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## PART THREE

### THE LIMITS OF POWER

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

*Ecclesiastes 9:11*

CHAPTER SEVEN

*Rosemary Lawlor*

“ I WASN’ T BORN THAT WAY. THIS  
WAS FORCED UPON ME.”

1.

When the Troubles began in Northern Ireland, Rosemary Lawlor was a newlywed. She and her husband had just bought a house in Belfast. They had a baby. It was the summer of 1969, and Catholics and Protestants—the two religious communities that have lived uneasily alongside each other throughout the country’s history—were at each other’s throats. There were bombings and riots. Gangs of Protestant militants—Loyalists, as they were called—roamed the streets, burning down houses. The Lawlors were Catholic, and Catholics have always been a minority in Northern Ireland. Every day, they grew more frightened.

“I’d come home at night,” Lawlor said, “and there would be writing on the door: ‘Taigs out,’ ‘Taigs’ is a derogatory word for an Irish Catholic. Or ‘No Pope here.’”

Another night we were there, we were very lucky. A bomb came into the backyard and didn't explode. One day I went to knock on my neighbor's door, and I realized that she was gone. I found out that day that a lot of people had gone. So when my husband, Terry, came home from work, I said, 'Terry, what's going on here?' And he said, 'We're in danger.'

"We left the home that night. We had no phone. You remember, this is in the days before mobiles. We walked out. The fear was in me. I put my son in his pram. I gathered up best we could pieces of clothes for him and ourselves. There was a tray at the bottom of the pram, and we stuffed them all in the tray. And Terry says to me, 'Right, Rosie, we're just going to walk straight out of here and we're gonna smile at everybody.' I was trembling. I was a teenage mum, a teenage girl who got married, nineteen, married, new baby, new world, new life. Taken away from me like that. D'you know? And I have no power to stop it. Fear is an awful thing, and I remember being really, really scared."

The safest place they knew was the all-Catholic neighborhood of Ballymurphy, in West Belfast, where Lawlor's parents lived. But they had no car, and with Belfast in turmoil, no taxi wanted to venture into a Catholic neighborhood. Finally they tricked a cab into stopping by saying their baby was sick and needed to get to a hospital. They shut the car door and Terry told the driver, "I want you to take us to Ballymurphy." The driver said, "Oh, no, I'm not doing that." But Terry had a poker, and he took it out, and he placed the point against the back of the driver's

don't care if you stick that in me," he said. "I'm not going any further." The Lawlors gathered up their baby and their worldly possessions and ran for their lives.

At the beginning of 1970, things got worse. That Easter, there was a riot in Ballymurphy. The British Army was called in: a fleet of armored cars with barbed wire on their bumpers patrolled the streets. Lawlor would push her pram past soldiers with automatic rifles and tear-gas grenades. One weekend in June, there was a gun battle in the bordering neighborhood: a group of Catholic gunmen stepped into the middle of the road and opened fire on a group of Protestant bystanders. In response, Protestant Loyalists tried to burn down a Catholic church near the docks. For five hours, the two sides fought, locked in deadly gun battle. Hundreds of fires burned across the city. By the end of the weekend, six people were dead and more than two hundred injured. The British home secretary responsible for Northern Ireland flew up from London, surveyed the chaos, and ran back to his plane. "For God's sake, bring me a large Scotch," he said, burying his head in his hands. "What a bloody awful country."

A week later, a woman came through Ballymurphy. Her name was Harriet Carson. "She was famous for hitting Maggie Thatcher over the head with a handbag at City Hall," Lawlor said. "I knew her growing up. Harriet was coming around with two lids of pots, and she was banging them together and she was shouting, 'Come on, come out, come out. The people in the Lower Falls are getting murdered.' She was shouting it up. And I went out to

milk, and they haven't got anything for a cup of tea, and there's no bread, and come out, come out, we need to do something!"

The Lower Falls is an all-Catholic neighborhood just down the hill from Ballymurphy. Lawlor had gone to school in the Lower Falls. Her uncle lived there, as did countless cousins. She knew as many people in the Lower Falls as she did in Ballymurphy. The British Army had put the entire neighborhood under curfew while they searched for illegal weapons.

"I didn't know what 'curfew' meant," Lawlor said. "I hadn't a clue. I had to say to somebody, 'What does that mean?' She said, 'They're not allowed out of their houses.' I said, 'How can they do that?' I was totally stunned. Stunned. 'What do you mean?' 'The people are locked in their houses. They can't get out for bread or milk.' While the Brits, the British Army, were kicking in doors and wracking and ruinin' and searchin', I was, 'What?' The biggest thought in everybody's mind was, there are people locked in their houses, and there's children. You have to remember, some houses then had twelve, fifteen kids in them. D'you know? That's the way it was. 'What do you mean they can't get out of their houses?'" They were *angry*.

Rosemary Lawlor is now in her sixties, a sturdily built woman with ruddy cheeks and short, white-blond hair swept to the side. She was a seamstress by trade, and she was dressed with flair: a bright floral blouse and white cropped pants. She was talking about things that had happened half a lifetime ago. But she remembered every mo-

"My father said, 'The Brits, they'll turn on us. They say they're in here to protect us. They'll turn on us—you wait and see.' And he was one hundred percent right. They turned on us. And the curfew was the start of it."

## 2.

The same year that Northern Ireland descended into chaos, two economists—Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf Jr.—wrote a report about how to deal with insurgencies. Leites and Wolf worked for the RAND Corporation, the prestigious think tank started after the Second World War by the Pentagon. Their report was called *Rebellion and Authority*. In those years, when the world was exploding in violence, everyone read Leites and Wolf. *Rebellion and Authority* became the blueprint for the war in Vietnam, and for how police departments dealt with civil unrest, and for how governments coped with terrorism. Its conclusion was simple:

Fundamental to our analysis is the assumption that the population, as individuals or groups, behaves "rationally," that it calculates costs and benefits to the extent that they can be related to different courses of action, and makes choices accordingly...Consequently, influencing popular behavior requires neither sympathy nor mysticism, but rather a better understanding of what costs and benefits the individual or the group is concerned with, and how they are calculated.

