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*PRODUCER: Rob Cave*

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THE ATTACHED TRANSCRIPT WAS TYPED FROM A RECORDING AND NOT COPIED FROM AN ORIGINAL SCRIPT. BECAUSE OF THE RISK OF MISHEARING AND THE DIFFICULTY IN SOME CASES OF IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUAL SPEAKERS, THE BBC CANNOT VOUCH FOR ITS COMPLETE ACCURACY.

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Producer: Rob Cave

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URRY: The peace process in Northern Ireland is being questioned, following allegations that the IRA was behind the £26 million robbery of the Northern Bank in Belfast, and the murder of Robert McCartney outside a bar in the city. It's no longer the bullet and the bomb which gives paramilitary groups a stranglehold on the Province – it's organised crime. The British government has identified 85 top-level gangs, among them the more serious and dangerous groups, both Loyalist and Republican. Many have international links. The organisation behind the most sophisticated and most lucrative criminal enterprises is the Provisional IRA. We've been told that the expertise, which made it one of the world's most feared terrorist groups, has been put to use making money. We've also discovered it has developed links with criminal gangs in Britain to help distribute smuggled goods. Now the bombing has stopped, is a new Mafia the price to be paid for peace?

SIGNATURE TUNE

ACTUALITY IN CAR

MULHOLLAND: Just coming up, heading towards Securicor's site. You can see it in front of it. You've a power fence ...

URRY: That's electrified, is it?

MULHOLLAND: Electrified at the top. You can actually see the warning signs on the top. That's the outer fence. Just inside it you've an inner fence of about 12 feet with the spikes on the top. Security lighting and security cameras right round the perimeter.

URRY: It looks impressively secure, doesn't it?

MULHOLLAND: Yes, you can't really get much more secure.

URRY: The headquarters of Securicor in North Belfast, the province's largest cash delivery firm. Staff leave here in vans every day carrying millions of pounds to banks and cash machines. And it's after they do so they are vulnerable. Michael Mulholland, a union official, is concerned because his members are being robbed at gunpoint. Those who've experienced that are too frightened to speak out, so Mr Mulholland agreed to take us to some of the places it's been happening, sometimes twice in the same day.

#### ACTUALITY IN CAR

MULHOLLAND: We're just coming back down the M2, heading towards the city and towards the docks. This is the scene of one of the robberies just after Christmas. They were done within the space of an hour of each other. The suspicion is that it was the same group that carried out both attacks on the one day.

URRY: And there's the bank. It's a low, squat, pretty solid looking brick building, nothing particularly spectacular about it. It's actually quite small. So what actually happened on this site?

MULHOLLAND: The two Securicor operatives were hijacked and asked to hand over a sum of money.

URRY: This is the front of the bank now. Were they waiting out here or did they pull in?

MULHOLLAND: Yes, they were waiting out here.

URRY: What sort of firearms were there?

MULHOLLAND: It was handguns.

URRY: What sort of an effect does having a gun pulled on a person have then?

MULHOLLAND: You're left with the psychological effect of that attack, that memory. When you close your eyes, you try to relax and you get flashbacks and stuff like that.

URRY: Mr Mulholland says a third of staff are on what's called attack absence - too traumatised to return to work. He's worried someone will be killed. The latest government figures show there were nearly four hundred armed robberies on Securicor and the Post Office between 1998 and 2003. Since then there's been a fall in annual numbers, but Michael Mulholland has noticed a disturbing trend.

MULHOLLAND: The planning is better and the amount of money. They're not after your £1,000 or £2,000. They're actually into tens of thousands of pounds. It tells me that it is an organised campaign. I want security forces to divert some of the resources that they can kick into operation after an attack, after a major robbery, to investigate it. I want them to be more proactive and divert some of that to stopping or reducing the number of attacks in the future. There always has been in the past criminal activity carried out by paramilitary organisations. You just have to look at the methods that are used, the viciousness that's being used. It's moving on a step and it's taking it from the employees who, I would say, assume a certain amount of risk when they take the job with that company, but it's taking it to their families.

