

Angular Frequency is the conclusion of the McGonegal Chronicles series and anything involving the McGonegals is complicated and deadly. All his friends have settled back into their lives, but now retirement is over and adventure waits.

Angular Frequency: The McGonegal Chronicles

By Terence A. McSweeney

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THE MCGONEGAL CHRONICLES

ANGULAR FREQUENCY

THE REUNION

They thought that the crisis was over. They were wrong.

TERENCE A. MCSWEENEY

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Paperback ISBN: 978-1-959620-89-1

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-959620-90-7

Ebook ISBN: 979-8-88531-829-7

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Trenton, Georgia.

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BookLocker.com, Inc.

2024

First Edition

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

McSweeney, Terence A.

Angular Frequency: The McGonegal Chronicles by

Terence A. McSweeney

Library of Congress Control Number: 2024918088

Characters



Adriana Bregante	Assistant to the Archivist
A.H.	Mysterious visitor
Alice Lamont	Horace Lamont's wife
Bobby Lee Bishop	Televangelist
Beau Tanniker	Bobby Lee's business manager (Bubba)
Cillian McGonegal	Archaeologist/Mary's spouse
Cara Galura	Agent-Specialist Chemist
Cosmo Lysander Doyle, PhD	Linguist, expert in ancient languages
Daniel McKinley	Stationmaster Antarctica Base 1
Darius	Alpha
Darlene Bishop	Bobby Lee's wife
Delila 1	Alpha
Dominic Waldorf	Time Agent/ Director of Communications
Finn	Bobby Lee's butler
Horace Lamont	Bobby Lee's neighbor
IT	?

James Aranas	The Archivist
James Paxil II	Missing Archaeologist
James Paxil III	Paxil II's son
James McIntyre	Nathan's comrade, soldier
Jehu	King of ancient Israel
Liam Highland	Friend of Patrick McGonegal
Mary McGonegal	Archaeologist/ Cillian's spouse
Moriarty	Stationmaster England/Ireland Base
Natalia Vorsokowski	Time Agent
Patrick McGonegal	Brother of Cillian McGonegal
Parker Jackson	Time Agent/ Technical Field operations
Nathan McPhee	Friend of Cillian McGonegal/ Susanne McKinnon
Robert Forester	Attorney for the Lamont Family
Shalmaneser III	Assyrian king
Susanne McKinnon	Philanthropist, Owner of Virgo
Samuel Franklin	Time agent (Eyes), Operations Director
Sally	Bobby Lee's secretary
Samuel Franklin	(Eyes) Agent, third in line for Archivist

Angular Frequency

Sissy Lee	Bobby Lee's daughter
Sophia Borghese	Liam Highland's fiancé
Theodore Lee	Bobby Lee's son
Theseus 4	Alpha
Thomas McGonegal	Former Archivist/McGonegal Family patriarch
William	James Paxil III's butler
Winston McIntyre (Mac)	Nathan's comrade, soldier



Prologue

The thing about evil is it comes disguised. It often wears a mask. Its argument seems reasonable at first, measured, but it is tempered in grievance and nurtured entitlement. Grievance presents the argument that there is no fairness and wrongs must be righted. Evil is more cunning. It waits. It measures discontent and massages it. It finds its narrators and sets them free to spread malcontent and lies. Soon a minor dispute becomes a national movement. Yes, evil is patient, but it will be fed.



It came with a faint sprinkle of dust. The sound was almost indistinguishable from the other background noise. It was not loud or heralding per se. It was more of a sigh. The air grew heavier and damper. There was a flickering of light that attacked the darkness surrounding the blackness that still refused to relinquish its hold on the source of the sound. **CLICK**. The front of the box drifted forward and fell to the floor. There was a rush of foul-smelling air and a burst of intense light. Then...it winked out and all was quiet. All was as it was, silent, still, uncommitted, and unpredictable except in one regard. Evil was released upon the world, and it had plans.

1.