In other words, getting insurgents to behave is fundamentally a math problem. If there are riots in the streets of Belfast, it's because the costs to rioters of burning houses and smashing windows aren't high enough. And when Leites and Wolf said that "influencing popular behavior requires neither sympathy nor mysticism," what they meant was that nothing mattered but that calculation. If you were in a position of power, you didn't have to worry about how lawbreakers *felt* about what you were doing. You just had to be tough enough to make them think twice.

The general in charge of the British forces in Northern Ireland was a man straight out of the pages of *Rebellion and Authority*. His name was Ian Freeland. He had served with distinction in Normandy during the Second World War and later fought insurgencies in Cyprus and Zanzibar. He was trim and forthright, with a straight back and a square jaw and a firm hand: he "conveyed the correct impression of a man who knew what needed to be done and would do it." When he arrived in Northern Ireland, he made it plain that his patience was limited. He was not afraid to use force. He had his orders from the prime minister: the British Army "should deal toughly, and be seen to deal toughly, with thugs and gunmen."

On June 30, 1970, the British Army received a tip. There were explosives and weapons hidden in a house at 24 Balkan Street in the Lower Falls, they were told. Freeland immediately dispatched five armored cars filled with soldiers and police officers. A search of the house turned up a cache of guns and ammunition. Outside, a crowd gathered. Someone started throwing stones. Stones turned into petrol bombs. A riot started. By ten p.m. the British had

had enough. An army helicopter armed with a loudspeaker circled the Lower Falls, demanding that all residents stay inside their homes or face arrest. As the streets cleared, the army launched a massive house-to-house search. Disobedience was met with firm and immediate punishment. The next morning, a triumphant Freeland took two Protestant government officials and a pack of journalists on a tour of the neighborhood in the back of an open flatbed truck, surveying the deserted streets like—as one soldier later put it—"the British Raj on a tiger hunt."

The British Army went to Northern Ireland with the best of intentions. The local police force was overwhelmed, and they were there simply to help—to serve as a peacekeeper between Northern Ireland's two warring populations. This was not some distant and foreign land: they were dealing with their own country, their own language, and their own culture. They had resources and weapons and soldiers and experience that dwarfed those of the insurgent elements that they were trying to contain. When Freeland toured the empty streets of the Lower Falls that morning, he believed that he and his men would be back home in England by the end of the summer. But that's not what happened. Instead, what should have been a difficult few months turned into thirty years of bloodshed and mayhem.

In Northern Ireland, the British made a simple mistake. They fell into the trap of believing that because they had resources, weapons, soldiers, and experience that dwarfed those of the insurgent elements that they were trying to contain, it did not matter what the people of Northern Ireland thought of them. General Freeland believed Leites

and Wolf when they said that “influencing popular behavior requires neither sympathy nor mysticism.” And Leites and Wolf were wrong.

“It has been said that most revolutions are not caused by revolutionaries in the first place, but by the stupidity and brutality of governments,” Seán MacStiofáin, the provisional IRA’s first chief of staff, said once, looking back on those early years. “Well, you had that to start with in [Northern Ireland], all right.”

## 3.

The simplest way to understand the British mistake in Northern Ireland is to picture a classroom. It’s a kindergarten class, a room with brightly colored walls covered in children’s drawings. Let’s call the teacher Stella.

The classroom was videotaped as part of a project at the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia, and there is more than enough footage to provide a good sense of the kind of teacher Stella is and the kind of classroom she has. Even after a few minutes, it is abundantly clear that things aren’t going well.

Stella is sitting in a chair at the front of the room. She’s reading out loud from a book that she is holding up to one side: “...seven slices of tomatoes,” “eight juicy olives,” “nine chunks of cheese....” A girl is standing in front of her, reading along, and all around her, the class is in chaos, a mini-version of Belfast in the summer of 1970. A little girl is doing cartwheels across the room. A little boy is making faces. Much of the class seems to be paying no at-

tention at all. Some of the students have actually turned themselves entirely around, so that they have their backs to Stella.

If you were to walk in on Stella’s class, what would you think? I’m guessing your first reaction would be that she has a group of unruly children. Maybe she teaches in a school in a poor neighborhood and her students come from troubled families. Maybe her students come to school without any real respect for authority or learning. Leites and Wolf would say that she really needs to use some discipline. Children like that need a firm hand. They need rules. If there is no order in the classroom, how can any learning take place?

The truth is, though, that Stella’s school isn’t in some terrible neighborhood. Her students aren’t particularly or unusually unruly. When the class begins, they are perfectly well behaved and attentive, eager and ready to learn. They don’t seem like bad apples at all. They only start to misbehave well into the lesson, and only in response to the way Stella is behaving. *Stella* causes the crisis. How so? By doing an appalling job of teaching the lesson.

Stella had the girl from the class reading alongside her as a way of engaging the rest of the students. But the pacing of the back-and-forth between the two of them was excruciatingly slow and wooden. “Look at her body language,” one of the Virginia researchers, Bridget Hamre, said as we watched Stella. “Right now she is just talking to this one kid, and no one else is getting in.” Her colleague Robert Pianta added: “There’s no rhythm. No pace. This is going nowhere. There is no value in what she’s doing.”

