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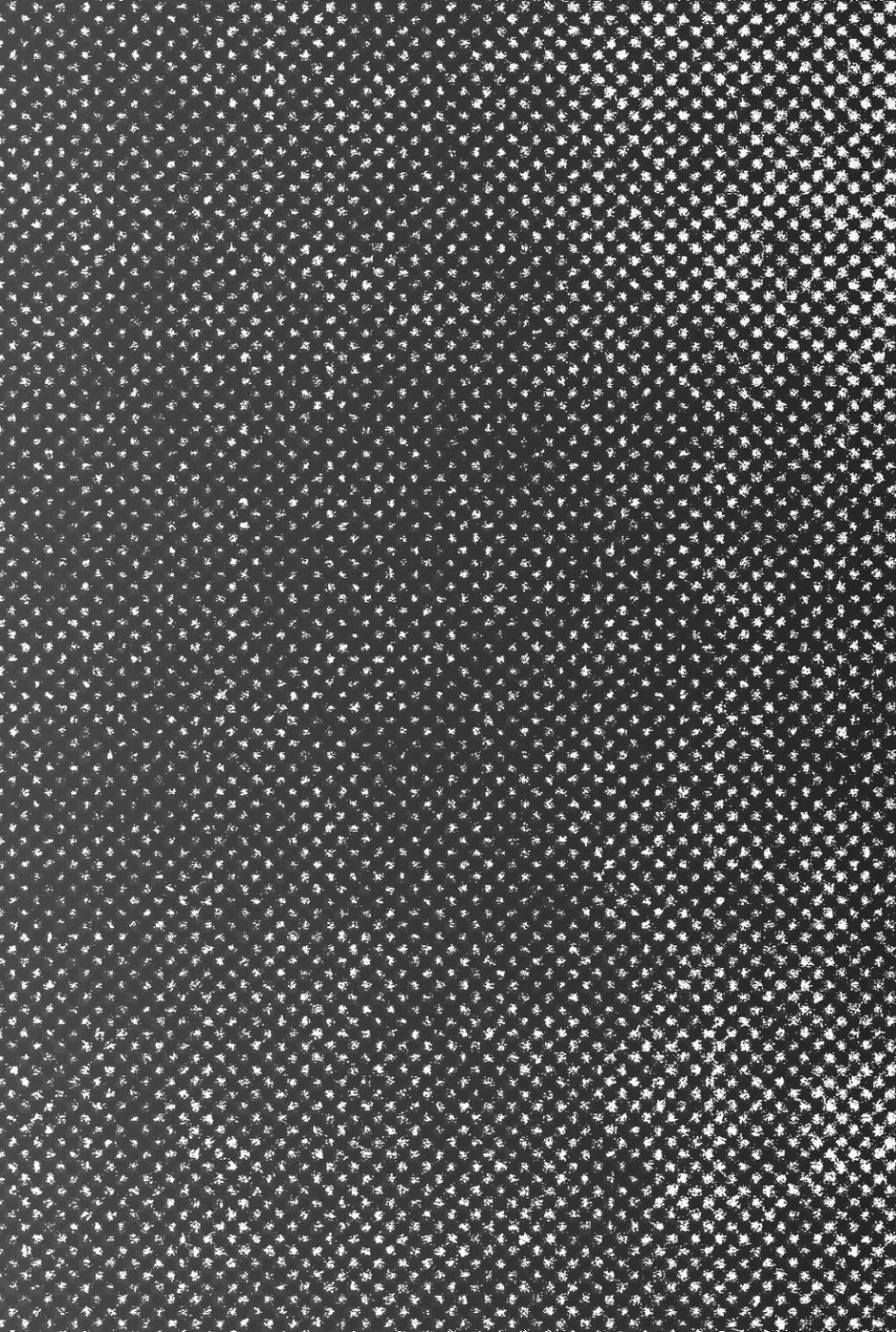
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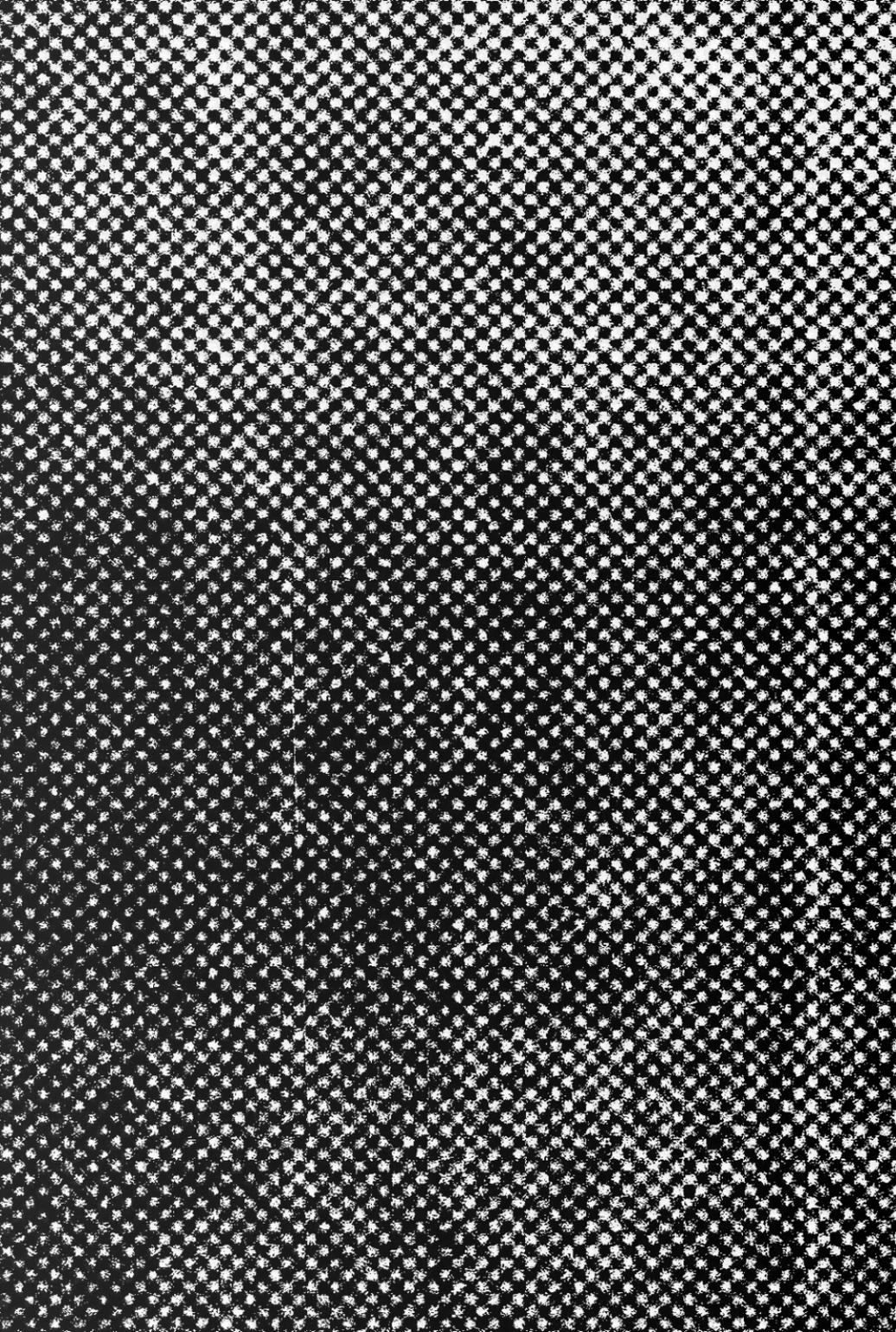
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THE ROAD TO PURGATORY