URRY: It's not just security staff being held at gunpoint - the Northern Bank job and a number of other recent large, well-organised robberies in the Province have focused concern. The police officer in charge of the Northern Bank investigation, Detective Superintendent Andy Sproule, accepts there's a problem.

SPROULE: I would hesitate to say that organised is endemic in Northern Ireland, but we do suffer from a legacy of terrorism. Terrorist infrastructures were ideally suited to organised crime, where you had intelligence gatherers, financiers and operational people to carry out the crime. People trust each other, they work on the need to know principle, that not everybody in the organisation needs to know everything that is going on. They are aware, forensically aware, of what police can do, so they try to remove all traces where they have been at particular crime scenes.

URRY: How much impact do you think you're making?

SPROULE: There are quite a number of gangs that have been significantly disrupted. Unfortunately, where a large investigation like the Northern Bank robbery, for example, a lot of resources are poured into that one investigation, and some of the other ongoing operations are put on the back burner for a while, until the main thrust of this robbery investigation is over.

URRY: It's become so serious, it's affecting day to day activity within the economy. One of Northern Ireland's biggest employers, tobacco manufacturer Gallaghers, has been targeted, and suffered major losses twice in sixteen months. A gang kidnapped the family of an employee at a warehouse, holding them at gunpoint and stealing £1 million worth of cigarettes and tobacco. And a lorry close to the border was robbed of another £1 million worth. Republican gangs are being blamed. After that, Gallaghers sent consignments from north to south by sea, via Liverpool, such was their concern. The company has also complained that security levels are too low. It's something Detective Superintendent Andy Sproule takes issue with.

SPROULE: Well that was a decision that was taken by the company.

URRY: Gallaghers seem to feel that it still isn't safe really, and it's not getting the protection that it feels it needs.

SPROULE: I haven't been in touch with Gallaghers on that particular one. We have worked fairly closely with Gallaghers on a number of other investigations, and that's what we will continue to do.

URRY: People that we speak to who represent staff on a company like Securicor are concerned that their members are not getting enough protection from the police service here.

SPROULE: Well, it is very difficult for the police service to follow every van that is making deliveries, and the individual security guards are vulnerable when they are walking from the van to the bank. It is a policing priority to protect the community, which we work very hard at doing, but we can't be everywhere all the time. What we have to try to do is concentrate what resources we have to the organised criminal gangs, and we are doing that.

URRY: The Northern Bank and three other large, well-planned and lucrative robberies are being blamed directly on the IRA. But that's just the tip of the iceberg. The IRA is making millions from smuggling, and we can reveal that's being done with the help of British gangsters.

#### ACTUALITY AT DOCKS

GODWIN: This is Ireland's premier port, which handles traffic from all over the world. Scale of movements through the port: approximately a million containers and freight vehicles we'd say per year, just over half a million incoming and just under half a million outgoing. So it's a huge logistical exercise certainly to control this level of movement. Dublin port deals with a number of UK ports like Liverpool and Holyhead. It also deals with Rotterdam, Antwerp, Felixstowe, Southampton.

URRY: Despite the volume of cargo, Customs Officers at Dublin docks have found amongst it a complex fraud - illicit fuel supplies hidden in lorry trailers known as tilts. The fraud works by tampering with a form of diesel not authorised for road use. It's cheaper to buy because it's taxed at a much lower rate. These so-called rebated oils have red or green dyes and chemical markers added to distinguish them from vehicle fuel. Removing those is known as laundering, and there are big profits to be made from that. Head of Investigations, David Godwin says a tilt was seized only last month.

GODWIN: What you have is essentially a 40' trailer with a frame over the top of the trailer and a soft top on that. This particular tilt was declared as timber, and in fact contained 26,000 litres of high quality laundered oil. All chemical markers and dyes had been removed from this product. Now we did some research on earlier transactions involving the same type of goods, and our research would indicate that in 53 previous consignments in the last couple of months, each containing between 22,000 and 26,000 litres, have been exported from Dublin to Liverpool, with laundered oil.