Only then did the class begin to deteriorate. The little

boy started making faces. When the child started doing cartwheels, Stella missed it entirely. Three or four students to the immediate right of the teacher were still gamely trying to follow along, but Stella was so locked onto the book that she wasn't giving them any encouragement. Meanwhile, to Stella's left, five or six children had turned themselves around. But that was because they were bewildered, not because they were disobedient. Their view of the book was completely blocked by the little girl standing in front of Stella. They had no way of following along. We often think of authority as a response to disobedience: a child acts up, so a teacher cracks down. Stella's classroom, however, suggests something quite different: disobedience can also be a response to authority. If the teacher doesn't do her job properly, then the child will *become* disobedient.

"With classrooms like this one, people will call what is happening a behavioral issue," Hamre said. We were watching one of Stella's kids wiggling and squirming and contorting her face and altogether doing whatever she could to avoid her teacher. "But one of the things we find is that this sort of thing is more often an engagement problem than a behavioral problem. If the teacher is actually doing something interesting, these kids are quite capable of being engaged. Instead of responding in a 'let me control your behavior' way, the teacher needs to think, 'How can I do something interesting that will prevent you from misbehaving in the first place?'"

The next video Pianta and Hamre played was of a third-grade teacher giving homework to her students. Each student was given a copy of the assignment, and the teacher and the class read the instructions aloud together. Pianta was

aghast. "Just the idea that you would be choral reading a set of instructions to a bunch of eight-year-olds is almost disrespectful," he said. "I mean, why? Is there any instructional purpose?" They know how to read. It is like a waiter in a restaurant giving you the menu and then proceeding to read every item to you just as it appears on the page.

A boy sitting next to the teacher raises his hand midway through the reading, and without looking at him, the teacher reaches out, grabs his wrist, and pushes his hand back down. Another child starts to actually do the assignment—an entirely logical action, given the pointlessness of what the teacher is doing. The teacher addresses him, sharply. "Sweetie. This is *homework*." It was a moment of discipline. The child had broken the rules. The teacher had responded, firmly and immediately. If you were to watch that moment with the sound turned off, you would think of it as Leites and Wolf perfectly applied. But if you were to listen to what the teacher was saying and think about the incident from the child's perspective, it would become clear that it is having anything but its intended effect. The little boy isn't going to come away with a renewed appreciation of the importance of following the rules. He is going to come away angry and disillusioned. Why? Because the punishment is completely arbitrary. He can't speak up and give his own side of the story. *And wants to learn*. If that little boy became defiant, it was because his teacher made him that way, just as Stella turned an eager and attentive student into someone who did cartwheels across the floor. When people in authority want the rest of us to behave, it matters—first and foremost—how *they* behave.

This is called the "principle of legitimacy," and legiti-

macy is based on three things. First of all, the people who are asked to obey authority have to feel like they have a voice—that if they speak up, they will be heard. Second, the law has to be predictable. There has to be a reasonable expectation that the rules tomorrow are going to be roughly the same as the rules today. And third, the authority has to be fair. It can't treat one group differently from another.

All good parents understand these three principles implicitly. If you want to stop little Johnnie from hitting his sister, you can't look away one time and scream at him another. You can't treat his sister differently when she hits him. And if he says he really didn't hit his sister, you have to give him a chance to explain himself. *How* you punish is as important as the act of punishing itself. That's why the story of Stella is not all that surprising. Anyone who has ever sat in a classroom knows that it is important for teachers to earn the respect of their students.

What is harder to understand, however, is the importance of these same principles when it comes to law and order. We know our parents and our teachers, so it makes sense that legitimacy should matter a lot inside the home or the school. But the decision about whether to rob a bank or shoot someone seems like it belongs to a very different category, doesn't it? That's what Leites and Wolf meant when they said that fighting criminals and insurgents "requires neither sympathy nor mysticism." They were saying that at that level, the decision to obey the law is a function of a rational calculation of risks and benefits. It *isn't* personal. But that's precisely where they went wrong, because getting criminals and insurgents to behave

turns out to be as dependent on legitimacy as getting children to behave in the classroom.

#### 4.

Let me give you an example. It involves an experiment that has been going on for the past few years in the New York City neighborhood of Brownsville. Brownsville is home to just over a hundred thousand people, and it lies in the eastern part of Brooklyn, past the elegant brownstones of Park Slope and the synagogues of Crown Heights.\* For more than a century, it has been among the most destitute corners of New York City. There are eighteen public housing projects in Brownsville, more than in any other part of the city, and they dominate the skyline: block upon block of bleak, featureless brick-and-concrete developments. As the crime rate in New York City fell dramatically over the past twenty years, Brownsville always remained a step behind, plagued by groups of teenagers who roamed the streets, mugging passersby. From time to time, the police would flood the streets with extra officers. But the effect was never more than temporary.

In 2003, a police officer named Joanne Jaffe took over as head of the city's Housing Bureau, the group with pri-

\* An impressive number of famous people have come from Brownsville over the years: two heavyweight boxing champions (Mike Tyson and Riddick Bowe); the composer Aaron Copland; the Three Stooges (played by Moe and Shemp Howard [later replaced by his brother Curly] and Larry Fine); the television host Larry King—not to mention a long list of professional basketball, football, and baseball stars. The operative words, though, are "come from Brownsville." Nobody who can help it stays in Brownsville.



mary responsibility for the Brownsville projects. She decided to try something new. Jaffe began by making a list of all of the juveniles in Brownsville who had been arrested at least once in the previous twelve months. That search yielded 106 names, corresponding to 180 arrests. Jaffe's assumption was that anyone arrested for a mugging had probably committed somewhere between twenty and fifty other crimes that never came to the attention of the police, so by her rule of thumb, her 106 juveniles were responsible for as many as five thousand crimes in the previous year.

She then put together a task force of police officers and had them contact every name on the list. "We said to them, 'You're in the program,'" Jaffe explained. "'And the program is that we're going to give you a choice. We want to do everything we can to get you back in school, to help you get a high school diploma, to bring services to your family, find out what's needed in the household. We will provide job opportunities, educational opportunities, medical—everything we can. We want to work with you. But the criminal conduct has to stop. And if it doesn't stop and you get arrested for anything, we're going to do everything to keep you in jail. I don't care how minor it is. We are going to be all over you.'"