PART I

Picturing the journey to Purgatory. Scattered along the way are short stories, memories, that offer an alternate perspective on the lived experience of life 'after' conflict.

The road to Purgatory was paved in 1998.

The year the Good Friday Agreement was approved by way of referendum. It brought an end to three decades of conflict in Northern Ireland.

The political institutions that were subsequently established were built on the idea of moving on, of forgetting, with a speed that left little time to work through the 30 years worth of pain and suffering.

Inevitably, many things, and people, fell through the cracks. Voices were lost. Truths never emerged. There is another side to our fragile peace that evades official narratives.







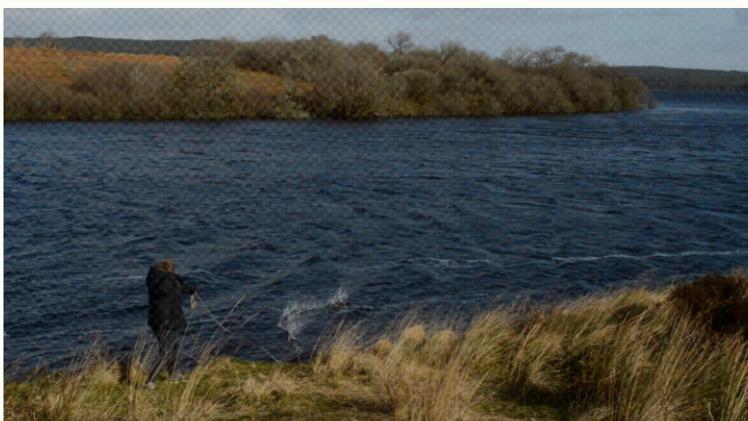


















THE ROAD TO PURGATORY

PART II

*Picturing the state with expired
film from 1998 and anonymous
reflections sourced from the
audio archive of the 'Victims
& Dealing with the Past'
Research Project initiated by
Queen's University.*

“I wouldn’t be in favour of this information recovery, I know people have said it isn’t, but it’s amnesty by the back door in my eyes. If someone comes forward, gives information, they are then more or less immune to prosecution in the future which I totally disagree with.

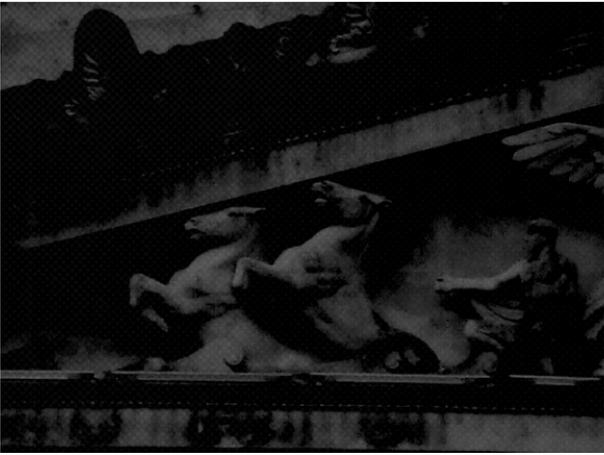
At the end of the day, I know who murdered my father. People say, truth helps heal but I know the truth. I want to see the people held accountable and face prosecution.

As time goes on, do the government and the politicians want the victims to die off so they can get a clean slate?”

Audio Excerpt 16B
on ‘Legacy’.