The climb down into the crevasse was a grueling vertical drop of five hundred feet. Typically, descending a cliff face would demand that the climber repel most of the distance. It was easier on the body and more efficient than a hand-over-hand descent. Repelling was not possible in this case. The walls of the stone gorge were no more than three feet from each other and in some parts less than two. This was not a descent or climb for the claustrophobic. The three-man team was specially trained, a training that was built on their military experience. Their mission was the rescue of two missing scientists whose last reported location was below their rescuers. The team of three began their descent spaced side by side at a distance of ten feet. This gap was maintained so if one climber had a mishap then the others could assist and not risk being pulled off the cliff as well. Each of the climbers was a professional who trained in various militaries. Each had faced the possibility of death in the past and had that *spit-in-its-eye* bravado that was endemic in special forces operatives. They relied on their training and to hell with the rest.

The descent would take over two hours and they would arrive at the same time. It was dark down at the bottom as no sunlight could penetrate such a depth. Night vision and small arms were the required equipment. Their targets were two archaeologists who had stopped communicating and it was their job to get them home. The guns were just precautionary after all this part of the world was loaded with unsavory characters.

“Comms check,” announced a burly man whose features were angular, and whose body was ripped right down to his square haircut.

“Two here.”

“Three here.”

“All right, steady pace gentlemen. ETA on ground...,” the leader checked his watch and continued, “09:17.”

With that, the three began. It was difficult in places where the walls grew closer, but manageable, and by the appointed time, they were either on the ground or about to land. They released their bindings and assembled a few yards from the ropes. It was very dark, so each switched on their night vision goggles and surveyed the area. The crevasse appeared to open about fifty yards to their right. The left offered no such space. They worked their way right to the opening as that was the logical direction the two archaeologists would most likely take. When they arrived, they found that the open area was vast and even had some light radiating up top. It was then that they found their quarry. Two figures were standing against the opposite wall. The leader waved to the shapes saying they were there to rescue them. There was no response. Immediately he ordered,

“Two go right, three left, safeties off!”

They clicked in unison and moved in. There was no other movement and the individuals just stared. Finally, they reached the figures, and the mystery was solved. Both men had gaping holes in their chests and their eyes were gone. Their faces were a frozen scream, and one held a book or journal. It was open to a particular page. The leader pried the book from the corpse’s hand and surveyed the page softly reading it aloud,

“WE ARE NOT ALONE!”

From behind the soldiers, there was a high-pitched squeal. They turned and large, luminous shapes approached. They moved in a herky-jerky manner as if they were constantly vanishing and reappearing. The men fired. It was their last living act. They joined the others frozen in the acts of their deaths.

2.

“There are two forces at play in the world. Each is formidable. One is the product of light, the other the product of darkness. Each of us must choose what side we are on. The side of light requires demanding work in the service of mankind while the other offers power and wealth and asks only one thing, one small sacrifice. This side after all things are said and done, after the flame of your life flickers for the last time, this dark side wants your soul. Now, I know some of you do not believe in souls because the soul is not readily available to witness, so you think that the dark side option is without penalty or expense. Behold the folly in this belief.”

The preacher raised his right arm, the lights went down, and instantly behind him on a vast screen appeared a scene from Dante’s Hell. It was a painting created by the Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch in which the dead are gobbled up by Satan, his giant mouth swallowing them whole beginning their torment for eternity. All was despair in the scene. The audience gasped as they took in the horrible image. The preacher then lowered his arm; the lights came back up and the vision was gone.

He knew he had them now. He screamed,

“I choose the light!” He repeated it, “I choose the light!” The congregation joined in the chant,

“I CHOOSE THE LIGHT! I CHOOSE THE LIGHT!”

This went on for a minute or two then the man of God raised his hand again, and soft music began to play as he called out to his flock to sing as the attendants passed the basket.

The three-hour service was over. The self-acclaimed prophet released the worshippers once again into the chaotic world and retreated into the inner sanctum of the Great Hall. The television cameras had all gone

dark, and he settled into a large leather chair after pouring himself a three-finger portion of a twenty-five-year-old bourbon. He took his first sip and sighed. His family would arrive shortly, but it was his accountant whom he waited for. The wait was not long. Through the doors came a small man with a big personality saying,

“You really dazzled them tonight, Bobby Lee. They looked terrified. Those wallets loosened up after that stunt with the painting of Hell.” The preacher smiled and sipped again at his sweet nectar. He then asked,

“So, how did we do, Bubba?”