The program was called J-RIP, for Juvenile Robbery Intervention Program. There was nothing complicated about it—at least on the surface. J-RIP was standard-issue, high-intensity modern policing. Jaffe put her J-RIP task force in a trailer in the parking lot of a housing project, not off in a station house somewhere. She made every surveillance tool available to her J-RIP team. They made lists of each J-RIPper's associates—the people they had

been arrested with. They went on Facebook and downloaded photos of their friends and looked for gang affiliations. They talked to brothers and sisters and mothers, and they put together giant, poster-size maps showing the networks of friendships and associations that surrounded each person—the same way an intelligence organization might track the movements of suspected terrorists.

"I have people out there 24/7," Jaffe said. "So when a J-RIPper is arrested, I'm willing to send in a team if I have to. I don't care if it's the Bronx, or the middle of the night. There have got to be dire consequences. They've got to know what's going to happen. It's got to be swift. If you get arrested, you're going to see my face."

She went on, "I tell them, 'You can slam the door when I come to your house. But I'll see you on the street. I'll say hello to you. I'll learn everything about you. You go from Brooklyn to the Bronx, I'll know what trains you take.' We say to someone, 'Johnnie, come into the J-RIP office tomorrow,' and Johnnie comes in, and we say, 'You were stopped in the Bronx last night. You got a summons.' He says, 'What?' 'You were with Raymond Rivera and Mary Jones.' 'How do you know that?' They started thinking we were all over the place. Since we had developed a folder on each kid, we'd show them what we had on them. We'd say, 'These are all your buddies. Here's all your information. Here are your pictures. We know you're part of this development. We know you might be a part of a crew. We know your world.' We started learning about where they're supposed to go to school, who they're hanging out with at school. When they're not in school, we get a call. So my J-RIP team goes out and wakes them up and says, 'Get up!'"

But this was only part of Jaffe's strategy. She also did things that don't sound like typical policing strategy. She spent a lot of time, for example, finding the *right* kind of officer to serve on the task force. "I couldn't put just any cop in there," she said, sounding more like a social worker than a police chief. "I had to have a cop that loves kids. I had to have a cop that didn't have an ounce of negativity about them, and who had the ability to help sway kids and push them in the right direction." To head the group, she finally settled on David Glassberg, a gregarious former narcotics officer with children of his own.

She was also obsessed, from the very beginning, with meeting the families of her J-RIPpers. She wanted to know them. It turned out to be surprisingly difficult. In her first attempt, she sent letters to every home, inviting the families to come to a local church for a group session. No one showed up. Then Jaffe and her team went door-to-door. Once again, they got nowhere. "We ended up going to each family, one hundred and six kids," she said. "They would say, 'Fuck you. Don't come into my house.'"

The breakthrough finally came months into the program. "There's this one kid," Jaffe said. She made up a name for him: Johnnie Jones. "He was a *bad* kid. He was fourteen, fifteen then. He lived with a seventeen- or eighteen-year-old sister. His mother lived in Queens. Even the mother hated us. There was no one for us to reach out to. So now, November of the first year, 2007, Dave Glassberg comes to my office, Wednesday before Thanksgiving. "He says, 'All the guys, all the people on the team, chipped in and we bought Johnnie Jones and his family Thanksgiving dinner tonight.'"

"And I said, 'You're kidding.' This was a *bad* kid. "And he goes, 'You know why we did it? This is a kid that we're gonna lose but there are seven other kids in that family. We had to do something for them.'"

"I had tears in my eyes. Then he said, 'Well, we have all these other families. What are we going to do?' It's ten a.m., day before Thanksgiving, and I said, 'Dave, what if I go to the police commissioner and see if I can get two thousand bucks and see if we can buy a turkey for every family? Could we do it?'"

She went upstairs to the executive level of police headquarters, and begged for two minutes with the police commissioner. "I said, 'This is what Dave Glassberg did with the team. I want to buy a hundred and twenty-five turkeys. Can I get money somewhere?' He said yes. Glassberg put his men on overtime. They found frozen turkeys and refrigerated trucks, and that night went door-to-door in the Brownsville projects. We put them in a bag, and we did a flyer: 'From our family to your family, Happy Thanksgiving.'"

Jaffe was sitting in her office at New York police headquarters in downtown Manhattan. She was in full uniform—tall and formidable, with a head of thick black hair and more than a hint of Brooklyn in her voice.

"We'd knock," she continued. "Momma or Grandma would open the door and say, 'Johnnie, the police are here'—just like that. I'd say, 'Hi, Mrs. Smith, I'm Chief Jaffe. We have something for you for Thanksgiving. We just want to wish you a happy Thanksgiving.' And they'd be, 'What is this?' And they'd say, 'Come in, come in,' and they would drag you in, and the apartments were

so hot, I mean, and then, 'Johnnie, come here, the police are here!' And there's all these people running around, hugging and crying. Every family—I did five—there was hugging and crying. And I always said the same thing: 'I know sometimes you can hate the police. I understand all that. But I just want you to know, as much as it seems that we're harassing you by knocking on your door, we really do care, and we really do want you to have a happy Thanksgiving.'"

Now, why was Jaffe so obsessed with meeting her J-RIPPers' families? *Because she didn't think the police in Brownsville were perceived as legitimate.* Across the United States, an astonishing number of black men have spent some time in prison. (To give you just one statistic, 69 percent of black male high school dropouts born in the late seventies have done time behind bars.) Brownsville is a neighborhood full of black male high school dropouts, which means that virtually every one of those juvenile delinquents on Jaffe's list would have had a brother or a father or a cousin who had served time in jail.\* If that many

\* Here are the U.S. imprisonment rates by race and education level.