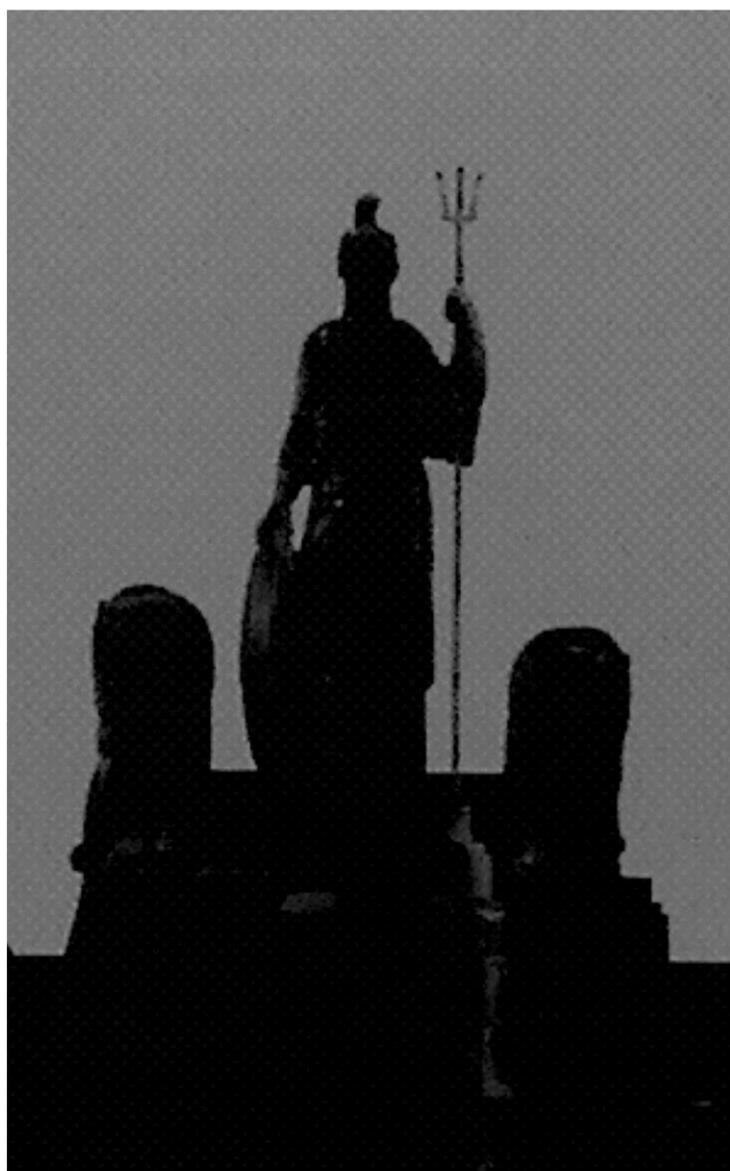












“You’ve got to look at the calculated political thinking that lies behind a lot of these pressures for truth commissions and such. You know, is it just sustaining a narrative that is good politically, that keeps people on side politically. I suppose that works in both communities.

I believe there might be a level of dishonesty in this debate to some extent, you know a kind of ‘stick with us, we can get you to the truth’, but I’m not sure they even know what the truth is or whether they’ve got the mechanisms to get there.”

Audio Excerpt 15H
on ‘Truth’.

THE ROAD TO PURGATORY

PART III

*Picturing 1998 with glimpses
of personal archives submitted
by local communities and
anonymous reflections sourced
from the audio archive of
the 'Victims & Dealing with
the Past' Research Project
initiated by Queen's University.*

“In my view, there has to be a complete and total amnesty and that includes British soldiers from Bloody Sunday, from the Ballymurphy Massacre, from the Shankill Road Murders, everybody, it can’t be cherry picked. And, I mean, if this society wants to do that, now is the time. But I cannot, I just cannot see it happening.

The other thing is, the longer you leave it, the more people die and the more people’s memories fade. The paramilitaries didn’t have a Human Resources Department, or a Tax Department, and they didn’t keep notes so I think that’s why the focus is on the state so much because they know the answer to all these questions.”

Audio Excerpt 16F
on ‘Legacy’.

LIFT & PEEL
HERE

QUALITY CONTROL

- Obstruction appearing on the print
- *Finger/object partially covering the lens
- *Faulty wind on - pictures overlapping
- *Double exposure - film placed in camera twice

ADVICE LABEL





“And I think people are scared, it’s the old Pandora’s box, when you open it and you start talking about things, it lets out so much pain, unanswered questions.

Why’s, what’s and wherefore’s and I think that’s why the suicide rate’s quite high in an awful lot of areas. I think that’s why there’s very heavy levels of drug and alcoholism in some areas.

People feel like they’ve nothing to live for and, you know, intergenerational trauma kicks in and all sorts of things.”

Audio Excerpt 12T
on ‘Silence.’







“There is fear from them that if they do speak out they’ll be labeled because people label people, that’s what we do. They are afraid of repercussions.

