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## The Silenced: An Artistic Analysis of Memory and Conflict

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## **Introduction**

The ability to tell stories has always been one I considered most valuable. Histories have been passed down across generations, tales of war and independence, of crimes and justice. Storytelling is not unique to one particular culture or people, instead traversing divides both geographic and societal. This permeation of words, of voices that convey histories both real and imagined is the driving force behind my thesis. The culmination of my research, which is outlined in the following reflection, is an original short play. While based on the Troubles in Northern Ireland, the play speaks to the power behind every story and how that power shapes both collective and individual memory.

## **The Inspiration**

I spent a semester studying at Griffith College in Dublin in 2015. Named for Irish Volunteer Force revolutionary and journalist-turned-Sinn Féin founder Arthur Griffith (Dorney), the institution is still known today for its Republican ties, a fact that I would be told multiple times during my return trip. One communications research ethics class focused entirely on a project started by Boston College in 2001, in which Irish researchers interviewed admitted members of the IRA and the UVF (Moloney, 5).

Lord Paul Bew, a proponent of the peace process and a Queen's University professor of Irish politics, proposed the idea of an archive to house the stories of those on the front lines of the conflict to Boston College in the late 1990s (Greenslade). Ed Moloney, a Northern Irish journalist and past editor for both the *Irish Times* and the *Sunday Tribune* (Moloney 513), and Anthony McIntyre, a former member of the Irish Republican Army who served almost two decades in prison for his involvement in the Troubles before attending Queens University to obtain his doctorate (McIntyre), served as the lead researchers for the project (Moloney, 5).

Moloney and McIntyre with the help of third interviewer Wilson McArthur recorded interviews with 46 participants, all of which were turned over to the Boston College Center for Irish Programs and kept in the Burns Library (Schworm, “BC reflects...”).

One of the most now-infamous interviews from the project was given by Brendan Hughes. In this interview, Hughes provides a detailed description of his involvement with events like Bloody Friday, his participation in the IRA leadership, and his knowledge of events surrounding the disappearance of single mother Jean McConville in 1972, including allegations that current Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams instigated the event (Moloney). Hughes’ interview, along with the transcript from former UVF member David Ervine, was published in Moloney’s book *Voices from the Grave: Two Men’s War in Ireland* in March 2010 and later released in a documentary by the same title (“The Belfast Project, Boston College...”). A month earlier, Dolours Price gave an interview to the *Irish News*, citing her involvement in three other disappearances (Morris). Within in the week, another article, this time published by the tabloid *Sunday Life*, alleged that admissions of guilt were recorded in the Belfast Tapes project (Barnes). In 2011, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) moved to legally obtain tapes from the archive, specifically those concerning the disappearance and murder of McConville, whose remains had been found almost seven years prior in County Louth by a couple walking on the beach (McDonald). McConville, who had 10 children, was thought to have been an informer by the IRA; the organization did take responsibility for her death and others on the list of the “Disappeared” in 1999, after the signing of the peace treaty and the ceasefire (McDonald). Despite Moloney and McIntyre’s and Boston College’s resistance to the subpoenas, the tapes were claimed by the PSNI (“The Belfast Project, Boston College...”).

I was completely captivated by this botched project, fascinated by the idea of confiscated stories. At the time, I had no idea of where this interest would take me. Yet the seed was planted in my mind. I finished my semester at Griffith, a wild adventure as many study abroad trips are, and returned to the States to begin my junior year. As a member of the South Carolina Honors College, I was encouraged to think about my senior thesis. The first thing that came to mind was the Troubles.

Initially, the idea was to create my own oral history archive comprised of interviews from people who lived in both the Republic and Northern Ireland during the Troubles. Unfortunately, my ties to Irish communities were very shallow. More than that, however, was my specific interest in the Belfast Tapes interviewees; I was not simply attracted to the field of oral histories but to the people whose intentions in recording such sensitive material had gone awry. I convinced myself that I had to go back – back to the original spark of interest, back to the minds behind the Belfast Tapes, back to Ireland.

### **The Return Trip**

My main inquiry behind this project was how memory, both national and individual, affected history and how these two arenas could be portrayed artistically through a performance piece. In order to gain a better understanding of the effects of the Troubles on collective memory, I wanted to travel to Northern Ireland, where I had only spent a brief time during my semester abroad. I also planned to visit the Republic.

Convincing my parents to let me travel 3,000 miles for 17 days was no easy feat, especially when I threw the terms “IRA,” “ex-prisoners” and “alone” into the mix. My mind was set on talking to people face-to-face. I was in the midst of reading about the lives of Hemingway and Fitzgerald, writers who often travelled in order to find inspiration in new places. There is

something to be said for immersing oneself in the culture and the mindset of the people about whom you want to write.

The next challenge was finding contacts who would allow me to speak with them about the practice of oral histories and the Belfast Tapes. I contacted my Griffith professors, including the one who introduced me to the Belfast Tapes, and set up meetings with them. I also asked them for other contacts who work with and around oral histories. These contacts included Professors Robbie Smith and Jane Carrigan at Griffith College, Dr. Ruan O'Donnell at the University of Limerick, and oral historian Dr. Brian Hanley. Dr. Ed Madden at the University of South Carolina additionally put me in contact with Mike Cronin, the academic director for Boston College Ireland.

Still, I wanted to get closer to the Belfast Tapes project. I began following Anthony McIntyre's blog, "The Pensive Quill," on both Blogger and Twitter. My desire to speak with him was so strong that I searched for a way to contact him. There was no email address or contact form to be found. I cannot say exactly what led me to search for McIntyre on Facebook, but I did and found him. I sent him a direct message, explaining my project and my intention to travel to Ireland in the next few weeks to get a better sense of the Troubles and Irish oral histories. I was sitting on the Horseshoe, reading Ed Moloney's *Voices from the Grave*, when I received his response:

"Kitty, having had enough of the shortcomings of academia I refuse to use the Dr. title, having effectively relinquished the doctorate because it means nothing any more. Yes, I will talk to you but how soon do you need me to talk? I am up to my eyes in things at present including

fighting yet another BC subpoena” (A. McIntyre, personal communication, April 25, 2016).

Ed Moloney was much more elusive. He currently resides in New York rather than Ireland. I decided that speaking to Moloney would provide me at least one side of the story. As with many parts of this return trip, I lucked out. During my time with McIntyre, I asked about getting in contact with Moloney. McIntyre hesitated for a moment, suggesting that Moloney might be unwilling to speak with me. However, Moloney was back in Ireland, staying in Dublin for the week. McIntyre provided me his contact information, which ultimately led to our meeting at his residence in Dublin.

Planning a trip around these meetings, some in the Republic, some in the North, was a puzzle. I left with plans to visit Dublin, Limerick, Belfast and Derry to meet with my two journalism professors from Griffith; Dr. Cronin; Dr. Hanley; Dr. O’Donnell; CAIN archive director Martin Melaugh and Mr. McIntyre. In the way that things do not go as planned, two of my scheduled meetings fell through the week before I left. I packed my bags and decided to continue with the project anyway.

Among the many things I stumbled upon during this trip that would go on to help me with this project was the many events happening in Dublin to commemorate the centennial of the 1916 Easter Rising. Though a failed attempt for independence, the Rising sparked the larger movement which would lead the south to independence from Great Britain. These odes to revolution, albeit one that occurred 100 years prior, put me in the mindset to truly begin this project. The summer I traveled to Ireland was also the summer leading up to the referendum that would bring about Brexit. A shock for many people worldwide, the vote for the United Kingdom

to leave the European Union has created many questions of independence and national identity for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Another inspiration was a temporary art exhibition in Limerick, *Still (the) Barbarians*. One piece that was featured was an installation of screens playing interviews with Troubles prisoners and their families, produced by Jonathan Cummings. Another ode to the tradition of oral histories, this piece portrayed the domestic and emotional struggles experienced not only by political prisoners but by their families.

In similar bouts of serendipity, the woman who owned the Belfast AirBNB in which I stayed worked with ex-convicts to record their stories of prison life. I spent many mornings in her kitchen discussing my project and the implications the Belfast Tapes had on her work. She said that there was more reluctance of people to participate and more protocol to follow on her end. Another woman staying in the room next to mine in the house was a schoolteacher in the States. Her background was focused on history and theatre, leading me to discuss the idea of writing a play for my thesis project.