URRY: That's a sizeable operation.

GODWIN: A sizeable, very well-organised operation. The previous traffic of this nature that we detected was in April 2004, when we found similar tilts coming in from the UK, empty again, but when we analysed the dregs in the bottom of the tank, we found that was high quality laundered oil. And on that occasion we identified ninety earlier transactions in the previous three or four months. So we're looking at in the order of something over three million litres, and the more recent one about one and a half, 1.6 million or 1.7 million litres.

URRY: Do you know who's behind the operations?

GODWIN: The laundry does take place in the border area, and we would certainly be of the view that if paramilitaries are not directly involved, certainly these type of operations would not be happening without their knowledge or consent.

URRY: Although Customs, like many other agencies we've spoken to for this programme, are unwilling to spell it out, that means the IRA. And it's those border areas, in places like South Armagh, from where much of the smuggling is organised.

ACTUALITY IN CAR

FRAZER: Probably as you can see, it's a lovely part of the countryside. We're just coming up into the forestry area here. It is nice to sit and look at the lovely view, lovely countryside, and it's hard to believe that countryside that looks so nice has actually got so much evil in underneath, and there's people up here who would butcher you, basically, if they thought that you were creating a problem for them.

URRY: Driving around the country lanes of South Armagh, you are left in no doubt where many people's allegiances lie. There are IRA banners and memorials to fallen comrades along these little byways. We're in a car with Willie Frazer, a local Protestant man, who runs an organisation set up to try to get justice for the victims of terrorism. Mr Frazer has been scarred by violence from the times of the Troubles.

FRAZER: I've lived a life where I've had five of the family killed – a father, two uncles and two cousins. I've had all members wounded. I've had attempts on my own life. I've had my home blew up five times, no warning, bombs.

URRY: Willie Frazer says he has had fourteen death threats made against him in the last two years. That's because he goes on spying missions behind the lines of his enemies in South Armagh, gathering intelligence against organised criminality he says is being controlled and carried out by the IRA. Today, he's taken us with him to show us some suspect fuel depots, which he points to as the visible signs of racketeering.

FRAZER: We're actually heading up and round Cross Lane. I'm going to take you and show you a few oil depots, which are just sitting there, you can't avoid them. It's not as if they're hidden.

URRY: Might they not be legitimate?

FRAZER: We're in a rural area. Where are they going to get all their customers from?  
Cutting off onto the side road here, there's one there. There's one of the main operations up here.

URRY: So we're just turning around now to go and see if we can get a better look at what you strongly suspect is a fuel laundering operation run by the IRA.

FRAZER: Local security forces have told us that we're right, that it is. You can see the high wall round it.

URRY: Yes, and there's tankers in the yard I can see as we go past that place. Also large storage tanks round the back.

FRAZER: You'd probably find a lot of them on the ground too. There is an observation post. It overlooks a fuel depot.

URRY: Is that observation post still used?

FRAZER: Oh aye, yeah.

URRY: So they're looking over a fuel laundry plant?

FRAZER: Yes.

URRY: I can see the observation post clearly on the hill, what, less than half a mile away from here.

FRAZER: Yes. They're so blatant.

URRY: It's impossible to verify some of the specific allegations being made by Willie Frazer. But he's drawn up a list of those he accuses of organised crime and handed them over to the authorities in Belfast, and to the Prime Minister. It's this willingness to name names which has prompted the most recent death threats against him. But what is clear, is that there is a vast criminal enterprise here, suspected of making millions. And fuel is very much a part of it. The latest threat assessment from the Northern Ireland Organised Crime Task Force confirms Provisional IRA members are deeply involved in sophisticated oils frauds. David Godwin from the Republic's Customs service says laundering is being carried out on an industrial scale.