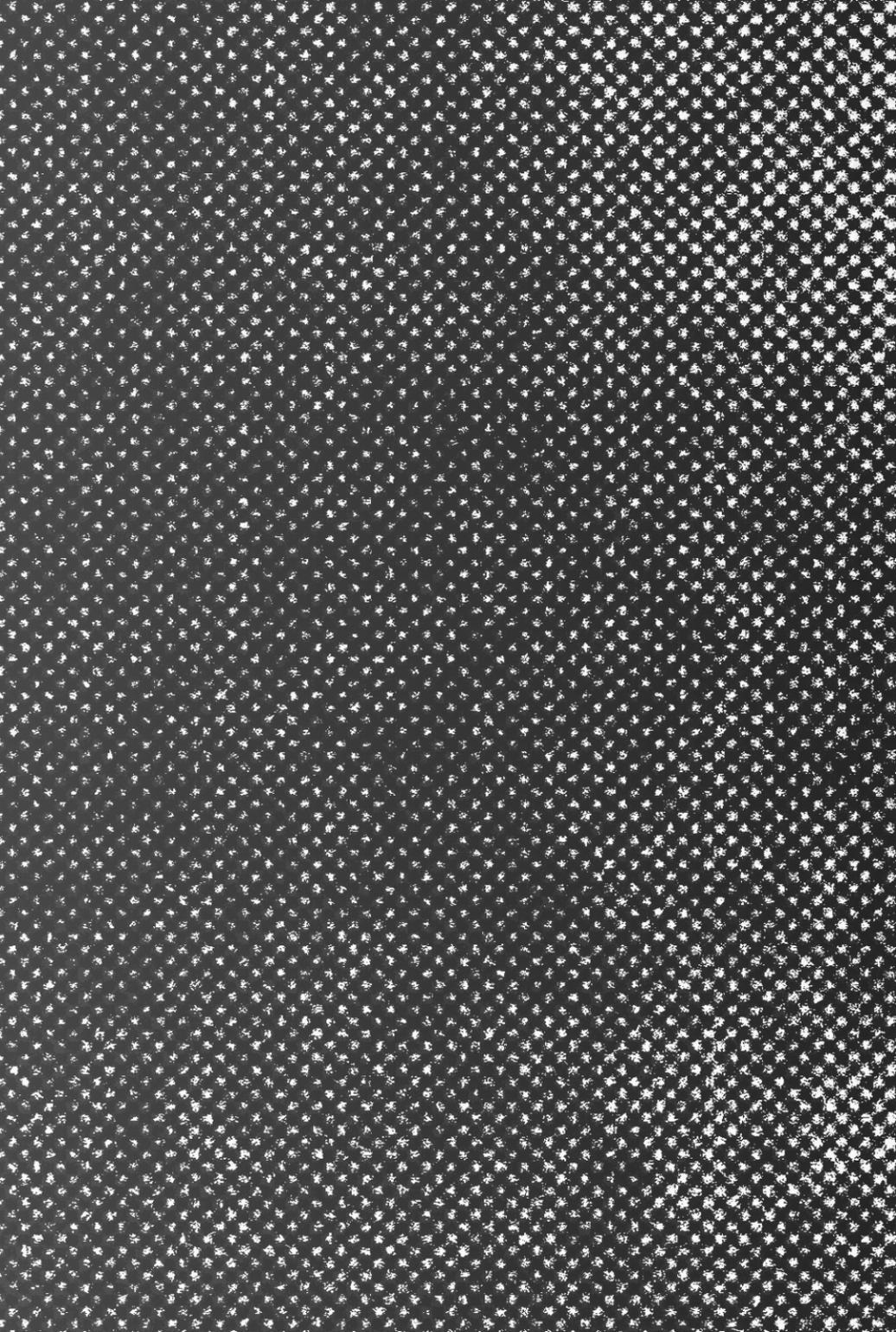
There is also apathy within the community in general, they’re fed up listening about The Troubles, you know, its been over 20 years, get over it, draw a line in the sand. When you hear those negative comments continually, would you want to speak out?