Additionally, I met with other experts in the field of oral histories. My meeting with Dr. Mike Cronin occurred in the Boston College Dublin board room, directly across from St. Stephen's Green. Cronin is adamant that the botched research ethics of the Belfast Tapes were a result of the lack of review given the project by Boston College (M. Cronin, personal correspondence, May 24, 2016). Thirty years ago, there was no problem putting a recorder in front of someone with little or no paperwork, but in this modern day, training and contracts are the norm. Unfortunately, these norms were disregarded by those working on the Belfast Project. The main reason for this was probably the volatile nature of the project, which by interviewing



revolutionaries about their actions in the Troubles, automatically set up the project for controversy.

Cronin suggests the inherent flaw in the project is the caveat that the interviewers would not release any tape until the participants' respective deaths. As Cronin states, the chance is that someone "will drop dead in 2002" and thus begin the release of the project before it even approaches completion (M. Cronin, personal correspondence, May 24, 2016). His suggestion is that the interviewers should have planned to release the tapes at a later time when all those interviewed would surely be deceased.

I met Professor Robbie Smyth the following day in the Griffith College dining hall, the same place where I discussed my experience at Griffith as an American student with him just a year before. During my time at Griffith, I was completely ignorant of Smyth's past involvement with Sinn Féin. He served as general secretary from 2003-2005 and had been involved in the leadership prior. His knowledge of the Troubles and the people involved seems much more comprehensive than he let on.

He is very suspicious of the Belfast Tapes project, which is justified to an extent. As he stated, "all Republicans are superstitious" (R. Smyth, personal correspondence, May 25, 2016). He began by establishing "Republican lingo." While the Troubles are typically referred to by academics and others as a "conflict," Republicans refer to it as "the War" (R. Smyth, personal correspondence, May 25, 2016).

His opinion of Ed Moloney is that he is "viciously anti-peace process". There is certainly a blatant divide between Sinn Féin Republicans and those who, as Smyth says, are anti-peace process. That term makes these people seem anti-peace, but even Smyth acknowledges that the peace process that ultimately produced the Good Friday agreement was not the desired result for

those who fought in the Troubles. For these people, Smyth says, it is clear that the War isn't over (R. Smyth, personal correspondence, May 25, 2016).

Part of the vehemence between Moloney and Sinn Féin is due to the fact that the party's leadership "phased out" Moloney. During the earlier part of the conflict, Moloney served as a press connection between Republicans and the media. He was a successful journalist who would go on to serve as a Northern Irish editor for two major newspaper publications. Censorship of the media began in Ireland in the 1970s; censorship of the conflict was not established in Britain until 1988. As Smyth states, "censorship on TV leads to censorship in society." When the peace process began, mainstream news outlets began to cover the events, thereby pushing journalists like Moloney to the outskirts.

Anthony McIntyre, on the other hand, grew up in Short Strand, where Republicans successfully pushed the Loyalists out "street by street" in 1969. This was the first victory in the area for what would grow to be the contemporary IRA, and it occurred in quite a small town. Perhaps part of the problem with Moloney and McIntyre working on a project like the Belfast Tapes was their emotional and mental proximity to the conflict. Smyth suggests that an external moderator – external to Ireland and to the war – may be the only way for a project like this to be successful.

In reading *Voices from the Grave*, Smyth realized that Brendan "Darkie" Hughes' account was heavily edited (R. Smyth, personal correspondence, May 25, 2016). While engaging, the narrative contains large gaps which make the presence of an editor apparent in Smyth's eyes. The project seems to be not a history, but something else, a medium by which fingers can be pointed especially at Gerry Adams. Like Cronin, Smyth questions whether the

interviews are representative of both sides of the Republican movement. There is not one current member of Sinn Féin involved in or interviewed for the project.

To get a better sense of oral histories, especially those dealing with sensitive material, I met with historian Brian Hanley, whose book, *The Lost Revolution*, chronicled the development of the Worker's Party and the history of the Official Irish Republican Army through primary interviews with participants (Hanley). Hanley and his research partner Scott Millar published the project in 2009, a year before the Belfast Tapes controversy began. In Hanley's opinion, *The Lost Revolution* would not have been approved had it not been published before the first Boston College subpoena (B. Hanley, personal correspondence, May 25, 2016). Hanley's discussion of his work as an oral historian helped me to think about how I would approach the writing and artistic portrayal of the conflict. In Hanley's experience, gathering stories from people led him to, if not sympathize or agree with their cause, at least understand their background and reasoning (B. Hanley, personal correspondence, May 25, 2016). Oral history's value lies in the primary aspect of it; without it, it can be difficult if not impossible to fully comprehend the motives of people involved in political or cultural movements.

As I made my way from the Republic to Northern Ireland, I arranged a meeting with Danny Morrison, the former Sinn Féin director of publicity and a well-known novelist and political commentator (Morrison, "Biography"). He described growing up on the Falls Road and his experience in academia. Morrison has been very critical of the Belfast Tapes project, citing it as "the worst oral archive project in the history of the world" ("Explain, Ed?"). Morrison's qualms about the project stem largely from the outright inclusion of Moloney's name and the blatant allegations against him. Morrison's name is also printed in *Voices from the Grave*, though only in accordance with his publicity of the hunger strikes and of Adams' political strategies

(Moloney, 234-235). Morrison was himself involved in the struggle for independence, running an independent and illegal station called Radio Free Belfast beginning in 1969 (Morrison, “Radio Free”). Morrison has been vocal about his belief that the project was a means by which certain individuals could point fingers at Moloney.

## **Reflections**

I want to preface the following section by stating that I did exercise caution while abroad. Because I was traveling alone, I was hyper-aware of my surroundings and cautious of where I discussed certain topics with my interviewees. I was warned by contacts in the Republic multiple times about which areas I should avoid in Northern Ireland and about which topics (politics) I should avoid in pubs and other public places.

My advice to others studying and traveling abroad is to exercise this caution but also to follow the feeling in one’s gut. I never did anything that made me feel overly uncomfortable or in any way worried about my safety.

My trip was one where my desire for the story drove some of my choices and ultimately led me to acquire insights from unexpected sources. After taking a Bloody Sunday walking tour with the son of Paddy Doherty, a man killed in the Bloody Sunday violence, I accepted the offer of a ride to the Free Derry museum. I was too tempted by the possibility of talking to him more about growing up in the Bogside, about having his father’s murder so clearly documented by newspapers and photographs. He introduced me to the museum staff, whom he knew personally and who led me around the small exhibition hall.

I met Morrison at his home on the Falls Road. Taking a taxi at 9 in the morning, my driver asked why I, an American college student, was on the Falls Road so early in the morning. ‘Visiting a friend,’ I replied. Perhaps not a friend of mine but a friend of Robbie Smyth’s.

Morrison was very welcoming as was his cat. As I was getting ready to leave, I asked him about the Roddy McCorley museum, a small Republican society exhibit that O'Donnell mentioned but about which I could find little information. Morrison gave me a number to call, then suggested I visit the Eileen Hickey Irish Republican History Museum. The easiest way to get there? Walk up to the corner and catch a black taxi, he said. Until this point, I thought of black taxis exclusively in association with tours of the Belfast political murals. Little did I know that for a meager £1,30, I could share a cab anywhere in the neighborhood. I flagged a taxi and got in, a heavily-tattooed man getting in right behind me. I sat across from him, next to an elderly woman and an older teenager. I admit I was nervous, having no familiarity with the area and being so clearly an outsider. The elderly woman asked to stop, having arrived at her desired location, and it was just me and the three men. I asked the driver where a certain intersection was, as directed by Morrison. His response was almost incomprehensible, so I settled into my seat, prepared to get off and find a café within walking distance where I could reassemble my thoughts and find the location on my phone. However, the two other passengers began explaining where I should get off. I suppose that of everything I learned during the trip, the most prominent was how alike we all are. The adage "don't judge a book" immediately comes to mind, but perhaps it is so often used because it rings true.

In fact, across all of my meetings with the aging men who were so involved in the Troubles, I see, perhaps ironically, how similar we are. In the midst of a study about a conflict that divided a nation, divided families, I found a humanity in each person I met that remarkably bound them to one another and even to this millennial American student.

Looking at the ethical considerations of the Boston College researchers, it is clear that the project lacked review. Perhaps, as Morrison and Smyth allude, the project was tainted from the

onset due to the personal biases of the researchers. While Moloney, McIntyre, and McArthur interviewed members of both Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries, they neglect various divides within these groups. Because project leaders framed the project as an archive chronicling the span of the Troubles, the absence of Republicans who were actively involved in and supportive of the peace process is a definite oversight. However, the main issue with the project and the reason it garnered and continues to garner controversy, at least in my opinion, is the indefinite protocol followed by the researchers after the project concluded. Moloney's decision to publish Hughes' transcript alongside his personal commentary in *Voices from the Grave* while others mentioned in the interview were still living placed a target on the project. Moloney and his editors' other blatant choice to print the names of prominent living persons, namely Adams, shed additional light on the project.

