

Life in the North

In Northern Ireland, the Catholics remained oppressed. Government positions and top jobs all went to Protestants. Property qualifications prevented Catholics from voting. During the 1960s, as civil rights movements sprung up around the globe, one also sprung up in the Catholic ghettos—demanding equal rights, equal treatment. Many held out the dream of a united Ireland. The Catholic fervor was met by an equal fervor from the Protestants, who feared not only losing their privileges, but also their power.

With violent confrontations such as the Battle of the Bogside in 1969 and Bloody Sunday in 1972, things turned violent. On both sides, militias were formed. The Protestants relied upon the police—the Royal Ulster Constabulary, or RUC, and the division known as the B-Specials, which were notorious for their abuse of Catholics. The Catholics, on the other hand, had the IRA.

The IRA

The Irish Republican Army had formed during the independence movement earlier in the century. After independence, the new Irish government prohibited the IRA from bearing arms or drilling publicly. But the IRA never completely died. It merely went underground.

For several decades, the IRA was not a violent organization. They sought to mobilize the working class. But embattled Catholics in the ghetto began to urge a violent response to the violence befalling them from the RUC and the B-Specials. A faction split off, calling itself the "Provisional IRA," or the Provos, after the "Provisional" government of Ireland announced by the leaders of the 1916 movement. Their goal was to destabilize the country through terrorist attacks until the British were forced to withdraw. Meanwhile, the Official IRA, known as the Officials, or colloquially as the "Sticks," pledged to fight for freedom through nonviolent tactics. But their claims of nonviolence seemed hollow when their own members were accused of physical violence against the Provos to punish them for their operations. And eventually they began their own campaign of violence. For a time, during the 1970s, both branches of the IRA were carrying out separate terrorist attacks.

The New Troubles

Through the 1970s, violence was a daily part of life in Northern Ireland, particularly in the cities of Belfast and Londonderry. The IRA took the fight to Britain, setting off bombs in London and other cities as part of their protest. At the same time, Protestant paramilitary militia groups had been carrying out their own attacks. Both sides traded atrocities.

In the 1980s, the internment situation had reached a nadir. Catholic prisoners were demanding that they be treated as prisoners of war rather than as common criminals. They argued that there was a difference between someone who carried out violence for a political cause and someone who did it for personal gain. They wanted to be treated according to the Geneva Convention, which demanded that prisoners be separated from common criminals, that they be allowed to wear their own clothing, and be allowed freedom to organize within the prison.

The protests finally took the form of a hunger strike by prisoners. The British Government proved unresponsive. Led by Bobby Sands, 10 hunger strikers died one by one over the course of 1981. Their faces, plastered on walls and in clubs, became symbols of Catholic will.

Barricades

In parts of the Catholic neighborhoods that were thickest with IRA activities, the British built road blocks to keep traffic to a minimum. The goal was also to make it harder for IRA soldiers to escape when the Army raided. They left one road in and out of each neighborhood open.

The Catholics that lived there turned this to their advantage. With only one road in and out, they only had to block off one road to prevent the Army from entering at all. To this end, they made barricades out of anything at all—cars, construction materials, traffic signs, old doors.



JAKE ALSTON (Danny/Second Soldier)

Jake has shared the singer-songwriter stage with the likes of Marty Stuart, Sixpence None The Richer, Bad Company, and Amy Grant. His Composer/Arranger credits include the WB's *Charmed* and *One Tree Hill*. His acting credits include: Dreamworks Pictures' *The Last Castle*, WB's *Charmed*, and the new NBC sitcom, *Come to Papa*.



KELLY BOULWARE (Cathal/First Soldier)

Kelly is a recent transplant to L.A. from Seattle, where he worked with theatres such as Seattle Repertory, Intiman, The Empty Space, Seattle Children's Theatre, Book-It Rep, The Village Theatre, The Civic Light Opera, Seattle Shakespeare Company, and many more. He has also worked with the Portland Center Stage, the City Theatre in Pittsburgh, and has toured the country several times with the Montana Repertory Theatre. On screen he portrays Merriwether Lewis in *Lewis and Clark: Great Journey West*, and the leading role of Bob in *Mulletville*, recently available at Hollywood Video. He is pleased to be in L.A., and delighted to be working with this company.



ED CUNNINGHAM (John McDermot)

recently played Petrucchio in *The Taming of the Shrew* at The Orpheum Theatre downtown, and currently stars in the feature film *Design*, running on the Sundance Channel. Other credits include Smirnov in *The Bear* at the American Russian Theatrical Alliance, Ceyx in the Tony Award-winning production of *Metamorphoses* at Lookingglass Theatre in Chicago, and Marco in *A View from the Bridge* at The Raven Theatre for which he won Chicago's Joseph Jefferson Citation. Ed enjoys haggis and hiking with Sheyla. Much love and thanks to Lenny Mullan and his son Ciarrin.



KATHLEEN DUNN (Donna/Producer/Dialect Coach)

Kathleen received Dramalogue Awards for her lead roles in *Bitter Tears of Petra*, *Dusa Stas Fish & Vi*, and *Blood Moon* at the Open Fist Theatre. Other credits include Olga in *Three Sisters* and Selina in *Loose Ends*, both at the Odyssey Theatre, and *Andromache* at the Evidence Room. TV/Film highlights include a co-star in the indie film *The Joy Riders* starring Martin Landau; the lead in *Pumpkin Hill* (winner of Houston Family Festival); a starring role with Deldrich Badre in *4 a.m.*; a guest role in *Gideon's Crossing* (episode directed by Kathy Bates); and the role of Doris in *Cold Intelligence* (currently playing at the New York Indie Festival).