The accountant’s face at first revealed truly little and then he smiled saying, “We took down over fifty K from the house.”

A big smile came to Bobby Lee’s face. “What about the television audience donations?”

“Still coming in, but so far they are double the house. It is going to be a particularly good year.”

The preacher bathed in that news as he felt the warm buzz of the bourbon sharpen his mind. He then asked, “So, where are we for the year?”

“Well, if we keep going in this direction fifteen million all tax-free is not out of the question. Any charitable enterprises you would like to put some of that cash?”

“Charity, my money friend, begins at home.” They both laughed and continued laughing until the family arrived.

“Oh, by the way, a large crate came this morning addressed to you. I had it brought up to the residence.”

“You don’t say. Now I wonder what that might be.”

“Not sure, but it was god awful heavy. It came by way of a foreign shipper.”

I’ll take a look when I get back. Keep counting that cash, Bubba.”

“Will do,” said the accountant as he excused himself from the room, a room that was now filled with Bobby Lee’s children and wife.

They were chattering and pouring drinks, each of the children still trying to get their father’s attention while his wife Darlene in a daze looked on.

“Daddy, did you like my singing today?” asked a precocious little blond girl.

“You were wonderful Sissy, I thought God came down from the heavens. Theo, you were quite flat today. You need to practice,” said the preacher. “Now, you two get on along. I need to speak to your mama.”

“Yes Daddy,” the two said in unison and filed out of the room.

“Darlene, we had a good day.”

His wife came out of her daze and softly, mechanically said, “That’s nice dear.”

“Dar, I swear you don’t seem excited. In fact, you are downright morose. You should be happy. It’s another fur coat, another diamond necklace, or whatever you want.”

His wife responded, “What I want is to be out of this marriage.”

Bobby Lee moved like a cat, pulled his wife out of her chair by both arms, and spat out, “The only way you are getting out of this marriage is horizontally on a slab.” The vein in his right temple was pulsating. He struggled to gain control and taking a breath he eased his wife back into her chair and patted her shoulder saying, “There, there. I’m sorry. It’s just that we have built so much here, and I will not throw it away. Why don’t you go to the spa or take a swim.”

Darlene shaken once again by her husband's abuse and cruelty, saw this as her opportunity to escape from the torment of being in the same room with her violent spouse. She jumped up out of the chair and quickly exited the room slamming the door behind her. Bobby Lee smiled and moved on to other matters. He thought,

“I wonder what is in that crate that came today.”

He rose and proceeded to find out.

3.

Nathan found a home after much soul-searching and many pubs. The experience with the gates took something from him. The last seven years left him with a hunger, a pressing desire to discover who he really was. That and the realization that he was in love, changed the big man. True, he was still larger than life and anchored by a morality that valued honor and life in a way that only a hardened soldier who had seen the horrors that mankind was capable of could understand. He was that man, but he also had a fatalism about him now. It was this that drove the man.

He sat in his favorite pub at the bar and ordered his drink of choice, Jameson's' Black label neat. He held the glass up and announced,

“For all who have fallen, I salute you.”

He held the glass up for a moment then placed it back on the bar. He paid the bartender, pushed back his stool leaving the full glass of whiskey, and walked out just as he had walked out yesterday, the day before, and every day since his sobriety. He was five years, four months ten days sober. He made sure to keep count. Nathan was a changed man, and she was to blame. So many times, he thought about finding her and revealing his love. So many times, he talked himself out of it. So, each night he would travel back to his flat and stare out at the city lights of Edinburgh. Later he would read of all things, poetry. As a Scot, it was of course the work of Robert Burns that suited his tastes. Burns' words soothed, at least temporarily, the hole in his heart. Susanne of course knew nothing of this. She went back to Brian and had five good years before he passed away. Nathan read about it in the Edinburgh Evening News. Susanne was still a mover and a shaker and so as a consequence was followed around the world. Nathan, if he thought about it, would have put it together that he ended his drinking the moment he accepted the loss of Susanne in his life. *Why was that?* he

thought. He knew why but did not want to admit it. He felt guilty that another man had to die for him to have a chance. He felt dirty about it, but the desire kept whispering *perhaps she would have him now*. He fought that thought on a daily basis.