Oral histories provide unequalled access to the beliefs and reasoning of those who lived and fought in conflicts. The richness of content that one can gain through an oral archive is immense and can provide a comprehensive sense of the times. Unfortunately, the media frenzy and legal scandal surrounding the Belfast Tapes has had negative effects on oral history projects. As the subpoenas move forward, I will watch to see if the researchers face other legal ramifications. Nonetheless, the Belfast Tapes seem to be unrecoverable, stories lost or at the very least tainted.

### **Analysis**

In the preface to this publication, *Voices from the Grave: Two Men's War in Ireland*, History Professor Thomas Hachey and John J. Burns Library Director Robert O'Neill write, "This book represents the inaugural volume of a planned series of publications drawn from the Boston College Oral History Archive on the Troubles in Northern Ireland. The transcripts of

interviews with Irish Republican Army and Ulster Volunteer Force veterans, most of whom were operationally active, are housed at the University's Burns Library and are subject to prescriptive limitations governing access. Boston College is contractually committed to sequestering the taped transcriptions unless otherwise given a full release, in writing, by the interviewees, or until the demise of the latter...Boston College...offered a welcoming and neutral venue in which participants felt a sense of security and confidentiality that made it possible for them to be candid and forthcoming" (1). Perhaps more interesting given the events that were to transpire is Moloney's introduction to the book: "The key consideration in going ahead was the willingness of interviewees, even before the smoke of battle had cleared from the field, to open up candidly and comprehensively not only about their own lives and activities but about others' as well. It seemed unlikely that they would be receptive to the traditional academic researcher...and so, to maximise trust, and the value of the interviews, it was decided that the interviewers should be people the interviewees could trust, who broadly came from the same communities while being academically qualified individuals with a record of research" (6). Moloney continues on to acknowledge McIntyre and McArthur's contributions: "I can testify to their individual objectivity and commitment to the truth. The fault for any deficiency in the final product therefore lies at my door while the credit for what is good resides mostly at theirs. A defining rule for the project was that no material could be used until and unless the interviewee consented or had died" (7).

Close reading of these segments reveals key insights about the intentions of the project. First, and most blatantly, is Boston College's intention to publish other interviews from the archive. Of course, this has not and in my opinion will not occur due to the subpoenas surrounding the interviews that were released, namely Hughes', and others that were kept in the

archive but to which other recordings alluded. In my personal interviews with McIntyre and Moloney, both accentuated the doctrine agreed upon by the project leaders that these interviews would be kept secret. It is therefore interesting how the location of these tapes is explicitly stated, not just in the preface but also on the title page. While the choice to go public with the archive seems to have been agreed upon by those directing the project, there are discrepancies as to whether all interviewees were notified. Other discrepancies regarded information given to participants contribute to the legal questions. In the printed agreement provided for interviewees, there is an assurance that the interviews will be protected under the conditions of a signed written agreement or upon death “to the extent American law allows” (“Secrets of the Belfast Project”). In a 2014 piece for the *Boston Globe*, reporter Peter Schworm writes, “No lawyers at Boston College reviewed that participant agreement, a lapse that would come to symbolize the university’s shaky supervision of the project...Moloney said it was his understanding that university lawyers had reviewed the participant agreements to ensure confidentiality could not be threatened” (“BC reflects...”).

Allusions to the willingness of interviewees to reveal such sensitive information in both the preface and Moloney’s introduction reveal the confidence the researchers had that this project was both beneficial to its participants and to the future study of the Troubles and similar conflicts. However, in a later statement, Boston College spokesman Jack Dunn acknowledged the project’s shortcomings: “The regret comes from the selection of Ed Moloney as project director and Anthony McIntyre as IRA interviewer, given the extensive criticism that has been levied against them since the project was made public in 2010,” Dunn said to the *Boston Globe* in 2014 (Schworm, “BC will...”).



Delving into Moloney's introduction, I am surprised by his inclusion of the interviewees' willingness to divulge the actions of others beside themselves. This willingness ultimately led to Adams' inclusion in the archive and in the book. However, Moloney and his publishers made the distinct choice to leave Adams' name in the book. Adams is the one of the only living persons whose name is not removed from the published interview transcripts.

### **The Play**

The deliverable portion of this project went through many stages from an interactive performance art piece to an only auditory exhibition. I decided finally upon a play. Theatre has a longstanding history in Ireland, and its storytelling abilities parallel those of oral histories quite nicely.

The piece is titled "The Silenced," an ode to the Belfast Tapes interviewees whose stories may never be heard except by the authorities as well as to those Disappeared who never had the opportunity to tell them. I began solely focusing on the lives of the men involved in the oral history project portrayed onstage. During my trip to Belfast, I had seen an unexpected representation of female paramilitary participants. The Eileen Hickey Museum had entire sections dedicated to all-female IRA sectors. In his book *Contemporary Irish Republican Prison Writing: Writing and Resistance*, Lachlan Whalen comments that "[w]orks by incarcerated Republican women...have not received the attention that they deserve...For Ireland to move toward what I pray will be the new era, silence must become a thing of the past" (14). Women were strangely absent, however, from the Belfast Tapes story, only appearing as the supporting characters of Dolours Price and the haunting presence of Jean McConville. Many media outlets positioned Price as a woman plagued by guilt and mental incapacities, whereas McConville was exclusively the victim, a mother who had been unable to fight for her life. While aspects of these

character descriptions may be true, I wanted to give women a strong voice in the play. Whalen's analysis of prison literature married into my recollections of the Eileen Hickey exhibits. I wrote a scene about female revolutionaries in a jail resembling Armagh Prison. The female characters largely drive the revolution in many ways from recruiting Man 2 to propelling the dirty strike that would later turn into the hunger strike.

This play is very much a minimalist piece. Because the scenes move from one to the next quickly, there is little need nor time for full sets or elaborate costumes. Were I to fully stage it, I would only want pieces onstage to give a sense of the time and place; much of this is done by sound and by the actors themselves. In describing the importance of setting to Irish Republican prison writing, Whalen writes,

“people are not just from a place, they are the place; they are palimpsests of present and past cartography, the children of the effacements wrought by slow time and the sudden violence of the Troubles...Because the Cages have been demolished, the ex-POWs must recreate their former prison through testimony alone, they must bear witness to a vanished space of which they still remain a part” (18-19).

The idea of placing actors in a “vanished space”, in a blank canvas to tell their stories drove me to write a piece that was adaptable in both structure and meaning.

Fluidity is also found in the three eras of time: the Time, or the War; the past, sometime after the Time but before the current time; and the present. Memory, specifically memory in connection to the collective voice and to the theatre, was a thread I wanted to weave throughout. I felt the need to portray these different periods of time as without understanding life during the Troubles, or the Time as it is called in the play, the audience would not understand the gravity of

the Tapes. Oral histories themselves record memories, but memory is a fickle thing, subject to the effects of time and repression. Emilie Pine's chapter in *Ireland, Memory and Performing the Historical Imagination* examines what she calls "theatre-as-memory" as a means by which a performance piece can "not only [open] up the repressed memory banks of Irish society but also, in their fragmentation..., formally [mirror] the processes of memory and remembering" (Collins, 212). This relationship between history, oral histories and memory is one I examine throughout the play. The audience should question the reliability of some of the characters, most notably the Daughter and Man 3. The Daughter's unwillingness to identify the Politician as the leader of the Others who disappear the Mother is discordant with her pressing desire to bring her Mother to justice. Man 3's motives for starting the project are foggy; does he want to create an archive for the future study of the Time and of paramilitaries or is he trying to defame the Politician? And if he is attempting to depose the Politician, are his actions motivated by justice or a deep-seated vendetta? I believe arguments can be made for multiple sides. Christopher Collins and Mary Caulfield's introduction to *Ireland, Memory and Performing the Historical Imagination* correlates memory and history to time:

"[m]emory is concerned with the present tense. It is not interested in being written into the narrative because those that remember valorize it, improvise on it and thus, shape it. History is concerned with the past tense; it situates memory in the historical context. However, memory is not simply history's Other. Performance in Ireland is marked by the performativity of memory and as such the reception of a collective memory becomes collective history" (1).