WHITE MEN	1945-49	1960-64	1975-79
High school dropouts	4.2	8.0	15.3
High school only	0.7	2.5	4.1
Some college	0.7	0.8	1.2
BLACK MEN	1945-49	1960-64	1975-79
High school dropouts	14.7	41.6	69.0
High school only	10.2	12.4	18.0
Some college	4.9	5.5	7.6

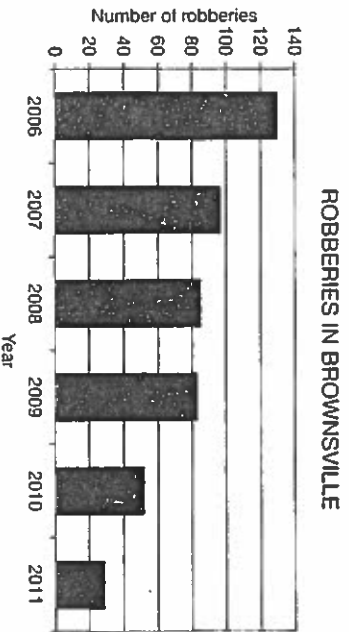
The key statistics are the ones in boldface. Sixty-nine percent of all black male high school dropouts born between 1975 and 1979 have spent time behind bars. That's Brownsville in a nutshell.

people in your life have served time behind bars, does the law seem fair anymore? Does it seem predictable? Does it seem like you can speak up and be heard? What Jaffe realized when she came to Brownsville was that the police were seen as the enemy. And if the police were seen as the enemy, how on earth would she be able to get fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds—already embarked on a course of mugging and stealing—to change their ways? She could threaten them and warn them of the dire consequences of committing more crimes. But these were *teenagers*, stubborn and defiant by nature, who had already drifted into a life of crime. Why should they listen to her? She represented the institution that had put their fathers and brothers and cousins in prison. She needed to win back the respect of the community, and to do that, she needed the support of the families of her J-RIPPers. Her little speech on that first Thanksgiving—I know sometimes you can hate the police. I understand all that. But I just want you to know, as much as it seems that we're harassing you by knocking on your door, we really do care, and we really do want you to have a happy Thanksgiving—was a plea for legitimacy. She was trying to get families who had been on the wrong side of the law—sometimes for generations—to see that the law could be on their side.

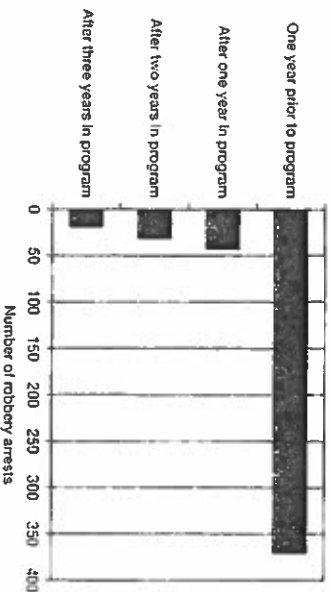
After the success with the turkeys, Jaffe started Christmas-toy giveaways. The J-RIP task force started playing basketball with their young charges. They took them out for sushi dinners. They tried to get them summer jobs. They drove them to doctor appointments. Then Jaffe started a Christmas dinner, where every J-RIPper was invited along with his entire family. "You know what I do

at the Christmas dinner with my J-RIP kids?" Jaffe said. "They act all tough in front of their friends. So I hug each one of them. It's always 'Come on. Let's hug.'" Jaffe is not a small woman. She is strong and imposing. Imagine her approaching some skinny teenager with her arms wide open. A hug from her would swallow him up.

This sounds like something out of a bad Hollywood movie, doesn't it? Turkeys on Thanksgiving! Hugging and crying! The reason most police departments around the world haven't followed Jaffe's lead is that what she did doesn't *seem* right. Johnnie Jones was a bad kid. Buying food and toys for people like him seems like the worst form of liberal indulgence. If the police chief in your town announced, in the face of a major crime wave, that she was going to start hugging and feeding the families of the criminals roaming the streets, you'd be speechless—right? Well, take a look at what happened in Brownsville.



**ROBBERY ARRESTS J-RIPPERS**



When Leites and Wolf wrote that "influencing popular behavior requires neither sympathy nor mysticism," they meant that the power of the state was without limits. If you wanted to impose order, you didn't have to worry about what those whom you were ordering about thought of you. You were above that. But Leites and Wolf had it backwards. What Jaffe proved was that the powerful *have* to worry about how others think of them—that those who give orders are acutely vulnerable to the opinions of those whom they are ordering about.

That was the mistake General Freeland made in the Lower Falls. He didn't look at what was happening through the eyes of people like Rosemary Lawlor. He thought he'd ended the insurgency when he rode around the hushed streets of the Lower Falls like a British Raj on a tiger hunt. Had he bothered to drive up the street to Ballymurphy, where Harrier Carson was banging the lids of pots and saying, "Come on, come out, come out. The people in the Lower Falls are getting murdered," he would have realized the insurgency was just beginning.

## 5.

July in Northern Ireland is the height of what is known as “marching season,” when the country’s Protestant Loyalists organize parades to commemorate their long-ago victories over the country’s Catholic minority. There are church parades, “arch, banner and hall” parades, commemorative band parades, and “blood and thunder” and “kick-the-Pope” flute band parades. There are parades with full silver bands, parades with bagpipes, parades with accordions, and parades with marchers wearing sashes and dark suits and bowler hats. There are hundreds of parades in all, involving tens of thousands of people, culminating every year in a massive march on the twelfth of July that marks the anniversary of the victory by William of Orange in the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, when Protestant control over Northern Ireland was established once and for all.

