

ENGLISH TRANSCRIPT

*Sample from Dutch radio documentary 'Take the Troubles away'
[19'15 – 23'10 of 38 minutes]*

[00:00:00]

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, A VERY WARM WELCOME TO BELFAST INTERNATIONAL. TIME IS JUST AFTER TEN PAST ONE. ON BEHALF OF THE CAPTAIN AND THE REST OF THE ONBOARD CREW, WE WISH YOU A SAFE AND PLEASANT ONWARD JOURNEY TO YOUR FINAL DESTINATION. ONCE AGAIN, THANK YOU AND A VERY GOOD AFTERNOON.

[00:00:14]

It's my first time in Belfast. In the city center it's a modern European town, full of shopping people, pubs with live music and hipster coffee shops. But when I walk through the areas that Anna-Marie and Liza grew up in, I get a very different view.

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There are still walls with barbed wire everywhere and in Anna-Marie's area I can see large portraits of paramilitaries and murdered residents, surrounded by Irish slogans. There are Sinn Féin posters against Brexit, and a cardboard I R and A in the colors of the Irish flag decorate a lamppost.

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The identity thinking is also clearly visible in Liza's area. The curbs are painted red white and blue and Union Jacks are flying everywhere. Under murals that commemorate unionist paramilitaries, it says, 'defenders of our community' and 'murdered by cowards'.

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I'm surprised by the public exaltation of paramilitaries, after so many years of peace. And the murals that at Jacqueline's had been changed to messages of peace and unity, are still on show everywhere. It seems almost impossible to me now that Anna-Marie and Liza got along so well when they were staying with us.

[00:01:24]

With even more questions than I had before, I go to visit Anna-Marie, who has invited me to her daughter's house. I wave through the window, because they can't hear the doorbell over the music inside. The young curly-haired tomboy is now a grown woman with a sleek black haircut.

AM: How are you?

Inge: Hi, how are you?

AM: I was looking there if that was you out there or not.

She introduces me to her brother Gerard and her daughter Cursty, who are sitting in the small living room.

Cursty: I'm Cursty.

Inge: Inge, nice to meet you.

AM: That's Gerard, that's my little brother.

AM: Turn that off Cursty.

AM: Pause, there you go.

Once the music's turned off and Anna-Marie has poured us coffee, she mentions that she grew up in the conflict, but that she hardly noticed anything of The Troubles.

AM: Never really seen the Troubles or...don't remember the Troubles, d'you know what I mean? Don't remember nothing. You'd think I was from a different country, hahaha!

I give her a puzzled look, but she explains that she lived relatively far from the border with a protestant area. Any bombs or riots she saw; it would be on TV.

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But as we keep talking, she does mention that there were paramilitaries everywhere. She even suspects that her father was a paramilitary. She turns to her brother Gerard and ask him if he remembers finding a gun in a biscuit tin.

AM: Remember Gerard? You wouldn't remember, you were only a wee kid. Remember up in the cubbard? I remember you found a gun, in a biscuit tin. That was my dad's, where he should never have had it in the house.

She explains that her father couldn't have owned a gun without permission from the IRA. But she also thinks that he probably wasn't worth much as a combatant, because he was a severe alcoholic.

AM: I don't know. He was like drunk half the time, like and, don't know how he would've done anything anyway...

And although she noticed little of the violence outside the house, it was different inside. There, she witnessed how her father beat her mother up daily.

AM: He used to like, beat her really bad. Where we used to walk in and see her with big black eyes and... Fractured jaw, fractured skull, broken nose, and she had her jaw all wired up and all. So we watched like domestic abuse for years.

She regularly saw her mother with black eyes and a battered face. And more than once they would have to escape from the bedroom window.

AM: My poor mommy. She used to...have to jump out windows with us and, bedroom windows, onto the roof, into the next-door neighbors and run, you know, in the middle of the night and stuff.