This projection of collective memory on a group led me to think about how the Boston College researchers think about the project and the resulting subpoenas in the present. This concept is additionally exhibited through the chorus of actors who remain onstage throughout the piece. They are there as “ghosts” as I write in the opening note; each character is haunted by the past in some way. In *The Politics of Irish Memory: Performing Remembrance in Contemporary Irish Culture*, Emilie Pine describes the importance of the spectral figure in the Irish theatre as “the embodiment of the past in the figure of the ghost, the perpetual eruption of that ghostly figure into the present, and the special ability of theatre to provide a home for these ghosts in which death and the past, as imagined spaces, co-exist with life and the present” (154). I wanted to use my actors in a variety of ways, including in multiple roles as written in the note preceding the script. The doubling is written into the script and can be adapted depending on the cast size and capabilities.

Though the play’s opening and closing scenes explicitly reference the Troubles and the Belfast Tapes, the rest of the piece is written as to channel any civil war or conflict at any point in history. Hypothetically, the first scene and the news interjections in the last scene could be removed or replaced with segments about another conflict. This is the reason behind the almost nameless characters – *almost* nameless because The Officer calls the Daughter Sally; Woman 1 takes a letter addressed to Mary Martin; Woman 4 responds to Alms, short for Alma; Woman 3 gives her name as Jenny; Woman 2 does not say her own name but that of her brother; and Man 1 is referenced as Mackers by Man 3, a slight nod to McIntyre’s nickname – and the choice to rename the Troubles the Time.

One of my biggest struggles in writing this piece was in trying to frame the Daughter's story and Man 1, Man 2 and Man 3's stories fairly; I did not want the audience collectively to feel sympathy for one side over the other. Each character has flaws, or edges as I like to call them, and not only in the decisions they make. I want each character to feel developed, autonomous and real. The characters for whom this does not ring true are the Officer during the Time and the Politician. An Officer is present in each of the three stages of time; He or she is not the same Officer in each of these periods, though each Officer may be played by the same actor throughout the play. I find it difficult to have sympathy for the Officer in the prison or for the Officer who beats Man 2 in the street. While I do not want to communicate that all British or Unionist law enforcement was brutal and brutish, I do want to communicate the violence experienced by many Catholics and by paramilitary prisoners.

The other character who does not have a character arc is the Politician. This is an intentional choice. The Politician, whose occupation grants him a stage and a microphone, whose standing in society allows him an audience at virtually any moment, barely speaks in the play. In fact, he only speaks five lines, all of them in the beginning of the play. I am allowing the silenced a voice.

Throughout the piece are allusions to various bits of information I heard or saw on my trip and odes to the men and women who sat down to talk about their experience in the Troubles. For instance, Woman 1 shouts "vive la République" to the Officer in Vignette Seven. The decision to have her speak in French is very intentional; much of the Irish Republican rebellions took inspiration from the French Revolution. This is reflected in artwork and propaganda from both the 1916 uprising and from the Troubles. In the same scene, the idea for Woman 1 to receive a birthday card in the shape of a cell door is based on a 21<sup>st</sup> birthday card exhibited in the

Eileen Hickey museum. It was very striking to me, and I thought about how different my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday must have been from the recipient of this card. Its inclusion is a nod to the many birthdays and holidays spent by prisoners on both sides of the conflict.

Other bits of character development are meant to develop a sense of the times. Danny Morrison's explanation of life on the Falls Road in the late sixties and early seventies included a lot about the barricades in the streets and about the beginnings of Radio Free Belfast, which is why I included these details in Man 2's storyline.

A reading of "The Silenced" occurred April 11 in the Longstreet Theatre conference room. Three male actors and four female actors read all of the parts. The casting was as follows: Ben Crawford read Man 1; Parker Byun read Man 2 and Child 2; Sam Edelson read Man 3 and an Officer; Corey Drennon read the Daughter and Woman 4; Elizabeth Houck read the Mother and Woman 1; Rachael Bates read Woman 2 and Child 1; and Brooke Troxell read Woman 3, Child 3, and the Officer in Vignette Nine. I read the stage directions to give the audience a sense of setting and time since the reading was not staged. As can be observed in the attached script, the suggested doubling differs slightly from that of the reading due to the capabilities of my actors and how I wanted the play to read with this particular cast.

This reading helped me to identify things that worked well. While the scenes, or vignettes, are quite short, I feel ample time is devoted to the different sides of the story I wanted to tell. I also believe the language works well and flows. While the actors did not read with Irish accents, they did work with me on rhythm to make the pacing and intonation seem naturalistic. After two years of thinking about this project, it was rewarding to have it performed, to hear the words spoken.

## **Glossary**

*IRA*: Irish Republican Army

*UVF*: Ulster Volunteer Force

*PSNI*: Police Service of Northern Ireland

*Disappeared*: references those forcefully taken from their homes and murdered by a paramilitary group during the Troubles, often for a grievance against the group such as informing the enemy of plans and tactics or wronging a member of the leadership.

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**Appendix:**

**THE SILENCED**

**Kitty Janvrin**

**Characters:**

Mother

Daughter

Man 1

Man 2

Man 3

Politician

Officer

Woman 1

Woman 2

Woman 3

Woman 4

Children

The Others

Note: This piece is composed of vignettes, taking place over the span of four decades. The setting of each scene is noted as taking place in one of three different periods: during the Time, in the recent past, or in the present. Scenes set during various points of the Time, are noted in the stage directions. These scenes should be underscored by the sound of helicopters. This sound should become white noise until it stops for the scenes that take place in the past and the present, a subtle transition across time.

Actors do not have to be cast as a single role. Instead, they should be used in a variety of ways throughout the play. It should also be noted that the OFFICER in Vignette Three and Vignette Nine is not the same character as the OFFICER in Vignette Six or the same as in Vignette Seven. While it is suggested that one actor play both OFFICERS, these scenes take place in different time periods. If actors are doubled, here is an example of how this can be done:

The actor playing the DAUGHTER also plays WOMAN 4.

The actor playing WOMAN 2 also plays CHILD 1.

The actor playing WOMAN 3 also plays CHILD 3.

The actor playing MAN 2 also plays the POLITICIAN.

The actor playing MAN 1 also plays CHILD 2.

The actor playing WOMAN 1 also plays the MOTHER.

It is encouraged that all actors should remain on-stage throughout the play. They should stand along the back of the stage, facing upstage. During scenes in the prison, this is to emulate the watchfulness of guards. In other scenes, the presence of other characters should serve as ghosts of those who have been lost along the way.

## Prologue: A Cacophony

*Lines and recordings from relevant and more recent news sources may be used in this section. There may be music playing in the background, something like “Revolution Number 9” by the Beatles. These lines are delivered by faceless actors, either from off-stage, recordings or characters in silhouette. Lines should overlap until the last three.*

WOMAN 1: “The 30<sup>th</sup> of January 1972 was a day that shaped the course of modern Irish history.”<sup>i</sup>/

WOMAN 2: /March 2016. “Dublin staged its largest ever military parade as it marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Easter Rising, a botched but historically significant rebellion against British rule. Hundreds of thousands of people lined Dublin’s streets to watch”<sup>ii</sup>/

WOMAN 1: /“Jim Wray was lying on the ground, wounded and paralysed by the first burst of fire, when a Para shot him twice in the back from point-blank range just in front of his grandparents’ house.”<sup>iii</sup>/

MAN 3: /1974. “Scotland Yard detectives fear this attack could herald the start of a new summer offensive by the dissident Irish group on government buildings. A man with an Irish accent telephoned the Press Association with a warning only six minutes before the explosion.”<sup>iv</sup>/

WOMAN 3: /The point was to destroy property./

WOMAN 2: /“We were deeply conscious, too, of the appalling situation in places such as Londonderry, a city of the United Kingdom, which includes enclaves of total lawlessness.” Statement from the Prime Minister, March 1972./

MAN 1: /This project, we hope, will contribute to developing the peace process./

WOMAN 1: /Seventeen year-old Jackie Duddy “fell dying in the courtyard.”<sup>v</sup>/

WOMAN 3: /Never to outright kill people. Especially civilians. Not in our division at least./

MAN 2: /26 February, 1972. “Some of my friends have been insinuating that I am not really writing about Long Kesh, that these occasional jottings fail to convey the claustrophobic, deadening, frustrating, hopeless, vicious, inhuman nature of the camp. Is this better?”<sup>vi</sup>/

WOMAN 2: /“Ulster terrorist bomb kills 11.” November 9, 1987. “No organization claimed responsibility yesterday, but the Royal Ulster Constabulary’s Chief Constable said he was in no doubt that the IRA was responsible.”<sup>vii</sup>/

MAN 1: /People may withhold things. But what they do give us is still valuable./

MAN 3: /They gave us an ironclad agreement. The government couldn't touch these recordings. And why would they want to?/

DAUGHTER: /We are held, we should be governed by journalistic ethics./

WOMAN 1: /February 2017. "Britain's Ministry of Defense has been forced to defend a post on the Parachute Regiment's Facebook group calling for witnesses to a 1971 killing."<sup>viii</sup>/

WOMAN 3: /"I'm being treated like a terrorist. The government's doing nothing about this political witch-hunt."<sup>ix</sup>/

MAN 3: I'll tell you this: researchers, journalists, academics, we have to be able to research the illegal. If we don't, who will?