GODWIN: These laundries are fairly large commercial operations, consisting of a network of storage tanks, compressors and generators, laundering materials. The net result is that rebated oils - that is green in the Republic of Ireland and red in Northern Ireland – can be fully processed by these plants, and all the chemical markers and dyes can be removed. We're even aware, for instance, that the launderers have resorted to having their product tested in commercial oil laboratories, a form of quality control. Significantly, one of the reasons why the laundries are established in the border area is that you have two markets at your disposal. First of all, you can source your raw material, which is your rebated oil, either south of the border or north of the border. Then the resulting product is neutral, in that you can put it on either market. To all intents and purposes it appears like ordinary auto diesel.

URRY: It's the way obvious signs of suspect storage depots, tankers and filling stations litter the countryside which raises questions about the levels of law enforcement. Northern Ireland's Security Minister, Ian Pearson, doesn't accept too little has been done.

If you look at the issue of fuel smuggling and fuel laundering and the use of illicit fuel, that has been a criminal trade that has been allowed to run rampant, hasn't it?

PEARSON: The land border presents specific problems and certainly opportunities for organised criminals. We recognise that and we have been proactive in attempting to deal with it. That's one of the key reasons why we set up the Organised Crime Task Force in the first place, and as I say, the fact that over the last three years you've seen legitimate fuel deliveries go up by almost a quarter, I think indicates some of the successes we've been having in disrupting fuel smuggling operations.

URRY: But it all feels like Operation Stable Door, doesn't it? You're now having to try to claw back some ground that was lost when this trade was allowed to go ahead. Why did that happen?

PEARSON: I think this is Operation Getting On With The Job, and I actually think that the police service, together with Customs, are doing an excellent job at the moment. Of course there's more that needs to be done. There are opportunities there for fuel smuggling which people are taking advantage of, and we need to keep going at it.

URRY: The authorities, north and south, are trying to get to grips with the problem, but by now the fuel launderers have become skilled at protecting their investment. According to David Godwin, of Irish Customs, much is being done to frustrate the revenue agencies.

GODWIN: The remoteness of some of these laundries, many of them can be up cul-de-sacs, even to set up a surveillance operation in these areas can be quite difficult. The premises where these laundries are set up, we have found bogus leases, for instance, to be in existence when we actually tried to associate the laundry with the owner of the land. The use of false plates on vehicles is quite common, so quite difficult to identify who, in fact, is responsible for the operation. There are security issues as well. Usually when we're setting up one of these what we call the knock, we would certainly have police back-up in a lot of these operations, because of where the operation is being mounted and the possibility that there may be trouble.

URRY: And there is concern, isn't there, that a lot of the time, when there are these operations to crack the fuel laundering plants, that people have gone? How do they know you're coming?

GODWIN: Well it can be difficult at times to keep these operations confidential.

URRY: Are you aware of some cases then where people have been tipped off?

GODWIN: I'd rather not say.

URRY: In this part of the world, criminal profits vanish just as quickly as the suspects. Not far away, on the other side of the border, we've discovered where some of that money has been hidden. Last month, two brothers from South Armagh pleaded guilty to evading VAT and were ordered to pay nearly three quarters of a million pounds damages. However, police found that the VAT scam fed in to a much bigger operation, which laundered hundreds of millions of pounds worth of dirty money. Detectives with financial expertise have been following some of the vast trails of paper this generated.

## ACTUALITY WITH CONTAINER

SIDLINGTON: This is one of our stores for documents.

URRY: This is a huge container, the like of which you normally see offloaded in a port.

SIDLINGTON: This case had nearly half a million documents.

URRY: Will you open it up for me, just so as I can get a sense of what half a million documents actually looks like?

## ACTUALITY OF CONTAINER BEING OPENED, ALARM SOUNDING

URRY: You have an alarm system.

SIDLINGTON: Yes. You can see the whole length of this forty foot truck is six foot high with boxes of documents on either side and a track up the middle.