The night before the Twelfth, as it is known, marchers around the country hold street parties and build enormous bonfires.<sup>8</sup> When the fire is at its height, the group chooses a symbol to burn. In past years, it has often been

\* In Belfast, the Twelfth march wends its way through the city and ends up in the “field,” a large staging area where the crowd gathers for public speeches. Here is a sample of one speech given in 1995. Keep in mind that this is after the Downing Street Declaration that officially began the peace process in Northern Ireland:

We have read the history books, from 200 years ago. The Roman Catholics forming into groups known as the Defenders, to get rid of the so called heretic dogs, better known by you and I as Protestant people. Well today is no different from 1795. There is a Pope on the throne, a Polish Pope who was around in the days of Hitler and the concentration camps of Auschwitz when they stood back and watched thousands go out to death without one word of condemnation.

an effigy of the Pope or some hated local Catholic official. Here’s how one Twelfth dirty goes, sung to the tune of “Clementine”:

*Build a bonfire, build a bonfire,  
Stick a Catholic on the top,  
Put the Pope right in the middle,  
And burn the fucking lot.<sup>9</sup>*

Northern Ireland is not a large country. Its cities are dense and compact, and as the Loyalists march by each summer in their bowler hats and sashes with flutes, they inevitably pass by the neighborhoods of the people whose defeat they are celebrating. The central artery of Catholic West Belfast is, in places, no more than a few minutes’ walk from the street that runs through the heart of Protestant West Belfast. There are places in Belfast where the houses of Catholics back directly onto the backyards of Protestants, in such close proximity that each house has a giant metal grate over its backyard to protect the inhabitants against debris or petrol bombs thrown by their neighbors. On

\* There are many versions of this children’s rhyme, of course. A slightly less offensive version is sung by fans of Manchester United about their archrival Liverpool. (“scouser,” incidentally, refers to someone from Liverpool or who speaks with the Liverpudlian accent. The Beatles were scousers.)

*Build a bonfire, build a bonfire,  
Put the scousers on the top,  
Put the city in the middle,  
And we’ll burn the fuckin’ lot.*

As you might expect, numerous highly enthusiastic renditions of this rhyme are available on YouTube.

the night before the Twelfth, when Loyalists lit bonfires around the city, people in Catholic neighborhoods would smell the smoke and hear the chants and see their flag going up in flames.

In marching season, violence *always* erupts in Northern Ireland. One of the incidents that began the Troubles was in 1969 after two days of riots broke out when a parade passed through a Catholic neighborhood. When the marchers went home, they went on a rampage through the streets of West Belfast, burning down scores of homes. The gun battles the following summer that so tried Freeland's patience also happened during Protestant marches. Imagine that every summer U.S. Army veterans from the Northern states paraded through the streets of Atlanta and Richmond to commemorate their long-ago victory in the American Civil War. In the dark years of Northern Ireland, when Catholic and Protestant were at each other's throats, that's what marching season felt like.

When the residents of the Lower Falls looked up that afternoon and saw the British Army descend on their neighborhood, they were then as desperate as anyone to see law and order enforced in Belfast. But they were equally anxious about *how* law and order would be enforced. Their world did not seem fair. The Twelfth, when

\* The next day, a Loyalist mob burned the Catholic neighborhood along Bombay Street to the ground. The Loyalists, who are fond of their verse, had a dirty for that attack as well:

*On the 15th of August, we took a little trip  
Up along Bombay Street and burned out all the shit.  
He took a little petrol, and we took a little gun  
And we fought the bloody Fenians till we had them on the run.*

either their flag or their Pope would be burned in giant bonfires, was only days away. The institution charged with keeping both sides apart during marching season was the police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary. But the RUC was almost entirely Protestant. It belonged to the other side. The RUC had done almost nothing to try to stop the riots the previous summer; a tribunal convened by the British government concluded, after the Protestant Loyalists had torched houses, that the RUC officers had "failed to take effective action." Journalists at the scene reported Loyalists going up to police officers and asking them if they could borrow their weapons. One of the reasons the British Army had been brought into Northern Ireland was to serve as an impartial referee between Protestant and Catholic. But England was an overwhelmingly Protestant country, so it seemed only natural to Northern Ireland's beleaguered Catholics that the sympathies of the soldiers would ultimately lie with the Protestants. When a big Loyalist march had run through Ballymurphy in the Easter before the curfew, British soldiers had stood between the marchers and the residents, ostensibly to act as a buffer. But the troops faced the Catholics on the sidewalk and stood with their backs to the Loyalists—as if they saw their job as to protect the Loyalists from the Catholics but not the Catholics from the Loyalists.

General Freeland was trying to enforce the law in Belfast, but he needed to first ask himself if he had the legitimacy to enforce the law—and the truth is, he didn't. He was in charge of an institution that the Catholics of Northern Ireland believed, with good reason, was thoroughly sympathetic to the very people who had burned down the

houses of their friends and relatives the previous summer. And when the law is applied in the absence of legitimacy, it does not produce obedience. It produces the opposite. It leads to backlash.\*

The great puzzle of Northern Ireland is why it took the British so long to understand this. In 1969, the Troubles resulted in thirteen deaths, seventy-three shootings, and eight bombings. In 1970, Freeland decided to get tough with thugs and gunmen, warning that anyone caught throwing gasoline bombs was "liable to be shot." What happened? The historian Desmond Hamill writes:

The [IRA] retaliated by saying that they would shoot soldiers, if Irishmen were shot. The Protestant Ulster Volunteer Force—an extreme and illegal paramilitary unit—quickly joined in, offering to shoot a Catholic in return for every soldier shot by the IRA. The *Times* quoted a Belfast citizen saying: "Anyone who isn't confused here doesn't really understand what is going on."