MAN 1: There's that group that now sees oral histories as a dangerous thing to do. We always thought of it as being a brave thing to do.

MAN 3: It's lost now. It's all lost.

### **Vignette One: In Passing**

*The stage is empty when the lights come up. All actors file on and stand along the back of the stage. Once in position, THE DAUGHTER turns and walks to the far side of the stage. As she does so, one of THE OTHERS turns around to meet her. They pause; there is a moment of dark recognition. THE DAUGHTER continues and finds her place in line.*

### **Vignette Two: The Story**

*All face upstage except MAN 1, the DAUGHTER, and PRISONER 1 who face the audience directly. As other characters speak, they turn to face the audience. A collage of time.*

MAN 1: This isn't a story.

WOMAN 1: It happened.

MAN 1: Is still happening. That's the first thing you ought to understand. Beyond that, you're getting into something that is much deeper than I think you know.

OFFICER: Once you get into it, you've to decide what side you want to tell.

DAUGHTER: I want my mother's story told. I don't know how to tell it, like. But how can you just let a whole life disappear—

WOMAN 1: My whole life disappeared behind bars.

DAUGHTER: With no explanation, no justification?

MAN 1: Justice isn't something that appears; you have to go after it.

DAUGHTER: So, I went after it, after her.

MAN 2: After, you're numb. I lived in that war for so long—

MAN 1: Because it was a war. We had guns and bombs.

MAN 2: For so long that I still feel like I'm in it.

MAN 1: And purpose. We were fighting for freedom.

WOMAN 1: For rights, for personhood, really.

DAUGHTER: For justice.

WOMAN 3: Peace.

OFFICER: For what was right.

POLITICIAN: Or what we thought was.

MAN 3: Now, the whole thing's called the Time. Not the War. The Time.

OFFICER: What a time it was.

WOMAN 1: We like to downplay things here. Otherwise, we'd call it what it was.

DAUGHTER: A time of murder.

POLITICIAN: They said I committed—

MAN 3: Essential.

DAUGHTER: Heartless.

POLITICIAN: Murder.

WOMAN 2: It started long before I was born.

MAN 1: I was born into a world where you were labelled—

DAUGHTER: Protestant.

POLITICIAN: Catholic.

MAN 2: As soon as you entered the world.

MAN 1: Until you lost all notion of God.

OFFICER: Terrorist.

WOMAN 2: Hero.

WOMAN 1: They put up the walls between the neighborhoods.

OFFICER: To keep the same sort of people together.

POLITICIAN: Or to keep certain people out.

MAN 3: The walls are still there today. They stand tall. They stand strong. They stand even though there's peace for most people now.

MAN 1: For most people.

DAUGHTER: For most people.

MAN 3: The first time I see the walls, I think of them as dividers between people with differing ideologies, between people who fought on different sides during the Time. But I'm told:

POLITICIAN: These walls make us feel safe. We know that it's much less likely that a bomb will be thrown through a window.

DAUGHTER: Or someone will invade our house.

MAN 3: So I stand there, looking at the walls that are safety barriers for some and reminders for everyone.

DAUGHTER: I'm reminded of her every day. My mother was...was a woman like no other. I guess that's what everyone says, right? Death makes everyone a fucking martyr. But your mother, when she's raised you and your brothers and sisters on her own all these years -- I'd be damned if I tried that. So, she had a strength in her, that's what that tells you.

MAN 1: I'll tell you what: strength means fuck all. Physical strength that is. It's all about controlling what's in your head. You can't think; when you think, you get soft. You see them as people.

MAN 3: Who?

WOMAN 1: Whoever's on the other side. Whoever invades your neighborhood and takes...everything.

DAUGHTER: The bastards who took my mother and killed her.

MAN 3: What happened when they came?

DAUGHTER: They took her life.

MAN 1: They took my life. WOMAN 1: They took my life.

*MAN 1 and WOMAN 1 join the other actors facing upstage.*

MAN 3: What did you feel when they found your mother's remains?

DAUGHTER: Like I was a kid again. Like it was happening all over again.

OFFICER: If it happened all again, I wonder if I'd have done anything different.

**Vignette Three: The Discovery**

*Present. We are in the DAUGHTER's house.  
Perhaps she is doing household chores or sitting  
enjoying a morning tea. There is a knock.*

DAUGHTER: It's open!

OFFICER: Sally.

DAUGHTER: (taken aback) Hi...hello. What are you—

OFFICER: Is Liam here?

DAUGHTER: Hopefully getting ready for school.

OFFICER: Your husband?

DAUGHTER: Already left for work. (Pause) What's the matter?

OFFICER: They found her.

DAUGHTER: What?

OFFICER: They found her. Your mother.

*THE DAUGHTER sits down carefully.*

DAUGHTER: Where?

OFFICER: About 40 minutes south of your house.

DAUGHTER: Oh my god.

*They sit in silence for a moment.*

DAUGHTER: I—I should check on Liam.

*THE DAUGHTER turns to exit.*

OFFICER: I would like to take you to the station to look at some things.

*THE DAUGHTER nods her head and exits. The  
OFFICER pours himself a glass of water. The  
DAUGHTER reenters.*

DAUGHTER: Why didn't you call me?



OFFICER: They were going to. I thought you should hear it in person.

DAUGHTER: How?

OFFICER: Did they find her?

DAUGHTER: Yes.

OFFICER: I'd really like to explain everything at the station.

DAUGHTER: Please.

OFFICER: Well, someone revealed some information about a woman's...disappearance around the same time as your mother's. It was leaked, and we figured there might be some connection. It was her. We DNA tested the, uh, remains. (The DAUGHTER does not respond.) Are you alright?

DAUGHTER: It's been just so long. (Pause) I haven't known anything for three decades. Thirty-one years and I never really knew why it happened to her. It's like she became something not even real.

OFFICER: I know it took time. We want this to give you and your siblings some peace.

DAUGHTER: What about the killers?

OFFICER: Evidence is scarce, as you know.

DAUGHTER: Yes, but the person who gave the hint. Where'd you get that information?

OFFICER: I would really like to take you in—

DAUGHTER: Dammit! I...we've known each other since we was kids. You met my mother before... and now you're telling me you can't give me anything.

OFFICER: A civilian found her body. It's a positive match.

DAUGHTER: Thirty-one fucking years. And no one has paid for her death—

OFFICER: It's not--

DAUGHTER: Except her children. Ten kids, motherless, homeless.

OFFICER: We found the body. We know how she died.

DAUGHTER: Yes, but why. That's what I want.

OFFICER: It was a rougher time, y'know.

DAUGHTER: I lived through it. I know.

OFFICER: They—they thought she was an informer.

DAUGHTER: My mother had nothing to do with...any of that.

OFFICER: I can only tell you what I know. (Pause) Look, there's this project. Recordings of people involved in the Time pointing fingers, calling us the bad guys. It's very secretive, but somebody leaked part of an interview.

DAUGHTER: Well, are you going after it? After these people admitting to murder?

OFFICER: Yes. But there's a lot of legalities involved. If you could identify anyone, anything that you remember/

DAUGHTER: I should call my family.

OFFICER: Yes, of course.

DAUGHTER: (Pause) Can I hear it?

OFFICER: Hear what?

DAUGHTER: The tapes.

#### **Vignette Four: The Project**

*The past. Two chairs face each other. There is a small table between them. MAN 2 sits, followed by MAN 1.*

MAN 1: Comfortable?

MAN 2: Sure. Got a smoke?

MAN 1: Thanks for meeting me.

MAN 2: Been a long time.

MAN 1: Yeah, you're an old man.

MAN 2: Me? You look feckin' terrible.

MAN 1: Lots happened.

