

FROM THE EMMY, BAFTA AND GRIERSON NOMINATED DIRECTOR OF **NO FIRE ZONE**
A FILM BY CALLUM MACRAE

† THE BALLYMURPHY PRECEDENT †

IN CINEMAS AUGUST 30 — LIVE Q&A FEATURING DIRECTOR CALLUM MACRAE AND CHANNEL 4'S JON SNOW

Director

Callum Macrae

Producer

Gwion Owain

Co-Producer

Mark Williams

Executive Producers

Christopher Hird
Dorothy Byrne
Adam Partridge

**Director of
Photography**
Huw Walters

Editor

Charlie Hawryliw

Music Composer

Wayne Roberts

Head of Production

Selina Kay

Format

105 mins, HD, Colour



SHORT SYNOPSIS

The Ballymurphy Precedent tells the story of a small group of relatives and survivors fighting to expose the truth about one of the most shameful — but almost entirely unknown — episodes in the thirty years of the Northern Irish Troubles. How, just five months before Bloody Sunday, the same Parachute regiment was involved in targeted shootings in Belfast which left another ten innocent Catholics dead, including a priest and a mother of eight. An eleventh died of a heart attack after a confrontation with a Para patrol.

This film, the latest feature documentary from the multi-award-winning director of *No Fire Zone: The Killing Fields of Sri Lanka*, is a forensic expose of one of the most shocking events of the troubles, but it is also an emotionally powerful and sympathetic portrait of the terrible consequences of war on the people, and in particular the children of one small housing estate at the heart of those tragic events.

LONG SYNOPSIS

The Ballymurphy Precedent tells the story of a small group of relatives and survivors fighting to expose the truth about one of the most shameful — but almost entirely unknown — episodes in the thirty years of the Northern Irish troubles. How, just five months before Bloody Sunday the same Parachute regiment was involved in a series of shootings in a west Belfast housing estate which left another ten innocent Catholics dead, including a priest and a mother of eight. An eleventh died of a heart attack after a confrontation with a Para patrol.

This film, the latest feature documentary from the multi-award-winning director of *No Fire Zone: The Killing Fields of Sri Lanka*, is a devastating expose of one of the most shocking events of the troubles, but it is also an emotionally powerful and sympathetic portrait of the terrible consequences of war on the people — and in particular the women & children — of one small housing estate at the heart of those tragic events. Macrae's film is a skilful mixture of investigative journalism, documentary storytelling and a reflection on contemporary history.

The film starts with a masterful history of the background to the Troubles — a narrative, which from the perspective of 2018, seems almost incredible. The film seamlessly takes us from the creation of Northern Ireland as a sectarian state, through the years of housing, employment and social discrimination against the Catholics to the decision of the British government to send in the army at the end of the 1960s, ostensibly to protect the Catholic population from protestant mobs. With the testimony of soldiers and civilians and the use of some remarkable archive, the film explains how this “peace-keeping” force rapidly became an army of occupation, at war with the Catholics, inexorably leading to the imposition of imprisonment without trial — internment in 1971.

At the heart of the film is the investigation of the terrible violence inflicted on Ballymurphy during the first three days of internment; three days in which, according to eyewitnesses, the Army terrorised the civilian population, killing eleven innocent civilians and wounding many more. To this day, these events have never been properly investigated and the dead wrongly branded as gunmen and a gunwoman.

With access to autopsy reports, witness statements and eyewitness testimony, Macrae skilfully reconstructs these events, demonstrating how the victims were killed, presenting evidence of innocence and revealing the ongoing trauma these events had on the families and survivors.

And it is these families and survivors who become the heroes of the final part of the film, which chronicles their efforts to get to the truth and secure justice. As, Breige Voyle, whose mother Joan was shot dead on the first day of the killings says “There is only one way that you can draw a line under the past. It is to tell the truth.”

FESTIVALS, SCREENINGS & BROADCASTS

World Premiere

Sheffield Doc/Fest

June 2018

Previews

Galeri Caernarfon (BAFTA Cymru)

18 July 2018

Respect Belfast Human Rights Festival

01 August 2018

Chapter Arts Centre (BAFTA Cymru)

08 August 2018

Gasyard Wall Feile, Derry

10 August 2018

Frontline Club, London

28 August 2018

Theatrical Premiere

Curzon Soho (Q&A hosted by Jon Snow)