URRY: Detective Inspector Sam Sidlington of the Police Service for Northern Ireland says much of the paperwork was generated by a tiny bureau de change, just inside the Republic.

SIDLINGTON: This bureau was an office, 10'x10'. It was really situated there at the time to cover passing trade from people moving from north to south, you know, people going down for a weekend break, maybe want to change a couple of hundred pounds, and you'd never really see any cars outside the bureau. The turnover for that bureau in the two and a half year period was over a quarter of a billion. So something wasn't right.

URRY: A quarter of a billion cash?

SIDLINGTON: In cash, yes.

URRY: Where was that money going?

SIDLINGTON: Well, the 350 account holders were using the bureau for lots of different activities. Some of the evidence that we produced was that it was used for cigarette smuggling, it was used for fuel smuggling, it was used in drug trafficking, used for the purchase of firearms.

URRY: So the tiny bureau at the border wasn't just hiding criminal cash - it was generating venture capital for international racketeering. Detectives began to unravel some of the frauds and it took them way beyond Irish shores.

SIDLINGTON: We covered a lot of countries in this investigation, because we had to follow the money trail, and bankers drafts were being bought in Ireland and being sent to areas like Hong Kong and South Africa, to Malta, to Spain, Germany, Denmark, Switzerland. And whenever we went to those companies to establish where the money went to and who it went to, there was a lot of cigarette companies and a lot of criminals in those areas who had received that money. So it was a cigarette smuggling enterprise paying for the product and getting that product shipped back to the UK.

URRY: Who was behind that whole enterprise then?

SIDLINGTON: Very hard to know. I mean, this investigation was never running on the lines of this really being used as a facilitation to terrorist organisations. I certainly wouldn't rule it out. The bureau sits in the border area. There are substantial amounts of money running through it. This bureau, in my mind, could not operate without the approval of certain organisations.

URRY: The Provos?

SIDLINGTON: Yes.

URRY: Because terrorist groups are involved, it can be difficult for the prosecuting authorities to get witnesses to give evidence in court. There are relatively few convictions, so police and other agencies have a policy of disruption, and they work together to try to cover all the angles. Security Minister, Ian Pearson, believes it's a matter of playing them at their own game.

PEARSON: The way in which we catch organised criminals needs to be a lot more sophisticated to counter the level of sophistication that they have.

URRY: How many have you caught?

PEARSON: Can't give you, can't give you particular, particular numbers, but certainly we have been very successful in disrupting organised criminal gangs and in bringing people to justice over the last two to three years.

URRY: If you can't give me numbers, how do you measure that success then?

PEARSON: I haven't got numbers off the top of my head in front of me today, but what I can say to you is that when you look at the fact that the number of robberies are down, down by almost half over the last two years, legal fuel deliveries have gone up by something like a quarter over the last three years, when previously they had been declining, and that shows the success we're having in terms of countering some of the fuel smuggling that's going on at the moment.

URRY: But for Sean O'Callaghan, who spent sixteen years in the IRA, and ran its operations in the Republic, the border area continues to be the criminal enterprise zone of what some call IRA plc.

O'CALLAHAN: South Armagh is hugely important, because it's an area where you've got a culture of lawlessness that's just built into it for centuries. There is no respect for authority, and the area itself is awash with money. I mean, somebody recently called it Sicily without the sun. It's the engine room that just keeps this thing going. And they're incredibly tight. The guys that run the IRA in South Armagh, they have a hard core of at least eighty people, who manage to avoid jail for thirty years, and they killed hundreds and hundreds of soldiers and they lost eleven people themselves. Now, once those people began to just put their minds to raising huge amounts of money, they are quite simply the equal, in those terms, of anybody else in the world, and in many points much more efficient and much more deadly.

URRY: The body which reports on paramilitary activities, the Independent Monitoring Commission, set up last year to help with the transition to a peaceful society in Northern Ireland, agrees about the potential for income generation. One of the commissioners, a former senior Metropolitan police officer, John Grieve, says groups like the IRA find it easy to move from terrorism to crime.