MAN 2: Guess so.

MAN 1: How's life up north?

MAN 2: The same. Well, not the same as when we were up there fighting but...the same as since the treaty. Mostly.

MAN 1: You ever see anyone from the neighborhood?

MAN 2: All the time. Tommy said to tell you hello.

MAN 1: You told him?

MAN 2: Just that I was passing through, might meet up with you.

MAN 1: Because this thing that we're working on here/

MAN 2: /I know.

MAN 1: I just worry, ya know.

MAN 2: Trust me. I've always been the cautious one, too.

MAN 1: You're still like you were when you were a kid, just running the radio station.

MAN 2: Seems like a lifetime ago.

*MAN 1 pulls out a recorder and begins to set it up.*

MAN 2: You recording all of these?

MAN 1: Yes.

MAN 2: Anyone refuse to?

MAN 1: A few. Some don't even want to meet with me.

MAN 2: Can't say I blame them.

MAN 1: There are lots of people with a bad taste in their mouth. About me, about this project.

MAN 2: What kinda risk are we talking about?

MAN 1: Nothing's going to happen with these recordings.

MAN 2: So. Where do you want me to start?

MAN 1: Well, I want your background. Growing up in the shitty neighborhood, getting involved in the Time.

MAN 2: Alright.

MAN 1: And I want...about the Disappearing.

MAN 2: I can't give you names. Not with it being fucking recorded.

MAN 1: Who's going to hear it? We're keeping this project quiet.

MAN 2: For how long? Til I'm dead and gone?

MAN 1: Sure.

MAN 2: (Pause) Is it on?

**Scene Five: The House**

*The Time. A small house, dirty and cramped. There are too many people living here. THE DAUGHTER sits on the floor playing with a doll. She is seven years old. Other cast members become other CHILDREN, all young and rambunctious. They may enter and exit as they go on the many adventures that childhood brings. THE MOTHER sits in a chair, smoking. She always smokes now.*

CHILD 1: Give it back to me!

CHILD 2: Why should I? It's my turn.

MOTHER: Settle down.

CHILD 2: But it's my turn.

DAUGHTER: Can't you just share?

CHILD 3: Mum, can I have a glass of milk?

DAUGHTER: Quiet down, will you.

CHILD 3: Mum!

MOTHER: Yes?

CHILD 3: Can I have a/

CHILD 1: /Tell him to give it back to me.

*Someone bangs on the door.*

CHILD 3: Milk. Just a small glass.

*Someone bangs harder. Someone's patience is running out.*

MOTHER: Milk. Yes. A glass of milk before dinner.

*THE MOTHER stands and goes to pour a glass of milk.*

*Pounding. There is more than one somebody pounding on the door.*

*Then, THE OTHERS enter. They wear masks, black with holes cut out so that the eyes are seen while the face is completely covered.*

MOTHER: (to the lead OTHER) Please.

*THE DAUGHTER stands and collects the other CHILDREN. They hug and crowd around each other. Their voices have suddenly vanished.*

*THE OTHERS circle THE MOTHER.*

MOTHER: Please. My children. Please.

*THE MOTHER runs toward the children, knocking over the chair. THE OTHERS grab her, pull her down. THE DAUGHTER screams. THE OTHERS drag her off.*

DAUGHTER: Mama!

*Some of THE OTHERS reenter. One picks up the chair. The other CHILDREN remain huddled together. The DAUGHTER stands. Suddenly, time has slowed. There is no concept of what is reality or what is imagined by THE DAUGHTER. She reaches toward one of THE OTHERS. THE DAUGHTER removes his mask and we see that it is THE POLITICIAN. A moment here and then we are back to everything moving quickly. THE POLITICIAN takes his mask from THE DAUGHTER and exits. THE OTHERS turn and resume their positions on the back of the stage.*

### **Vignette Six: The Choice**

*The Time. MAN 2 is younger, toying around with a radio transmitter.*

WOMAN 1: You're back.

MAN 2: Long time.

WOMAN 1: Just dropping in to see what the neighborhood's become?

MAN 2: Visiting my mum.

WOMAN 1: What are you working on today?

MAN 2: Oh, just toying around with something.

WOMAN 1: It's weird having barricades out in the streets, isn't it?

MAN 2: Makes me feel like I'm on the set of a film.

WOMAN 1: Come up here often enough, you'll get used to it.

MAN 2: Can you ever get used to it.

WOMAN 1: We have. We have to. (Pause) You know how to build a radio?

MAN 2: Working on a transmitter now.

WOMAN 1: So you can play anything you want over it, like?

MAN 2: Well, that'd be the idea.

WOMAN 1: You know, we're looking for someone to help us out with a project.

MAN 2: I'm not interested.

WOMAN 1: We want to run a radio station just playing all the stuff they won't let us. Songs of the Republic, speeches from the neighborhood leadership/

MAN 2: /I'm not interested.

WOMAN 1: You're so against joining up, but you think just like us.

MAN 2: I'm working on my A-levels.

WOMAN 1: You educated people think school is so goddamn important.

MAN 2: It is important.

WOMAN 1: More important than fighting for our independence? (Pause) You can't tell me you want to stay ruled by someone who fucking invaded this country and never had the decency to leave. You said it yourself, can you ever get used to living like this/

MAN 2: Of course not.

WOMAN 1: Then how do you sit here, content to just read about theories and numbers and the great revolutionaries? You could fecking be one.

MAN 2: I need to go before the curfew hits.

WOMAN 1: Exactly. Doesn't it bother you that you have to leave the neighborhood at a specific time so you're not harassed on the streets? Or thrown in jail? You know that there's something worth fighting for. Even if it's this shitty street we grew up on. We need people with some smarts.

MAN 2: I can't.

WOMAN 1: 'Cause of your mother?

MAN 2: Because I can't join you.

*MAN 2 walks away. WOMAN 1 resumes her place in line, but faces downstage. She watches as MAN 2 walks across the stage and is met by an OFFICER.*

OFFICER: Out awfully late, aren't we?

*MAN 2 does not respond. He knows not to respond, to keep his head down.*

OFFICER: Boy, I'm talking to you.

*The OFFICER blocks MAN 2's path. MAN 2 does not look up.*

OFFICER: Don't you know that there's a curfew?

MAN 2: I'm heading to catch my bus back to school.

OFFICER: A schoolboy, huh? You don't fucking fool me. I know you, know that you and your friends are all Paras, terrorists. You're filthy Catholic terrorists. Aren't you?

MAN 2: I'm heading back to university.

*The OFFICER knees him in the stomach, swiftly.*

OFFICER: How dare you lie to me? Get up. Worthless.

*MAN 2 attempts to stand, but the OFFICER kicks him again and again. The OFFICER is losing control. A brutal beating follows.*

OFFICER: MotherfuckingPara. You're all worthless shits, no respect for all that's been given you. You want to leave this country, fucking leave. Your stolen guns and homemade bombs don't scare us.

*The OFFICER is tired.*

OFFICER: Because you know that we'll win. This isn't your country; it's ours.

*The OFFICER leaves MAN 2 on the ground. He resumes his place along the back wall. MAN 2 struggles to his place in line, passing WOMAN 1. They lock eyes. WOMAN 1 extends her hand. MAN 2 takes it, an agreement.*

### **Vignette Seven: The Fire**

*The Time. A small cell, damp and dirty. All actors face the audience; they are the watchful eyes of the prison in which we find ourselves. THE OFFICER escorts WOMAN 3 into the cell.*

OFFICER: Lookie here. A new one, just brought in today. Don't worry, we stripped her down twice to make sure she's not a trouble-maker.

WOMAN 2: Mail today?

OFFICER: Fuck, you're all trouble-makers, otherwise you wouldn't be here. Just think, you could've been an upstanding citizen. Although I like you down on yer knees/



WOMAN 2: /Is there mail today?

OFFICER: Bitch.

*He looks through the papers in his hand.*

OFFICER: Mary Martin.

*WOMAN 1 takes the letter from him. It is in the shape of a cell door. She turns back to the cot; the OFFICER grabs her wrist.*

OFFICER: Anything you want to say to me?

WOMAN 1: Vive la République!

OFFICER: Ungrateful bitch.

*He yanks her up and pushes her against the wall. He begins to pat her down violently. He turns her around, grabs her head and turns it to him.*

OFFICER: I bet you think you can do whatever the fuck you want in here. But you're a terrorist, remember? And you're part of this empire, same as me. Only you're a cunt, aren't you? A worthless shit. Any more trouble from this cell, you don't even want to know what the fuck we'll do to youse. Watch yourself.

