OF A SCANDAL (2006), THREE BURIALS OF MELQUIADES ESTRADA (2005), THE GOOD THIEF (2002), DIRTY PRETTY THINGS (2002), THE BOXER (2007), MICHAEL COLLINS (1996), THE MISSION (1986), THE KILLING FIELDS (1984), LOCAL HERO (1983), KES (1970) Director credits include: SECOND BEST (1994), A WORLD APART (1988)

FERGUS CLEGG - Production Designer

LOOKING FOR ERIC (2009), IT'S A FREE WORLD... (2007), THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY (2006) Art Director credits: AE FOND KISS (2004), SWEET SIXTEEN (2002), THE NAVIGATORS (2001), MY NAME IS JOE (1998), CARLA'S SONG (1996), LADYBIRD LADYBIRD (1994), RAINING STONES (1993)

SARAH RYAN - Costume Designer

LOOKING FOR ERIC (2009), DONKEY PUNCH (2009), SUMMER (2008), DOWNTIME (1997)

JONATHAN MORRIS – Editor

ROUTE IRISH (2010), LOOKING FOR ERIC (2009), IT'S A FREE WORLD (2007), THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY (2006), TICKETS (short film) (2004), AE FOND KISS (2003), 11'09'01 (short film) (2002), SWEET SIXTEEN (2002), THE NAVIGATORS (2001), BREAD AND ROSES (2000), MY NAME IS JOE (1998), CARLA'S SONG (1996), LAND AND FREEDOM (1995), LADYBIRD LADYBIRD (1994), RAINING STONES (1993), RIFF-RAFF (1991), HIDDEN AGENDA (1990), FATHERLAND (1986)

CAST AND CREW LIST

Fergus	Mark Womack
Rachel	Andrea Lowe
Frankie	John Bishop
Walker	Geoff Bell
Haynes	Jack Fortune
Harim	Talib Rasool
Craig	Craig Lundberg
Nelson	Trevor Williams
Tommy	Russell Anderson
Jamie	Jamie Michie
Young Fergus	Bradley Thompson
Young Frankie	Daniel Foy
Marisol	Najwa Nimri
Frankie's Mother	Maggie Southers
David	R David
Andy	Anthony Schumacher
Undertaker	Gary Cargill
Peggy	Donna Elson
Steve	Stephen Lord
Jay	Jaimes Locke

and Natalie Flood, Andy Dwyer, Taban Othman, Ali Karami,
Nasredine Banda, Nick Baty

Yousef	Tayf Basil
Ranj	Ranj Hawra
Mother	Hind Kamil

and Malik Amir, Mohsen Fakhir, Aseel Salam, Kevin Burton,
Tagreed Asad, Omar Abdelazeez and Sajida Hassan

Director	Ken Loach
Screenplay	Paul Laverty
Producer	Rebecca O'Brien
Executive Producers	Pascal Caucheteux, Vincent Maraval
Production Designer	Fergus Clegg
Photography	Chris Menges
Recordist	Ray Beckett
Casting	Kahleen Crawford
Costume Designer	Sarah Ryan
Assistant Directors	David Gilchrist, Michael Queen
Locations	Claire Newton
Sound Editor	Kevin Brazier
Line Producer	Tim Cole
Editor	Jonathan Morris
Music	George Fenton
Stunt Co-ordinator	Paul Heasman
Stunt Performers	Kid Richmond, Barrett Snow (Jordan) Lee Sheward, Gordon Seed (UK)
Production Co-ordinator	Eimhear McMahon
Production	Loren McLaughlan, Sophie Agnew Owen Arnold, Danny Boocock
Casting Assistant	Caroline Stewart
Research	Ann Cattrall
3rd Assistant Director	Julie Heskin
Unit Manager	Mark Volante
Runner	Chris Cavanagh
Drivers	Keith Wignall, Paul Walker
Focus Puller	Carl Hudson
Clapper Loaders	Amaury Duquenne, Joachim Philippe
Camera Trainee	Ricky Mears
Additional Camera	Jason Bulley
Script Consultant	Roger Smith
Script Supervisor	Susanna Lenton
Stills Photographer	Joss Barratt

