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Reviews

Bloody Sunday - Scenes from the Saville Inquiry

On January 30, 1972, British paratroopers shot and killed 13 unarmed and innocent civilians in Derry, Northern Ireland. This event, Bloody Sunday, is the subject of the Saville Inquiry, which is the latest in Nicolas Kent's exemplary series of tribunal plays.

Edited from thousands of hours of testimony by Richard Norton-Taylor, the play tells the story of Bloody Sunday in the words of the people who were actually there. This acute sense of authenticity comes across well under Kent and Charlotte Westendra's direction and relies on the understated acting of a large cast, led by Alan Parnaby as Lord Saville and Nick Sampson as his chief counsel.

But although this is superb documentary theatre, the verbatim style does have its drawbacks. Anyone not familiar with the events will struggle to understand this account, while those who know the story will learn little new. It is also notable that some controversial figures, such as Martin McGuinness, do not take the stage.

In this version, the most telling contrast is between the civilian witnesses, who remember what they saw in vivid detail, and the soldiers, whose guilt is clear from their evasions, lies and convenient memory lapses.

It is obvious that the British Army committed many crimes that day and tried to cover them up. As a piece of drama, however, Bloody Sunday is flawed because, since the Saville Inquiry has not yet reported, the show has no conclusion. It is a compelling enough experience but, like reality TV, it doesn't really tell you anything you didn't already know.

Aleks Sierz

Wednesday 20 April 2005 05:00 PM



Michael O'Hagen (Daly) in **Bloody Sunday - Scenes from the Saville Inquiry** at the Tricycle Theatre, London
Photo: Tristram Kenton

Production information

By: Edited by Richard Norton-Taylor from the Bloody Sunday inquiry transcripts

Management: Tricycle Theatre

Cast: David Beams, John Castle, Jeremy Clyde, Michael Cochrane, Sorcha Cusack, Julia Dearden, Rita Hamill, William Hoyland, Charles Lawson, Hilary Maclean, Carole Nimmons, Michael O'Hagan, Alan Parnaby, Nick Sampson, Thomas Wheatley, Gerard O'Hare

Director: Nicolas Kent

Design: Claire Spooner

Lighting: Jon Driscoll

Production information can change over the run of the show.

Run sheet

Tricycle **London**

April 11-May 7 2005

Grand Opera House **Belfast**

September 11-14 2005

Millennium Forum **Derry**

September 16-17 2005

Tricycle **London**

September 20-October 8 2005

Abbey **Dublin**

October 11-15 2005