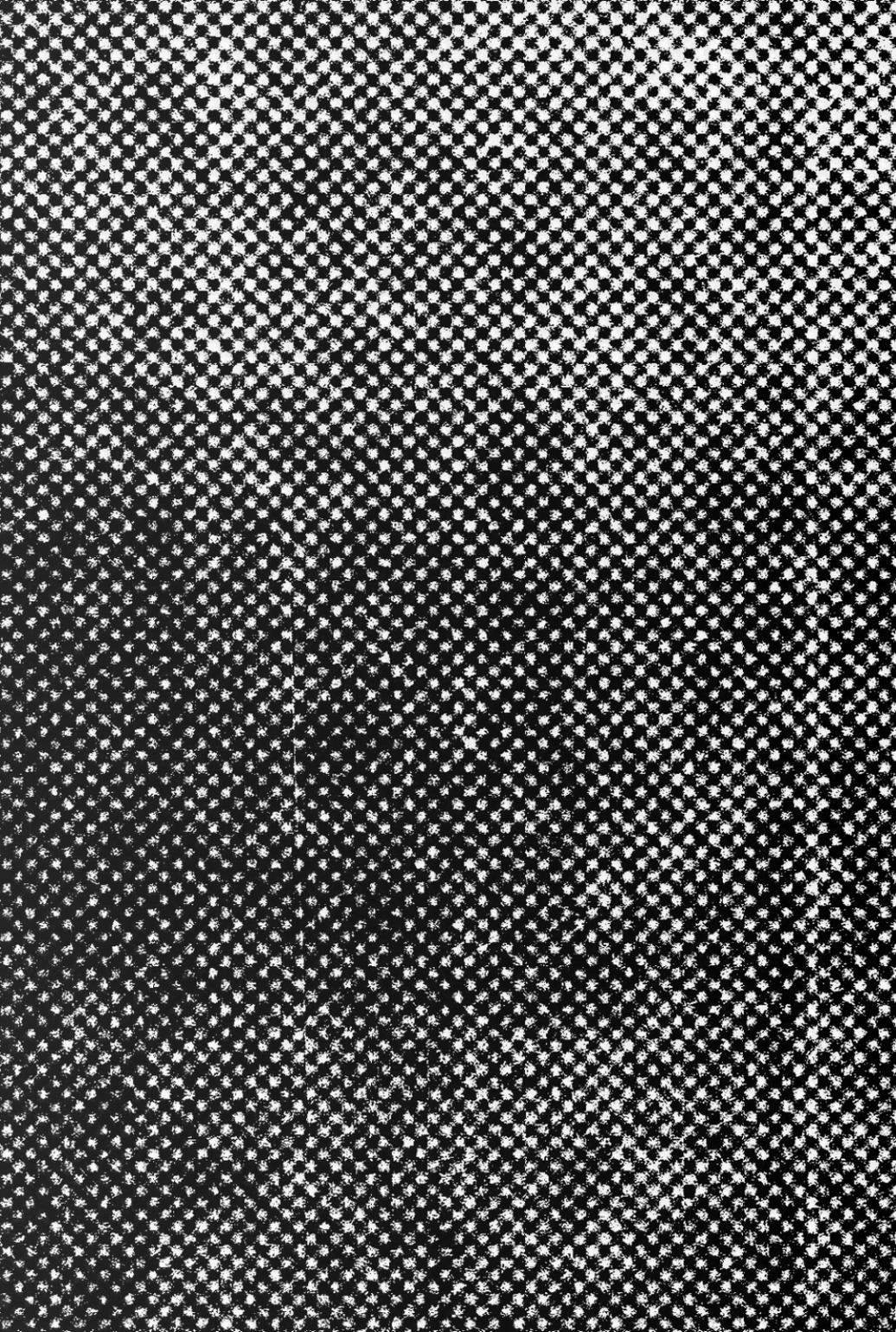
Would you want your story out there, if that’s what people are saying and politicians who we elect are also saying draw a line under it, get over it, forget about it. Maybe that’s why they’re not speaking up.”