That year, there were 25 deaths, 213 shootings, and 155 bombings. The British stood firm. They cracked down even harder—and in 1971, there were 184 deaths, 1,020 bombings, and 1,756 shootings. Then the British drew a line in the sand. The army instituted a policy known as "internment." Civil rights in Northern Ireland were suspended. The country was flooded with troops, and the

\* As Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams would say years later, the curfew's result was that "thousands of people...who had never had any time for physical force now accepted it as a practical necessity."

army declared that anyone suspected of terrorist activities could be arrested and held in prison, indefinitely, without charges or trial. So many young Catholic men were rounded up during internment that in a neighborhood like Ballymurphy, everyone had a brother or a father or a cousin in prison. If that many people in your life have served time behind bars, does the law seem fair anymore? Does it seem predictable? Does it seem like you can speak up and be heard? Things got even worse. In 1972, there were 1,495 shootings, 531 armed robberies, 1,931 bombings, and 497 people killed. One of those 497 was a seventeen-year-old boy named Eamon. Eamon was Rosemary Lawlor's little brother.\*

"Eamon appeared at my door," Lawlor said. "He said to me, 'I'd love to stay here for a day or two.' And I said, 'Why don't you?' He said, 'Ma would have a fit. She would go ballistic.' Then he confided in myself and my husband that he was getting harassed by the British Army. Every time he was out, every corner he turned, everywhere he went, they were stopping him and they threatened him."

Was he actually working with the IRA? She didn't know, and she said it didn't matter. "We were all suspects in their eyes," she went on. "That's the way it was. And Eamon was shot, shot by a British soldier. Him and another fellow were having a smoke, and one shot rang out, and Eamon got it. He lived for eleven weeks. He died on the sixteenth of January, at seventeen and a half years of

\* By the way, things didn't get much better in 1973. The British cracked down even harder that year, and there were 171 civilians killed, 5,018 shootings, 1,007 explosions, 1,317 armed robberies, and 172 tons of explosives seized by the army.

age." She began to tear up. "My father never worked again at the dock. My mother was destroyed, heartbroken. It's forty years ago this year. It's still rough."

Lawlor was a young wife and mother, living what she had expected would be a normal life in modern Belfast. But then she lost her home. She was threatened and harassed. Her relatives down the hill were imprisoned in their homes. Her brother was shot and killed. She never wanted any of it, nor asked for any of it, nor could even make sense of what happened. "That was my life, my whole new life," she said. "And then this was forced upon me. And I go, This is not right. D'you know? Here are my people I grew up with in school, being burnt out of their houses. The British Army that came in to protect us has now turned on us and is wracking and ruining. I became hooked. I don't mean that flippantly. I became that way because I can't sit in the house while this is going on. I can't be a nine-to-five mother.

"People call it the Troubles," she continued. "It was war! The British Army was out there with armored cars and weapons and you name it. That's a war zone we lived in. The British Army came in here with every means that they had available to put us down. And we were like rubber dolls—we'd just bounce back up again. Don't get me wrong. We got hurt on the way down. A lot of people had heartache. I suffered from anger for a long, long time, and I've apologized to my children for that. But the circumstances dictated that. It wasn't how I was. I wasn't born that way. This was forced upon me."

## 6.

When General Freeland's men descended on the Lower Falls, the first thing the neighbors did was run to St. Peter's Cathedral, the local Catholic church just a few blocks away. The defining feature of the Lower Falls, like so many of the other Catholic neighborhoods of West Belfast, was its religiosity. St. Peter's was the heart of the neighborhood. Four hundred people would attend mass at St. Peter's on a typical *weekday*. The most important man in the community was the local priest. He came running. He went up to the soldiers. The raid must be done quickly, he warned them, or there would be trouble.

Forty-five minutes passed, and the soldiers emerged with their haul: fifteen pistols, a rifle, a Schmeisser sub-machine gun, and a cache of explosives and ammunition. The patrol packed up and left, turning onto a side street that would take them out of the Lower Falls. In the interim, however, a small crowd had gathered, and as the armored cars turned the corner, a number of young men ran forward and started throwing stones at the soldiers. The patrol stopped. The crowd grew angry. The soldiers responded with tear gas. The crowd grew angrier. Stones turned to petrol bombs and petrol bombs to bullets. A taxi driver said he had seen someone carrying a sub-machine gun heading for Balkan Street. The rioters set up roadblocks to slow the army's advance: a truck was set ablaze, blocking the end of the street. The soldiers fired even more tear gas, until the wind had carried it clear across the Lower Falls. The crowd grew angrier still.

Why did the patrol stop? Why didn't they just keep



going? Lingering in the neighborhood is exactly what the priest told them *not* to do. The priest went back to the soldiers and pleaded with them again. If they stopped the tear gas, he said, he would get the crowd to stop throwing stones. The soldiers didn't listen. Their instructions were to get tough and be seen to get tough with thugs and gunmen. The priest turned back toward the crowd. As he did, the soldiers fired off another round of tear gas. The canisters fell at the feet of the priest, and he staggered across the street, leaning on a windowsill as he gasped for air. In a neighborhood so devout that four hundred people would show up for mass on a typical weekday, *the British Army gassed the priest.*

That was when the riot started. Freeiland called in reinforcements. To subdue a community of eight thousand people—packed into tiny houses along narrow streets—the British brought in three thousand troops. And not just any troops. To a fiercely Catholic neighborhood, Freeiland brought in soldiers from the Royal Scots—one of the most obviously and self-consciously Protestant regiments in the entire army. Army helicopters circled overhead, ordering the residents by megaphone to stay inside their homes. Roadblocks were placed at every exit. A curfew was declared, and a systematic house-by-house search began. Twenty- and twenty-one-year-old soldiers, still smarting from the indignity of being pelted with stones and petrol bombs, forced their way into home after home, punching holes in walls and ceilings, ransacking bedrooms. Listen to one of those British soldiers, looking back on what happened that night:

A guy still in his pajamas came out cursing, wielding a lamp, and whacked Stan across the head. Stan dodged the next one and decked the bloke with his rifle butt. I knew full well that a lot of the lads were taking this opportunity to vent their anger over things already done. Heads were being cracked and houses trashed from top to bottom. Everything in the houses became a mass of rubble, but, out of the blur, little sharp details still cut through: school photos; smiley family pictures (cracked); trinkets and crucifixes (snapped); kids crying; crunching on the glass of the Pope's picture; unfinished meals and bad wallpaper; coloured toys and TV noise and radio crackle; painted plates; shoes; a body in the hall, flattened against the wall.... This is when I did feel like we'd invaded.