GRIEVE: They have power, money, weaponry. They're used to violence. It's almost as if they have worked to a position where they could become organised crime groups. They had the international connections, that's how they got arms and explosives. They're very adept smugglers. They own and corrupt transportation companies, shipping companies, banking companies. They have all their fingers in all those pies – or if they haven't, they know somebody that does, and they have a way of making sure that what they want delivered to a time and place is delivered at that time and place. Now they have been very good at that down the years. We've seen the importations of arms that they've achieved, so cigarettes and alcohol is absolutely nothing to them. I heard it quoted there's more cigarettes than the entire population of Ireland could smoke in the next five years moving about.

URRY: A report published today by a Commons Treasury Committee said levels of tax lost to the UK Chancellor from tobacco smuggling were unacceptable. Latest figures show it cost more than £2.5 billion in the last financial year. The government says the Provisional IRA contributes to that loss. And evidence from the Republic of Ireland confirms the trade. David Godwin, head of customs investigations, is one of those at the forefront of the fight to combat the smugglers. His analysis of last year's seizures in the south shows him where most contraband tobacco is heading for the UK.

GODWIN: We look at two factors. We look at the circumstances of which the cigarettes were seized, number one, and we look at the brands involved, with a view to gauging whether they were likely to be for our market or the UK market. Now I think you can see brands such as Regal, L&M, Sovereign, Dorchester, Number 1, these are all clearly brands which are marketed in the UK as distinct from the Republic of Ireland. So we would say, while there might be a very small market in the Republic of Ireland, these brands would be targeted on the UK market.

URRY: What are the sizes of the seizures you're taking now?

GODWIN: They vary. In maritime freight they can be upwards from two to three million cigarettes to a seizure we had shortly before Christmas in a container from Miami in Florida, which had 9.7 or 9.8 million cigarettes. Now that's a large load. To illustrate the type of profits that can be made, the taxes on a 10 million consignment of cigarettes are in the order of £2.4 million, so that's the type of profit that the fraudsters are working on.

URRY: Others in the Republic's Customs service, like senior investigator Paul Garland, see consignments of smuggled cigarettes coming from overseas being moved up to the border.

GARLAND: We find that a lot of the cigarettes that come into Dublin port, a disproportion of them seem to end up towards the Dundalk, South Armagh area, so that'll tell you the type of persons that you're dealing with. They obviously feel safe, certainly in the South Armagh area. They feel safe, they can operate up there, and that they can bring in their goods, they can unload them from containers and distribute them into smaller loads, whether it be vans or trucks, for onward movement down into the mainland UK.

URRY: It sounds a pretty brazen operation that's been continuing year on year.

GARLAND: Well they're very careful, and the planning that goes into it and the types of importations and the expertise that they employ in importing cigarettes into the state are extensive. The access to what appears to be legitimate documentation, the cover loads that they would use, the routes that they would use, these are all well thought out, well planned, well financed.

URRY: With many millions of cigarettes being smuggled, there needs to be an effective distribution system. And IRA plc has got one. We can reveal that some of Britain's top criminal gangs are involved in selling them on once they cross the Irish Sea. The former head of Special Branch in Belfast, Bill Lowry, says alliances were formed in jails.

LOWRY: They have a network within the criminal community in mainland UK. A number of them got a lot of jail time in the high security jails and made good friends. When you're doing fourteen in a high security prison, you're in with the best criminals in the United Kingdom. There have been cases in England involving cigarette smuggling, all the type of smuggling that's going on, the scams that we can see here that are inspired by the Provisional IRA.

URRY: It's a frightening alliance, isn't it, Britain's top criminal gangs linking forces with one of the most feared terrorist organisations in the world?

LOWRY: Absolutely. You would take more heed if the Provisional IRA told you to do something, you would take more heed of them than you would of many other criminal gangs, because they mean business. If you don't do what you're told with them, they just kill you, they have no compunction, no worry about it and they will do that. Needs must, as far as they're concerned. You're not going to get honest people to come along and help you distribute stolen property or smuggled property, it has to be criminals.