Sitting down with the paper he perused the articles as was his habit. It helped him to sleep. As he turned to page four he saw her. The article read under Susanne's picture,

FAMOUS AMERICAN PHILANTHROPIST TO SPEAK
AT ST. GILES CATHEDRAL WED. SEPTEMBER 14 7:00 PM

Nathan looked at the top of the paper. It read Tuesday, September 13. *It was tomorrow!* He thought. He looked back at her picture. She had not aged. She kept the silver streak that she received from her experience with the gates, but she was radiant. It caused him to ache. His mind raced. *What would she think if he showed up after all these years? What would he say to her?* He agonized over what to do. This might be his last chance. He decided.

St Giles was built over 900 years ago. It was a Romanesque church but later became what it is today, Presbyterian. The church had a long, storied history. It was John Knox's parish church and the center of the Scottish Reformation. It became four churches in one due to the rising diverse population in the sixteenth century. The partitions were made of stone walls and the arches were blocked up. Each of the four partitions was known as a Kirk and parishioners were expected to attend their own Kirk based on their beliefs. By the late 1800's the church was restored eliminating the Kirks and becoming the Cathedral. The Cathedral sported beautiful stained-glass windows, ornate apportionments, and dramatic statuary that took the breath away. Nathan was not a religious man, but he could feel the gravity and spirit of the place. It was intimidating. He decided that he would attend Susanne's speech but sit in the back so as not to surprise her. He would then at the end of the event casually come up front and say hello. It was

a great plan up until the point that Susanne arrived at the back of the cathedral. She saw him immediately and her response startled the big Scot. She walked quickly to him wrapped her arms tightly around his heavy frame, stepped up and kissed his cheek all the time squeezing hard. When she finally broke away her eyes were moist as she exclaimed,

“Nathan, oh Nathan it is so wonderful to see you. You big lug. Where have you been?”

Nathan smiled, relieved that she still remembered him, and answered, “Aye lass the feeling is mutual. It has been a very long time. Aye, I am still above the earth.” He then smiled and Susanne could see a twinkle in his eyes, those eyes that saw so much and endured even more.”

“Mrs. McKinnon, we really must go,” came the voice of a young woman from the side.

“Yes, yes” answered Susanne. “Nathan, don’t you go anywhere. In fact, come up front so I can keep my eye on you. We need to catch up. It’s been too long.”

He was about to offer some excuse as to why he could not move forward, but Susanne took his arm and began walking him down the aisle. When they reached the front she ushered him into the first row winking and saying,

“I will not be long I promise.” Then she approached the large podium that towered over the audience. She began her speech about third-world food insecurity while a slideshow appeared to her right. She was compelling. She was passionate and Nathan fell in love with her all over again. The speech went on for about forty minutes and another fifteen minutes of questioning followed. Then it was over, and she worked her way through the admirers who wanted to shake her hand or get a copy of her latest book autographed. At long last, she reached Nathan who

sat there watching. Before he could get up she sat down next to him and grabbing his hand said,

“So, how is it that I have not heard from you all these years? What have you been doing with yourself?”

He thought, *Well I spent a good deal of my time drunk in the gutter and then of course there were the recriminations and sadness about what a mess I had made of my life.* He answered,

“This and that lass.”

“This and that? This and that? That’s all you have for me after, what has it been, this side of seven years? C’mon, you have to give me more than that.”

Nathan looked down at his chest for a moment then gathered himself and said,

“The truth is I took a long time recovering from our wee adventure. I tried to find my answers in the depths of the bottle lass. That did not work out so well, so I stopped. I have had several jobs from military consultant and trainer to guide. I guess I just stumbled through one job after another. But, I have been sober for a time and I am getting better each day.”

Susanne had not considered that the giant of a man, her friend, could show any sign of vulnerability. He was her rock for so long. She put her arms around his broad shoulders and kissed him, saying, “I’m so sorry Nate, so sorry.” She rubbed his back. Everything became quiet around them and for that moment they were back traveling with Kosey. It was just them, no others.