WOMAN 3: You okay?

WOMAN 1: Anyone got a smoke?

WOMAN 4: You know it won't hurt making friends with the officers. Getting them to turn a blind eye every once in a while.

WOMAN 3: Be careful with that. They think we're fucking terrorists.

WOMAN 2: Yeah, terrorists they let associate with each other in cages. Hey Alms.

WOMAN 4: Huh?

WOMAN 2: Smoke?

WOMAN 1: Yeah because we're not fucking terrorists. The state couldn't afford to put us all in solitary anyway.

WOMAN 2: The outside's working on getting us political status.

WOMAN 3: Yeah, they've said that since this war started. What's that look for?

WOMAN 2: What look?

WOMAN 3: Not you. Mary.

WOMAN 1: It's just...my fucking brother.

WOMAN 4: He send you a card?

WOMAN 2: What's it say?

WOMAN 1: A birthday card, that's all.

WOMAN 3: Happy belated.

WOMAN 1: In the shape of a cell door. "Happy twenty-first, sis." Only he would think of this. Cheeky wanker.

WOMAN 4: Can I see?

WOMAN 2: So how'd they pick you up?

WOMAN 3: Car bomb.

WOMAN 1: Someone saw you plant it?

WOMAN 3: Supposedly. Killed five.

WOMAN 1: Civilians?

WOMAN 3: Yup.

WOMAN 1: Shit.

WOMAN 2: You didn't warn the fuckin' neighborhood?

WOMAN 3: 'Course we warned them. The brigade just didn't pass on the message.

WOMAN 2: Fuckers. They like to make us look like we don't care about the people in our own neighborhoods.

WOMAN 1: When it's really them.

WOMAN 4: So what's your name?

WOMAN 3: Jenny.

WOMAN 1: From?

WOMAN 3: High Road.

WOMAN 2: That's where my brother is. Dean O'Connor? (Pause) Thought I'd ask.

WOMAN 1: Is there any news from the outside?

WOMAN 3: Tons.

WOMAN 1: Anything about the boys locked up in the Cages?

WOMAN 3: They're fighting back.

WOMAN 4: How?

WOMAN 3: Refusing to wear prison uniforms. They want political status.

WOMAN 1: Good on 'em. We're not feekin' criminals.

WOMAN 2: The guards already force us out of our clothes more often than not as it is. The boys have it different.

WOMAN 3: It's more than just refusing uniforms. They're refusing to bathe, smearing shit all over the cells. Walking around in nothing but blankets.

WOMAN 4: And you think we should do that, too? This prison stinks as it is.

WOMAN 3: It'll make it less tolerable for them. Maybe they'll think twice before barging in here whenever they want.

WOMAN 2: Yeah, how? They don't give a fuck. We're nothing but animals to them.

WOMAN 3: Fine, okay. Let's prove 'em right then. A dirty protest'll get the attention of everyone outside of the walls, like. The men are already showing that.

WOMAN 1: I think she's right. We have to show uniformity with the men, show that this fight isn't going to end just because they throw us in prison.

WOMAN 4: How did we get to this?

WOMAN 3: We'll make it through. We're fighting for something, something good.

WOMAN 4: What about our times of the month?

WOMAN 1: They already like to see us bleed out in the streets. We'll see how they like it on the walls, on the floor.

WOMAN 2: It won't be a feckin' crutch.

WOMAN 3: It'll be a rallying cry. Think the others'll agree?

WOMAN 1: We're here together. In this war together.

*WOMAN 1 begins removing her clothes, followed by the other WOMEN. As each finishes, she folds her clothes ceremoniously and sets them on the edge of the stage before returning to her position in the center of the stage. WOMAN 1 places her birthday card on top of the pile of clothing. They exit the stage.*

*The OFFICER approaches the pile of clothing. He picks up the card, reads it. He considers tearing it,*

*but he decides to take it off with him along with the pile of clothes.*

**Vignette Eight: The Project**

*The past. MAN 3 is smoking a cigarette.*

MAN 1: I don't know that I want to be involved.

MAN 3: The college is backing it.

MAN 1: What interest do they have?

MAN 3: Dunno, history for posterity's sake and all that.

MAN 1: We could get a bullet in the head for this, for having people admit their involvement/

MAN 3: /It's very unlikely.

MAN 1: It's a tenant to murder anyone who admits their involvement.

MAN 3: Fine, it's a risk. But who's going to hear the interviews? We keep everything very quiet, we'll have to.

MAN 1: Even so/

MAN 3: /Have them sign contracts. The university wants that anyway.

MAN 1: How much protection does a piece of paper offer?

MAN 3: Enough.

MAN 1: No one's going to talk if they have to sign something. It makes it too easy to trace.

MAN 3: Fine, don't have them sign anything. Look, they've assured me that no one will touch this archive if we go through with it. There's no point. We're talking about stuff that happened decades ago.

MAN 1: What sort of stories do you want? Who will talk to you?

MAN 3: We'll have to record both sides, ya know. Both Republican and Unionist.

MAN 1: Still, who's going to talk?

MAN 3: There are lots of people who'd like to expunge their conscience. We'll give them a way to do that, assurances that these stories will only be heard as voices from the grave.

MAN 1: (Pause) We could really do something good here.

MAN 3: Exactly. Part of the peace process.

MAN 1: Alright.

MAN 3: Do you think you could get some of them to talk who were around when that woman was disappeared?

MAN 1: The mother? (Pause) I can't do that.

MAN 3: Why? It's part of this whole thing, shows the brutality of the Time.

MAN 1: You know why.

MAN 3: People need to know. (Pause) He's denied his involvement over and over, but we know. Do you really want a man grandstanding who won't even acknowledge that he fought alongside you?

MAN 1: That's dangerous.

MAN 3: I want...I need an account that says he was present for the murder, that he was part of the leadership. Don't you think that's important, for people to know he was one of you?

MAN 1: I do.

MAN 3: And you know who to talk to.

MAN 1: Yes.

MAN 3: We'll finally let them know. It was him.

*MAN 3 points to THE POLITICIAN who steps forward to meet the accusation. The*

*WOMEN reenter, dressed now in the clothes of civilians.*

**Vignette Nine: The Subpoena**

*Two simultaneous presents. The DAUGHTER and the OFFICER share one side of the stage; MAN 1 and MAN 3, the other.*

DAUGHTER: So?

OFFICER: Good news.

MAN 1: What a surprise.

MAN 3: Sit down.

MAN 1: You're making me nervous. Coming all the way here without/

MAN 3: You should be.

DAUGHTER: My god.

MAN 1: My god. What's wrong?

OFFICER: We got it. A subpoena for the tapes.

DAUGHTER: I can't believe it.

OFFICER: I mean, not me. But you pushing for it helped tremendously.

MAN 1: I thought they couldn't touch us.

MAN 3: The fucking university. They told me, they told us that no one could.

MAN 1: We signed contracts.

MAN 3: I know. You don't think I've been looking over them all goddamn day?

MAN 1: Shit.

MAN 3: They weren't going to tell us, Mackers. Weren't even going to give us a heads up until we saw them in bloody court.

MAN 1: How is that justifiable?

MAN 3: Because they don't fuckin' have to. They're not legally bound to anything in regard to us.

OFFICER: I mean they're saying that the researchers are going to be absolutely dumbfounded. They didn't follow any sort of ethical guidelines or anything, from what I hear. The amount of evidence on those tapes...

MAN 3: There's no evidence in any of those interviews. Nothing that will hold up in court.

MAN 1: The people we interviewed...

MAN 3: I know.

MAN 1: This puts them in danger. This puts us in danger. (Pause) Fuck.

MAN 3: You didn't record your own story, did you?

MAN 1: We're still liable for having any hand in this project, don't you see? They're militaristic. They're not liable to forgive such a big/

MAN 3: I know, alright? God, ten years spent on this project, gone. Disappeared.

DAUGHTER: Are they releasing of all of the tapes?

MAN 1: All of the tapes?

OFFICER: Just the ones that mention your mother. For now.

DAUGHTER: I can't believe it.

OFFICER: This could lead to more discoveries, more arrests. From what I understand, other people talked about other disappearances. It's all there, locked away. But now that we can push for release of those recordings/

DAUGHTER: Justice.

OFFICER: For you. And for other families.



MAN 1: How can they fucking take them? Is the university releasing them?

MAN 3: They told me they'd fight it, but they're not. Not like they should. The project is ruined.