30 August 2018

Theatrical Screenings

Queen's Film Theatre, Belfast

30 August 2018

Brunswick Moviebowl, Derry

30 August 2018

Omniplex Antrim

30 August 2018

Omniplex Banbridge

30 August 2018

Omniplex Bangor

30 August 2018

Omniplex Craigavon

30 August 2018

Omniplex Derry

30 August 2018

Omniplex Dundonald

30 August 2018

Omniplex Kennedy Centre

30 August 2018

Omniplex Larne

30 August 2018

Omniplex Lisburn

30 August 2018

Omniplex Newry

30 August 2018

Omniplex Omagh

30 August 2018

Omniplex Arklow, Ireland

30 August 2018

Omniplex Cork, Ireland

30 August 2018

Omniplex Dundalk, Ireland

30 August 2018

Omniplex Limerick, Ireland

30 August 2018

Omniplex Rathmines, Ireland

30 August 2018

Omniplex Sligo, Ireland

30 August 2018

Omniplex Tralee, Ireland

30 August 2018

Omniplex Wexford, Ireland

30 August 2018

Glasgow Film Theatre

30 August–02 September 2018

Movie House City Side, Belfast

30 August–06 September 2018

Phoenix Cinema, Finchley, London

02 September 2018

Picturehouse at FACT, Liverpool

08 September 2018

Clapham Picturehouse, London

29 September 2018

Television Premiere

Channel 4, UK

September 2018

RTÉ, Ireland

September 2018



FILMMAKER STATEMENT

At the heart of my film is a terrible story. In a housing estate in West Belfast in 1971, the British Army shot dead ten unarmed Catholics — including a priest and a mother of eight. An eleventh victim died of a heart attack after a confrontation with an army patrol. These innocent people all died as a result of an operation carried out by members of Britain's elite Parachute regiment — the same regiment which five months later was to shoot dead another thirteen innocent people on Bloody Sunday.

I first began looking into this story three years ago. The more I spoke to people who were there at the time, including the survivors and the relatives, many of whom were then still children, the clearer it became that there was even more to this story than the tragedy of these appalling killings.

I came to realise that what happened over those three days is actually central to understanding what happened over the next thirty years in Northern Ireland. So, as well as being a forensic investigation of those killings, my film is about the catastrophic military and political strategy which led to them — and the decades of bloody violence which followed.

But I didn't want this to be either a political polemic or simply an investigation of the facts. This is a very human story. It is about the experiences of the ordinary Catholic people (and in particular the women) of Ballymurphy as they lived through the early, traumatic, period of what was to become a thirty-year war. It is the story of the bereaved families' courage and their determination to get to the truth.

But this story also calls into question the conventional history of the Troubles and demands a re-examination of Britain's role in the creation of thirty years of war in Northern Ireland. The truth about the killings in Ballymurphy leaves British claims that Bloody Sunday was an isolated incident looking completely implausible. It also, in my view, renders unsustainable the conclusion of the Bloody Sunday Inquiry that the British Government and Ministry of Defence could not be held responsible for those deaths in Derry, five months later.

As Richard Rudkin, one of the British soldiers who appears in the film, says: "If steps had been taken to look at what happened in Ballymurphy, admit what had gone wrong, Bloody Sunday would never have occurred, and if Bloody Sunday would never have occurred, I would suggest many more deaths after that would never have occurred."

But there was another thing that was important in the way we approached making this film. I didn't want the cinema audience to meet the people in the film as 'victims'. They are not in any sense victims, they are brave, dignified and determined people.

So, when we trace the events which led to the massacre, we see much of it — including the anti-Catholic pogroms, the creation of thousands of refugees — many of whom had been burnt out of their homes, the arrival of the British army (at first welcomed, then feared and resented) — through the eyes of people who were then children.

Some of these children were later to lose a mother, a brother or a father, but their story starts as with their memories of living through — and growing up — at the very start of the Troubles.

The most difficult challenge of the film was describing the awful reality of the killings themselves. Unlike on Bloody Sunday, five months later, there were no cameras in Ballymurphy to record the shootings. Indeed, that is partly why to this day so few people even know of the massacre — and also why the army's official version of events, that the victims were armed, hard-core IRA members, has still never been officially challenged.

So, we had to create our own images to show what happened. We had to develop a way of showing this massacre in a way that did not sanitise it, that really conveyed the appalling, senseless violence of these deaths, but remained at the same time respectful, and devoid of gratuitous imagery.

Equally important was the need to show what happened and where it happened, in a forensically accurate way. To do this, we developed a new and innovative technique using a combination of drone imagery, live action and a CGI recreation of the locality of the killings, based on maps, plans and photographs of the area from the time.

Did we succeed? I hope so.

The critics we worried about most, were the first people to see a preview version of the film: The 120 family members and friends of the victims who gathered for a private screening in the church at the heart of Ballymurphy, around which the killings occurred.

There is no doubt it was a very difficult film for the families to watch. There were many tears, but some laughter too. This was a portrait of a war in a small town and there were moments of humour even in those dark times.

As the film came to an end, there was a pause and then everyone rose to give the film a standing ovation. It was a very moving event — but I hope it was a significant one. The families and survivors are engaged on a search for truth and justice which is painful, but vitally important. A search which could help remove a significant block on the road to truth and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. I hope the film will help in that search.

As, Breige Voyle, whose mother Joan was shot dead on the first day of the killings, says in the film: There is only one way that you can draw a line under the past. It is to tell the truth."