“Mrs. McKinnon and Mr. McPhee, I presume?”

The voice came from behind. They turned around and before them was a tall elderly gentleman dressed in, of all things, a morning suit complete with spats. His appearance was coiffed impeccably as that of

a steward to some noble manor house. The well-dressed man with white-gloved hands presented to them two white, gold embossed envelopes saying,

“Mrs. McKinnon and Mr. McPhee your presence is requested.” He handed each an envelope and continued, “You will find all the pertinent details here.” Before they could utter another word, the gentleman bowed, turned, and walked back up the aisle. Susanne and Nathan just stared.

“Now what do ya think that was all about?” asked Nathan.

Susanne tore open the envelope and read the gold embossed writing. It read:

*Mrs. Susanne McKinnon,
Your appearance is requested on October 1 of this year of
our lord at 11:45 pm.
Fletcher Manor*

Nathan opened his envelope and found the same invitation. He stared at it and remarked,

“It’s an awfully strange time would you not say? 11:45? Odd.”

Susanne nodded. “Very strange indeed. We will go together. I will send a car for you.” She turned to find her assistant and called her over. “Linda, you will need to clear my calendar for October first and second.”

“Yes Mrs. McKinnon,” answered the assistant as she wrote down the instructions.

“Also, order a car for nine o’clock PM, October first to.... Nate, what’s your address?”

Nathan, still staring at the invitation mumbled, “Ah, 34 Whitestock Lane apartment six. But...”

“Did you get that Linda?”

“Yes, Mrs. McKinnon. We should be going. We are late for your next engagement.”

“Yes, yes. Nathan, we will speak soon. Can I drop you anywhere?”

The dazed Scot just mumbled, “Nah, don’t trouble yourself, I have a ride.” Susanne gave him a big hug and off she went leaving Nathan who tried to put together in his mind what had just happened.

4.

Aloise looked over at her husband who had a giant grin on his face. She asked,

“Now what is it husband that you resemble the Cheshire cat? I’m beginning to worry that screws are getting loose up in that noggin of yours. I’m not complaining mind you. After all, you were not your best after your return. I know you don’t want to talk about it, but you were not yourself for quite some time. I like you the way you are now even though you are smiling at me like a lunatic.”

Patrick answered, “It’s all right. I have not gone daft yet. I was just thinking about the children. They are a treasure, our treasure. Life is grand isn’t it Ali?”

“Certainly, for you, you don’t have to do their wash.” She laughed and came over and ruffled Patrick’s hair. “Have you heard from Liam in a while?”

“It’s been almost a month. I guess he is really enjoying the continent, but he did say that he would be back soon the last time we spoke. I think he has found a lady friend.”

“No. The confirmed bachelor is dating?”

It would seem so. Her name is Sophia. He met her in Milan. She must be one hell of a woman to put up with him,” said Patrick. “I think....”

There was a knock at the door and Patrick thought *kind of late in the evening for callers*. He got up and went to answer it. As he opened the door he said, “If you’re selling anything I’m sorry but I’m just not interested.” Standing before him was a well-dressed man in a morning suit and white gloves. He thought, *now who do I know who dresses like this? Even the head butler at his family estate did not dress this formally.*

“Mister Patrick McGonegal?”

“Yes?”

He presented a white envelope that was addressed to Patrick and bowed. He then turned one hundred and eighty degrees and walked away. For a moment Patrick just stood there, mouth wide open until Aloise came to the door and asked, “What are you up to now Paddy?”

“I just received this, from a butler of all people.” He handed the envelope to his wife who immediately tore it open as he closed the door. She read it and said,

“It’s an invitation to come to this address on October 1 in the dead of night.”

Patrick took the envelope from Aloise and reading it asked, “11:45 pm? Who holds a meeting or get-together that starts that late?” Patrick could feel an old familiar tightness in his stomach, and he knew he needed to call his brother. He found his phone and dialed. There were two rings and then a familiar voice answered,

“Paddy, I was just getting ready to call you.”