Gaffer	Lee Walters
Best Boy	Paul Sharp
Electricians	Laurent Van Eijs, Adam Walker
Boom Operator	Pete Murphy
Sound Assistant	Ric Perrin
Playback Technicians	Rick Bailey & Ben Hodkinson, Red Frog
Art Director	Grant Armstrong
Assistant Art Director	Julie Ann Horan
Prop Buyer	Anita Gupta
Prop Master	Colin Mutch
Dressing Props	Mark Reynolds
Standby Props	Ben Johnson
Armourers	Steve Wilkerson (Wilky)
Weapons Co-ordinator	Charlie Phillips, Perdix Firearms
Action Vehicle Co-ordinator	Neil Adams
SFX Supervisor	David Harris
SFX Senior Technician	Stuart Wishart
Construction Manager	Danny Sumsion
Carpenters	Alex Robertson, Colin Relph
Standby Carpenter	Mark Brady
Stagehand	Johnny Mellor
Painters	Paul Curren, Martin Feely
Make-up and Hair Designer	Carli Mather
Costume Supervisor	Sam Scragg
Dailies	Michael Biggam, Mark Garside, Lynn Gibson, Kay McIntosh, Victoria Yates, Chris Wanklyn, Mark Jones, Paul Taylor, Mark Burness, Antoine Doyen
Production Accountant	Tina Shadick
Assistant Accountants	Marc Grant, Habib Rahman
Auditor	Malde & Company
1st Assistant Editor	Anthony Morris

2nd Assistant Editor **Paul Clegg**
Sound Transfers **Steve Carr**
Effects Editor / Foley Recordist **Robert Brazier**
Dialogue / Foley Editor **Ben Brazier**
Foley Artists **Rowena Wilkinson, Sue Harding**
Re-recording Mixers **Ian Tapp, James Doyle**
Sound Mix Technician **Tim Siddall**

Paramedics **Mediprop**
Caterers **Michael Ross, Red Chutney**
Security **Keith Jenkins & Tony Molloy**
Travel Agents **Katie Grist, Alhambra Travel**

JORDAN UNIT
Production Services Supervisor **Linda Mutawi,**
The Royal Film Commission
Production Services Company **International Traders**

Production Manager **Fuad Khalil**
Production Co-ordinator **Reem Bandak**
Production Assistant **Ashraf Mezied**
Production Accountant **Maha Hanna**
Assistant Location Manager **Saeb Abu Al Ragheb**
3rd Assistant Director **Omar Sawalha**
Runner **Arifa Bseiso**
Best Boy **Jalal Khreisat**
Third Man **Maggie Kabariti**

Casting **Lara Atalla, Raya Hamdan, Basil Karim**
Art Department **Karim Kheir, Nasser Zoubi**
Construction **Samy Keilani, Samir Zeidan, Ashraf Ahmed Alnawai**
Wardrobe **Phaedra Dahdaleh, Abdel Rayyan**
Assistant Make Up **Reem Naber**

Transportation **Omar Ayesh, Omar Deeb (Abu Alaa), Nader Ayoub, Jihad Tamimi, Ahmad Smadi, Majdi Abdul Qader, Ziad Qariyouti**

Vehicle Coordinator **Garo Youmdjian**
Caterers **Wael Jabaji**
Locations Security **Abu Rashed**
First Aid Services **Civil Defence 19**

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Angel Recording Studios
Pro Tools **Mat Bartram**
Programmer **Leigh Lawson**

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Songs

‘Rocks’ performed by Primal Scream

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‘Baghdad’ performed by Talib Rasool

Composed and Arranged by Ilham al-Madfai, Lyrics by Nizar Qabbani

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Lawyers **Stephen Grosz, Bindman & Partners;
John Lafferty; Natalie Usher,
Lee & Thompson**

Insurance **Media Insurance Brokers**

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Lucy Borleteau**

For Wild Bunch **Marie Besançon, Emmanuelle Castro**

For Les Films du Fleuve **Delphine Tomson, Tania Antonioli,
Marie Schoenmaeckers**

For Vision+Media **Tara Cooke**

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Creative Partnership**

End Titles **Martin Bullard, Cineimage**

Laboratory **Color by Deluxe**

Neg Cutters **Professional Negative Cutting**

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