URRY: The former senior IRA commander, Sean O'Callaghan, says he witnessed the formation of some of these relationships when he was serving time along with another leading IRA figure in high security prisons. For legal reasons we can't name him.

O'CALLAHAN: [Beep] spent almost his entire time in jail talking with these kind of criminals and it was perfectly clear to me as I watched it in 1990 and 1991 that he was gathering as much information as he could, learning as much as he could, and also figuring out which of these guys would be useful when he got out, who were the contacts he could make. We had at least four instances of IRA people trying to escape out of English prisons along with criminals, walking together. So, if you like, the more serious criminals virtually looked up to these IRA guys.

URRY: This wasn't just about breaking out of jail then, this was about setting up business together, was it?

O'CALLAGHAN: Absolutely.

URRY: Further evidence of these alliances came in one of Europe's biggest ever tobacco busts.

#### ACTUALITY AT HARBOUR

URRY: That happened right where I'm standing at the harbourside in Dundalk. It's a little port with a big strategic significance for the IRA. Just minutes away is the border with the North. Dundalk is one of Ireland's most difficult ports to get into. You can't dock here by chance. It's a tidal estuary and vessels need the assistance of a pilot to bring them alongside. A ship, the MV Anto, had been tracked after it sailed from the United Arab Emirates, via Gibraltar, to the Atlantic and eventually to Dundalk. When it tied up here it was being watched.

GARLAND: We had a surveillance team in the distance over there, and they were reporting directly to me by satellite phone, where I was controlling operations in Dundalk Garda station.

URRY: Customs Officer Paul Garland led an operation, assisted by the Navy, the Air Corps, and an elite armed response unit of police guards. They waited until the Anto began to discharge its cargo.

GARLAND: At around 0200 hours, the heavy machinery came into the port area, which was a 60 ton crane for lifting the containers out of the hold, and a heavy duty forklift, so at that point we realised yeah, it's going to happen. A short time later the lights were taken out in the port, everything here went dark. The gates had been locked and we had to break down the gates as we came through. We were using heavy duty Jeeps, and obviously it took them out fairly handy. The opposition were panicking and running all over the place, so obviously there was minor chaos controlled by the ERU.

URRY: The Anto was carrying sixteen containers holding seventy million cigarettes - a huge logistical exercise had been put together by the smugglers, one in which they'd invested a lot of money.

GARLAND: Very hard to quantify the actual figure, but I would say a fair assumption, certainly three quarters of a million sterling is the figure that we put together, and that's just based on what we know of the cost of cigarettes to ship, the containers, the logistics involved, the transport. Obviously the crews had to be paid, people had to be sorted out.

URRY: If they'd have succeeded, how much money do you think they'd have made eventually?

GARLAND: The excise duties alone in the state here would have amounted to 13 million euros. We believe the goods were for the UK market, and that would amount to about 17 million euros, or the equivalent of that in sterling would certainly be in the region of £10 million, I imagine. Big investment, big risk, but big profit at the end of it.

URRY: There were ten arrests, others got away. But it wasn't the IRA who'd been running the show. It was a criminal gang from East London, unloading at a port in their heartland.

GARLAND: The UK-based operation that were running the show here, a lot of the logistics were supplied, like the transport personnel were brought over from the UK for the logistics assignment. There was definitely collusion here with a firm in Drogheda, who provided expertise in relation to cranes and forklift drivers. For a UK-based organisation to come in and use Dundalk port, you would assume that certain things would have had to be put in place for them to use Dundalk port.

URRY: But your reasonable conclusion is that some sort of deal had been done at some level?

GARLAND: I think that would be a fair assumption.

URRY: The ship's captain, 51 year old Terence Wall from Cardiff, was jailed. Robert Terrence Tibbs, a 29 year old from London, was sentenced to three and a half years. Another man from Chatham in Kent walked free on directions of