Before his brother could say another word Patrick said, “I’ll wager I know why. By any chance did you receive an invitation from a butler in the last day or two?”

“Why yes I did. Is this one of your jokes?”

Patrick measured his words saying, “No Cillian, I received one a few moments ago. No explanation just an envelope handed to me by a character that looked like something out of a Dickens novel.”

“Curious,” answered Cillian. “Are you going to go?”

“I haven’t had a chance to process this yet. Are you going?”

“Mary and I were both invited. I think we will,” replied Cillian.

Patrick mused that over and said, “This sounds a bit familiar don’t you think? I can’t do that again Cilly. I just can’t.”

“Well, you aren’t committed until you are. Come along and see what’s what. Then make your decision.”

“Aye,” Patrick answered. “I can do that. I am going to try to reach Liam. I feel a bit rudderless since he has been away.”

“I’ll let you to it. Now, all I have to do is convince Mary. She’s still a bit on the fence. Talk soon.” The phone went dead, and Patrick thought about what he needed to do next. He dialed Liam’s phone waiting for the message that he could not answer which confirmed he was still out of the country when on the second ring he heard his old friend’s voice.

“Paddy boy, it’s good to hear from you!”

“Liam? Wow is that really you?”

“Yes, we just cleared customs. I should be home within a couple of hours,” answered Liam. He then said, “Something very strange happened. I was just greeted by a butler who handed me some kind of invitation for the strangest time.”

Patrick exclaimed, “You too? I received one about an hour ago. Now how did he get to you that quickly?” Patrick mulled that over when he heard his friend say,

“I don’t know, but we have to go. The car is here, I will see you in the office tomorrow.”

“We?”

“Yes, Sophia and me. See you then.” The phone clicked and went dead. Patrick yelled,

“Ali, Aloise, where have ya gone girl?”

“I’m right here,” came a voice at the top of the stairs. “What’s all the hollering about?”

“Liam is back, and he brought her with him.”

“Brought who?” asked his wife.

“He brought Sophia.”

Aloise smiled and said, “Our Liam is all grown up” They then both laughed. Patrick thought, *I can’t wait to see him and...Sophia.*

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Observations and Commentary on Life, Love, and Nature

Green Underwear

Account of Two Boys Growing Up in the Cold War Era

Little One's Big Day

Children's Picture Book During the Pandemic

The Quest

A Heroic Journey of Adventure, Rescue and Redemption

Book 1: The McGonegal Chronicles

The Twelve Gates

The Road to Redemption

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Redemption and Illumination

The Way Home

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Between the Folds

The Agency: The Aranas Years

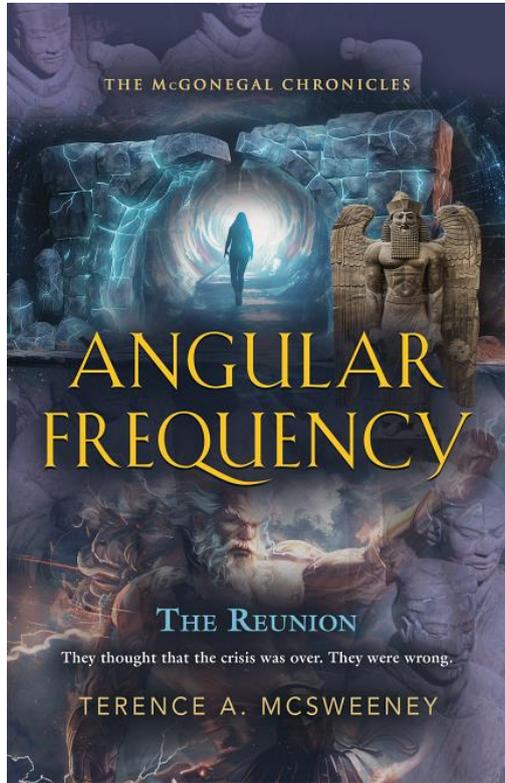
Sequel: The McGonegal Chronicles

Autonomous

Mankind's Greatest Helper

is Now Its Greatest Threat

When AI Goes Very Wrong



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