

BEECHWOOD

# The Establishment

IRELAND & WESTERN AUSTRALIA · 1866–1876

*"A handful of men. One shot at freedom. Failure means certain death."*

---

Television series · 9 x 55-minute episodes · Historical drama · Thriller · Based on true events

---

## LOGLINE

*In 1868, seven Fenian soldiers — convicted of insurrection against Britain — are sentenced to life imprisonment ten thousand miles away in a Western Australian hellhole known as The Establishment. One escapes. Determined to free his six friends, an audacious plot is hatched to sail back to Australia and rescue them.*

## SYNOPSIS

Ireland, still reeling from the potato famine, lives under Britain's complete control. A nascent movement for liberation grows into a full-blown plan for freedom — The Rising. The movement is infiltrated by informers and fails spectacularly. Seven Fenian soldiers are sentenced to death, later commuted to life imprisonment at Fremantle Prison — a fortress the convicts built with their own hands.

John Boyle O'Reilly escapes to Boston, where he joins John Devoy — a brilliant strategist raising funds from the Irish-American community — and the calculating John Breslin, who poses as a wealthy businessman to infiltrate Fremantle society. Their instrument of rescue: The Catalpa, captained by George Anthony, a Quaker pacifist whose principles are tested to their limits.

Under the noses of prison staff and a British garrison, Breslin and Anthony free their comrades on Easter Monday 1876. A tense standoff with the Royal Navy in open waters follows — until Captain Anthony raises the American flag, forcing Britain to back down. The Catalpa sails for Boston, carrying six free men and one of the most audacious rescue missions in history.

## tone & style

Raw, atmospheric, emotionally charged. The bleak interiors of Fremantle Prison contrast sharply with the vast, desolate landscapes of Western Australia and the treacherous open seas. Escape sequences are urgent and kinetic; quieter scenes focus on the internal struggles of men who carry the weight of a nation's hope.

## KEY THEMES

**Loyalty and sacrifice** — the unbreakable bond between the Fenians and their willingness to risk everything for one another.

**Hope against desperation** — men who carry belief in freedom even in its most impossible circumstances.

**The legacy of rebellion** — the long shadow cast by uprising on those who fought and the generations that follow.

**Conscience under pressure** — a pacifist captain forced to choose between his principles and his humanity.

## KEY CHARACTERS

**John Boyle O'Reilly**

Poet, fighter, escaped prisoner — the emotional heart of the mission. His letters and verse sustain the men through years of brutal imprisonment.

**John Devoy**

Brilliant strategist and architect of the rescue plan. Operates from Boston, raising funds and support from the Irish-American community.

**John Breslin**

Calculating and mysterious — poses as a wealthy businessman in Fremantle, gathering intelligence while dodging British spies.

**Captain George Anthony**

A Quaker pacifist whose conscience is tested to its limit. The unlikely hero who raises the American flag and forces Britain to stand down.

**Father McCabe**

A sympathetic Irish priest in Fremantle who provides critical support at great personal risk — showing the fight for justice extends beyond the rebels themselves.

**EPISODE BREAKDOWN****EPISODE 1****Present Day / 1866**

A tour guide leads an American family through Fremantle Prison. The story of the Fenians begins to unfold — the failed Irish Rebellion of 1866, the rise of John Devoy, and the looming betrayal.

**EPISODE 2****Ireland, 1866**

Stephens is tried for treason. Devoy orchestrates a covert rescue. The Fenians are betrayed — six sentenced to death, commuted to life imprisonment. Devoy flees to America.

**EPISODE 3****The Voyage to Fremantle, 1868**

A hellish voyage across the seas. Shackled and beaten, O'Reilly holds onto sanity through poetry and secret letters. The prisoners form a silent, unbreakable bond.

**EPISODE 4****Fremantle, 1868**

O'Reilly befriends Father McCabe and contacts a sympathetic whaler captain. A first escape attempt fails — but O'Reilly alone gets out and makes it to America.

**EPISODE 5****Boston & Fremantle, 1869–1875**

O'Reilly and Devoy plan the rescue. George Anthony agrees to captain The Catalpa. Breslin arrives in Fremantle posing as a wealthy investor.

**EPISODE 6****Fremantle, 1875**

Breslin infiltrates high society, makes contact with the prisoners and gathers intelligence. The British tighten their grip. The Catalpa sets sail from Java.

**EPISODE 7****Fremantle, 1876**

Easter Monday is set as the day. The stakes are higher than ever. Every detail of the escape could unravel at any moment.

EPISODE 8

**Days Before the Escape, 1876**

British spies grow suspicious. Breslin and Anthony scramble under intense pressure to lock down every last detail.

EPISODE 9

**The Escape — Easter Monday, 1876**

The six prisoners break out and race for the beach. A tense standoff with the Royal Navy. Captain Anthony raises the American flag. Britain backs down. The Catalpa sails for Boston — and freedom.

COMPARABLE TITLES

Peaky Blinders · The Crown · Banished (BBC) · North & South

PROJECT DETAILS

**Format** Television series — 9 × 55-minute episodes

**Genre** Historical drama · Thriller

**Setting** Ireland, Boston & Western Australia, 1866–1876

**Basis** Based on true events

**Status** Seeking representation & development

---

**Warwick Jaggard**

info@beechwood.app

+61 476 063 503

beechwood.app