MAN 1: There's still hope that they'll just take some of them, leave the rest/

DAUGHTER: We're not going to let them leave anything. I want to help all the people like me, all the people like my mother.

OFFICER: There's some speculation this project could uproot the peace process.

DAUGHTER: Without hearing these tapes, I'll have no peace. I lost everything, don't you see? And now I...I could get it back.

MAN 3: I wish we could take it back. The entire project. Destroy it. Burn it.

MAN 1: There's still a chance/

MAN 3: /The entire archive is tainted.

DAUGHTER: This is what I've been praying for. All these years praying to God.

MAN 3: It's lost. It's all lost.

**Vignette Ten: The Reassurance**

*The Time. The MOTHER and MAN 2 sit in the MOTHER's cramped kitchen.*

MOTHER: I feel like something bad's right around the corner.

MAN 2: I'm sure it's not.

MOTHER: They've cut me completely out. You're the only one who will even talk to me.

MAN 2: There's a lot going on. They've just been coordinating with other neighborhoods, coordinating the prison protests.

MOTHER: I could help.

MAN 2: It's a lot, getting messages in and out of the Cages. Making everything look cohesive. Making a clear statement.

MOTHER: They haven't said anything about me.

MAN 2: You have nothing to worry about.

MOTHER: I worry...

MAN 2: What?

MOTHER: I heard rumors that they're taking out informers. That they're suspicious.

MAN 2: Well, you're not an informer are you?

MOTHER: I worry.

MAN 2: If there's something you need to tell me/

MOTHER: /You know I've always fought against them occupying these streets. I'm a Republican through and through.

MAN 2: I know. They all know.

MOTHER: I helped run a lot of missions before I got married.

MAN 2: You don't need to tell me. I've heard the stories.

MOTHER: But my kids, they won't have anything if something happens/

MAN 2: You're worried over nothing.

MOTHER: To me. Nothing can happen to me for their sakes.

MAN 2: Look at me. There's nothing you should worry about.

*MAN 2 squeezes the MOTHER's hand and walks away. He is met by the POLITICIAN and the OTHERS. There is a plan. The OTHERS nod in agreement. MAN 2 pauses. The POLITICIAN*

*extends his hand. MAN 2 hesitates. He reluctantly shakes it. The OTHERS and the POLITICIAN don their masks. They surround the MOTHER as MAN 2 watches from a distance. She disappears, and the OTHERS resume their positions along the back of the stage.*

### **Vignette Eleven: The Decision**

*The past. MAN 2 is again sitting across from MAN 1. We understand that he has just finished his story. MAN 1 stops the recorder, which sits on the table between them. They sit in silence for a moment.*

MAN 2: I should tell you something.

MAN 1: Sure.

MAN 2: I have cancer.

MAN 1: I...I am sorry/

MAN 2: /Lung.

MAN 1: Huh.

MAN 2: It's pretty bad.

MAN 1: You're still smoking.

MAN 2: Hard to give it up. And there's no point, really. They don't think I have long.

MAN 1: You're telling me because you don't want me to release your interviews. When you die.

MAN 2: I'm telling you...I've given you my story. You do with it what you will. I'm telling you because I won't be around to see what happens when you do.

MAN 1: Why'd you agree to do it?

MAN 2: Talk to you, ya mean? I dunno. Thought it would be good for future generations to know... Why'd you agree to do it?

MAN 1: I thought I was doing something for the community, our community. Finally giving some ownership of the Time back to the people who fought in it, who actually believed in it.

MAN 2: You don't think that now?

MAN 1: I dunno. Who knows what will happen with it now.

MAN 2: Thanks for bringing me on. No, I'm proud to have been a part of this. Even if no one hears my story for decades, I'm glad I left it behind.

*MAN 2 exits quietly. He leaves the stage. The OTHERS now face MAN 1, who sits for a moment before turning the recorder back on.*

MAN 1: My name is...unimportant. I have never admitted my involvement in the Time other than now, as I record it here.

MAN 2: "Audio recordings locked inside a college library...might help solve a decades-old murder mystery, but the release of those tapes could damage the fragile peace."<sup>x</sup>

MAN 1: I grew up in a poor neighborhood. I never understood my mother's religion except in that it branded us as other.

WOMAN 1: "The UK's decision to leave the EU has coincided with a renewed focus on demographic shifts in Northern Ireland. The rapid increase in the Catholic population...has been well catalogued. What is less well known outside the North...is the extent to which the two communities still live apart after 20 years of the peace process."<sup>xi</sup>

MAN 1: I believed in a unified country, ruled by the people. I believed in peace.

WOMAN 3: "Almost everyone...is essentially kind and peaceful. Even in the most Loyalist of towns, just a few years after the Good Friday Agreement, a group of us...could stand in bright yellow jackets emblazoned with the logo of an organization"/

WOMAN 2: /"An organization which had publicly defended rights of members of the IRA, and more people gave us money than hassle."<sup>xii</sup>

MAN 1: I joined up when I was fifteen, when I understood that no matter how loudly I screamed, I wouldn't be heard.

OFFICER: "The abduction, murder and secret burial of Provisional IRA victims during the Troubles was an ugly secret...Failure to resolve these cases and bring an element of closure to

the relatives of victims prompted the Catholic Primate Archbishop Eamon Martin to appeal for those with information to come forward at a special Mass.”<sup>xiii</sup>

MAN 1: The neighborhood commander gave me a gun, and I hid it from my mother under my bed. My father found it and told me he was proud of me.

DAUGHTER: “Three of the four [men] are convicted killers...The fourth was imprisoned for offences that included attempted murder.”<sup>xiv</sup>

MAN 1: I remember the first time I used it, when the Unionist paras started shooting at us in our own neighborhood. We were caught off guard. They had taught us how to use weapons, like, but I was scared. I was so young. I saw one of ‘em, shooting at me from behind a barricade. I lifted my gun. I pulled the trigger. Silence.

*Blackout.*

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<sup>i</sup> Bloody Sunday handout, Free Derry Museum

<sup>ii</sup> Hjelmgard, K. (2016, Mar. 27). “Ireland commemorates Easter Rising centennial.” *USA Today*. Retrieved from <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2016/03/27/easter-rising-dublin-commemorations/82316982/>.

<sup>iii</sup> Bloody Sunday handout, Free Derry Museum

<sup>iv</sup> n.a. (1974). “IRA bombs parliament.” *BBC News*. Retrieved from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/june/17/newsid\\_2514000/2514827.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/june/17/newsid_2514000/2514827.stm)

<sup>v</sup> Bloody Sunday handout, Free Derry Museum

<sup>vi</sup> O’Hagan, D. (1972). “Letters from Long Kesh.” *The Irish Times*. Retrieved from the National Library Ireland archive.

<sup>vii</sup> Hearst, D. (1987, Nov. 9). “Ulster terrorist bomb kills 11.” *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/1987/nov/09/northernireland.davidhearst>

<sup>viii</sup> n.a. (2017, Feb. 3). “Military defends ‘political witch-hunt’ Facebook post calling for Troubles murder witnesses.” *RT News*. Retrieved from <https://www.rt.com/uk/376233-parachute-regiment-northern-ireland/>.

<sup>ix</sup> n.a. (2017, Feb. 3). “Military defends ‘political witch-hunt’ Facebook post calling for Troubles murder witnesses.” *RT News*. Retrieved from <https://www.rt.com/uk/376233-parachute-regiment-northern-ireland/>.

<sup>x</sup> Robertson, N. and Shiffman, K. (2012, May 25). “Tapes hold N. Ireland murder secrets.” *CNN*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2012/05/25/world/europe/wus-n-ireland-secrets/index.html>.

<sup>xi</sup> Nolan, P. (2017, Apr. 1). “Two tribes: A divided Northern Ireland.” *The Irish Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/two-tribes-a-divided-northern-ireland-1.3030921>

<sup>xii</sup> Ramsay, A. (2017, Apr. 9). “Will Brexit deliver a united Ireland?” *Open Democracy UK*. Retrieved from <https://www.opendemocracy.net/uk/adam-ramsay/will-brexit-deliver-united-ireland>

<sup>xiii</sup> n.a. (2017, Apr. 11). “‘The Disappeared’: Search for closure goes on.” *The Irish Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/editorial/the-disappeared-search-for-closure-goes-on-1.3043852>

<sup>xiv</sup> Carswell, S. (2017, Apr. 8). “The ex-IRA men: ‘United Ireland? It’s all guff’.” *The Irish Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/the-ex-ira-men-united-ireland-it-s-all-guff-1.3041131>