Three hundred and thirty-seven people were arrested that night. Sixty were injured. Charles O'Neill, a disabled air force veteran, was run over and killed by a British armored car. As his body lay on the ground, one of the soldiers poked a bystander with a baton and said, "Move on, you Irish bastard—there are not enough of you dead." A man named Thomas Burns was shot by a soldier on the Falls Road at eight p.m. as he stood with a friend who was boarding up the windows of his store. When his sister came to pick up his body, she was told he had no business being on the street at that time. At eleven p.m., an elderly man named Patrick Elliman, thinking the worst was over, went out in his bedroom slippers and shirtsleeves for a pre-bedtime stroll. He died in a burst of army gunfire. One of the neighborhood accounts of the curfew says of Elliman's death:

That very night British troops actually entered and quartered themselves in the shot man's home, the distraught sister having been moved to the other brother's up the street. This tasteless intrusion into the abandoned home was discovered the next afternoon during the interval in the "curfew" when the brother, with his daughter and son-in-law, went down to the house and found the door broken down, a window broken, kit lying on the floor, shaving tackle on the settee, and used cups in the scullery. Neighbors informed them that the soldiers had dosed down in the upstairs rooms as well.

A door broken down. A window broken. Dirty dishes left in the sink. Leites and Wolf believed that all that counts are rules and rational principles. But what actually matters are the hundreds of small things that the powerful do—or don't do—to establish their legitimacy, like sleeping in the bed of an innocent man you just shot accidentally and scattering your belongings around his house.

By Sunday morning, the situation inside the Lower Falls was growing desperate. The Lower Falls was not a wealthy neighborhood. Many of the adults were unemployed or, if they were not, relied on piecework. The streets were crowded, and the homes were narrow—cheaply built nineteenth-century terraced redbrick row houses, with one room to a floor, and bathrooms in the backyard. Very few houses had a refrigerator. They were dark and damp. People bought bread daily because it grew moldy otherwise. But the curfew was now thirty-six hours old—and there was no bread left. The Catholic neighborhoods of West Belfast are packed so tightly to-

gether, and linked by so many ties of marriage and blood, that word spread quickly from one to the next about the plight of the Lower Falls. Harriet Carson walked through Ballymurphy, banging together the lids of pots. Next came a woman named Máire Drumm. She had a bullhorn. She marched through the streets, shouting to the women: "Come out! Fill your prams with bread and milk! The children haven't gotten any food."

The women started to gather in groups of two and four and ten and twenty, until they numbered in the thousands. "Some people still had their rollers in their hair, and their scarves over their head," Lawlor remembered. "We linked arms and sang, 'We shall overcome. We shall overcome someday.'"

"We got down to the bottom of the hill," she went on. "The atmosphere was electric. The Brits were standing with their helmets and their guns—all ready. Their batons were out. We turned and went down the Grosvenor Road, singing and shouting. I think the Brits were in awe. They couldn't believe that these women with prams were coming down to take them on. I remember seeing one Brit standing there scratching his head, going, 'What do we do with all these women? Do we go into riot situation here?' Then we turned onto Slate Street, where the school was—*my school*. And the Brits were there. They come flying out [of the school], and there was hand-to-hand fighting. We got the hair pulled out of us. The Brits just grabbed us, threw us up against the walls. Oh, aye. They beat us,

\* Six years later, Drumm was shot to death in her bed by Protestant extremists while she was being treated at Mater Hospital in Belfast.

like. And if you fell, you had to get up very quickly, because you didn't want to get trampled. They came out with brutality. I remember standing up on top of a car and having a look at what was going on in the front. Then I saw a man with shaving cream on his face, and putting his braces on—and all of a sudden the soldiers stopped beating us.”

The man putting his braces on was the commanding officer of the Slate Street checkpoint. He might have been the only voice of sanity on the British side that day, the only one who understood the full dimensions of the catastrophe unfolding. A heavily armed group of soldiers was beating up a group of pram-pushing women, coming to feed the children of the Lower Falls. He told his men to stop.

“You have to understand, the march was still coming down the road, and the people at the back hadn't a clue what was going on at the front,” Lawlor went on. “They kept coming. Women were crying. People started coming out of their houses—pulling people in because there were so many injured. Once all the people started coming out of their houses, the Brits lost control. Everyone came out on the streets—hundreds and hundreds of people. It was like a domino effect. One street they'd come out, next thing you know, doors are opening on another street, another street, and another street. The Brits gave up. They had their hands up. The women forced—and we forced and we forced—until we got in, and we got in and we

broke the curfew. I've often thought about it. God, it was like—Everybody was jubilant. It was like—*We did it.*”

“I remember coming home and suddenly felt very shaky and upset and nervous about the whole episode, do you know? I remember speaking to my father about it afterward. I said, ‘Daddy, your words came true. They turned on us.’ And he said, ‘True. British Army—that's what they do.’ He was right. They turned on us. And that was the start of it.”

\* One of the many legends of the Lower Falls curfew is that the prams pushed by marchers had two purposes. The first was to bring milk and bread into the Lower Falls. The second was to take guns and explosives out—past the unsuspecting eyes of the British Army.