Audio Excerpt 12D
on ‘Silence’.









The Audible Appendix

a conversation with my mother about the past

A photograph of a window with light-colored, possibly white or cream, curtains. The curtains have a subtle texture and some faint, vertical lines. In the foreground, the dark silhouettes of what appear to be the backs of two chairs or a sofa are visible, suggesting a conversation taking place. The overall mood is quiet and reflective.

a conversation about the past





“If you’ve got a name that somebody can hang a label on it makes it a little bit more difficult to be accepted as...
(pause) a person. So therefore, if you were out, people would judge you by your name, and certain words that you would maybe speak, to pick up on who you were or what you were. So it was trying to live your life that you didn’t put your head above the parapet. You were trying to be neutral, you just wanted to live, you didn’t want to be recognised as any one thing, you just wanted to get on with your life. For me, having the name that I have made it more difficult.”

“What were the difficulties?”

“It was dangerous in those times for people of different religions to get together. Some people did it and yes, it could be done but

for other people, depending on which part of the country you lived in or the city, it made it more difficult. I mean people could've been killed for getting married to, as somebody else seen it, the wrong person. Or they could've been badly beaten up or you know. So you had to, you were always watching out for it. It made it more difficult because I chose, or fell in love, with someone from the other religion, so that made it more difficult because whilst most of his friends were okay his parents weren't that keen on it so it made things a bit more challenging."

"What did you have to face as a mixed marriage?"

"Um... *sighs*... um, well the challenge of both families accepting both of us. The challenges of society accepting

it. We're both very quiet people so you sort of lived a life that you didn't bring attention to yourself normally."

Mouths: 'I don't want to talk about this'.

Sighs.

"Why don't you want to talk about it?"

"I just don't enjoy talking about it. And I don't particularly like going back and thinking about the things that happened. It's just a lot of stuff that people can't see but because you were trying to live a life that you didn't draw attention to yourself, that you were just trying to survive, you internalised a lot of stuff, and you hid your identity and you hid who you were so ultimately you became a different person. So therefore, you lived your life very quietly and very consciously trying to hide where

you came from and what you were even though you didn't identify with that anymore. And yes, I'm not the only person it happened to, other people did it. Other people changed their names, maybe I could have changed my name, but that, for me, probably would've felt like the final straw, because then I would've totally lost who I was. Me holding onto that somehow felt important to me, that I hadn't totally... it's not about giving up... you are more than your religion or how you're brought up, you're more than that, but your identity in Northern Ireland is cemented in that, that's how other people see you. Maybe that's why I now.. I was never extrovert and I still find it very difficult in large groups or in totally trusting that people accept you for who you are. I don't know."