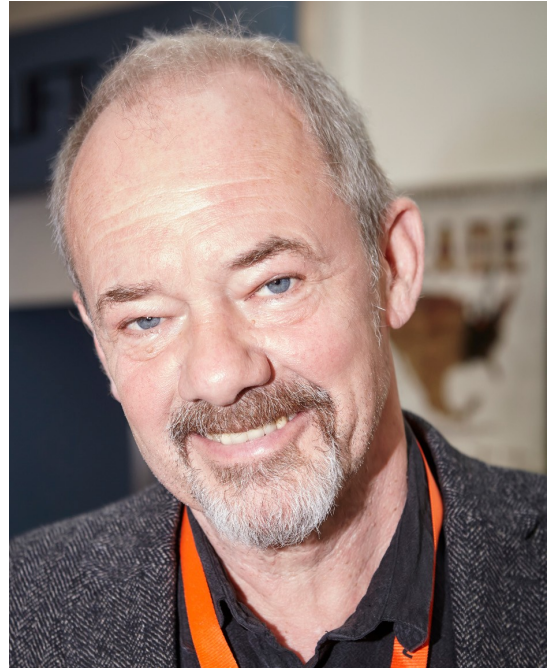
STILL TAKEN FROM DRAMATIC RECONSTRUCTION CONTAINED IN THE FILM

CREW

DIRECTOR

Callum Macrae

Callum Macrae is a film-maker and writer. An Emmy, BAFTA and Grierson nominee, he has won many awards in the UK and Peabody and Columbia Dupont Awards in the US. He headed the Channel Four team nominated in 2013 for a Nobel Peace Prize for their work on Sri Lanka which culminate in his feature documentary, *No Fire Zone, the Killing Fields of Sri Lanka*. He grew up in Nigeria and Scotland and trained as a painter in Edinburgh College of Art before becoming a dustman for two years, a teacher, a satirical cartoonist, Scottish Correspondent of the Observer, a television presenter and a few other things that now escape his mind.



MUSIC COMPOSER

Wayne Roberts

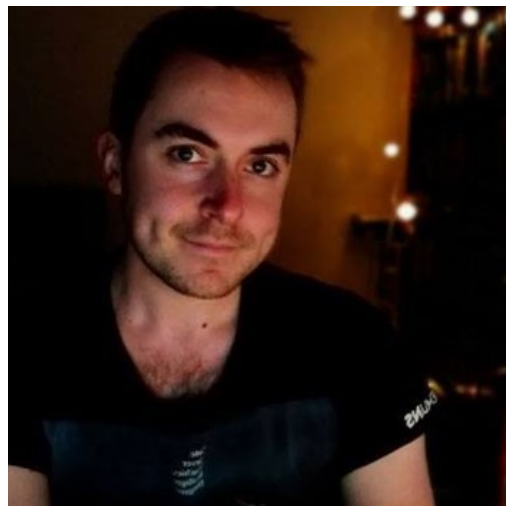
Wayne Roberts is a London-based Welsh composer. He has scored several films with director Callum Macrae including the multi-award-winning *No Fire Zone*. Wayne has an extensive portfolio in factual and documentaries and recent credits include *SAS Who Dares Wins* and *The Island with Bear Grylls* to name but a few. The score for *The Ballymurphy Precedent* was performed by AUKSO Orchestra and recorded at Alvernia Studios Krakow Poland.



EDITOR

Charlie Hawryliw

Born and raised in Fife, Scotland, Charlie moved to London in 2005 to study post production at Ravensbourne. Since leaving there, he has worked on many multi-award-winning documentaries and was one of Broadcast Magazine's 'Hot Shots' in 2012. His surname is pronounced 'Ha-rill-you'.



PRODUCER

Gwion Owain

Gwion Owain established Awen Media in 2014 to develop, produce and finance innovative factual, drama, and entertainment content. Awen's initial successes included pioneering the co-production relationship between Wales and South Korea for the production of feature-length documentary *Tears of Blood* (Dagrau o Waed) which was shortlisted in the History category at the 2016 RTS Programme Awards and was awarded a Bronze Medal at the 2016 New York Festivals. Previously Gwion was CEO and Founder of Anian Media, a creative sector consultancy sourcing finance for independent producers, which was acquired in 2013 by the Compact Media Group. He was also CEO of TAC (Teledwyr Annibynnol Cymru – Welsh Independent Producers), the trade association representing the media production industry in Wales, which has a membership with a combined turnover of over £100m delivering creative content in Wales. Gwion is currently developing and financing a slate of feature documentary projects as well as producing a £10m budget scripted feature film.



EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Christopher Hird

Christopher Hird is a leading figure in UK independent documentary making. With Dartmouth Films he has pioneered new ways of funding, producing and distributing documentaries in the UK, as well as promoting the work of new and emerging filmmakers.



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