

TE AHUREI
TOI O TĀMAKI

AUCKLAND
ARTS FESTIVAL



IN THE NAME OF THE SON

THE GERRY CONLON STORY

Rangatira, Q Theatre

14–17 March 2024

In the Name of the Son

Credits

Green Shoot Productions

Writers

Richard O’Rawe, Martin Lynch

Director

Tony Devlin

Performer

Shaun Blaney

Touring Production Manager

Sinead Owens

Touring Producer

Liam McMullan

Set & Costume

Tracey Lindsay

Lighting

James C McFetridge

Sound

Garth McConaghie

Marketing Officer

Briege Lynch

Set Construction

Matt Lavery

Scenic Artist

Chris Hunter

1hr 20mins no interval

*Contains scenes of a sexual nature, simulated violence,
strobe lighting and coarse language*

In the Name of the Son

Acknowledgements

In the Name of the Son is supported by



Cultúr Éireann
Culture Ireland

The *In the Name of the Son* team would like to thank: Jimmy Fay & the Lyric Theatre staff (original venue), Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council, Green Shoot Board Members, Rory Casey (original Production Manager), Emily Lamey (original stage manager), the O’rawe Family, Grainne Lynch, Jim Sheridan, Ian Wilson and the Grand Opera House staff, Alan Clarke, Brassneck Theatre Company, Chris Fitzpatrick, Ross CcDade at QUB, Megan Joyce, Iwan Lewis and the Barn Theatre staff and Direct Furniture.

Special thanks to Bronagh Boyle for her support.

Green Shoot Productions Administrator
– **Mary Bailie**

GBL Productions Administrator
– **Deirdre Ashe**

“Rainy Night In Soho, A”

Written by: Mac-Gowan

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Production images by Johnny Frazer

In the Name of the Son

Creative Notes



Writers' notes

Remarkable people live remarkable lives. Every minute is precious, every experience, good and bad, has reason and worth. As the late Frank Murray, the former manager of The Pogues said of Gerry Conlon: *“Anything that Gerry couldn’t do in there [in prison], he was trying to do out here; he was trying to live the sixties, the seventies, and the eighties, all in one month.”* Against this frenzied background, it was with some trepidation that I agreed to co-write this play when first approached by Martin Lynch. I asked myself: How can we possibly do justice to a life journey that had so many soaring highs and plummeting lows? How could we possibly capture the resilience and the spirit of the man in a ninety-minute play? Martin, wise old owl that he is, assured me that it was worth the effort, and I’m glad I listened to him.

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Master Shakespeare was also whispering in my ear when deciding whether to go for it, or not: “*All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players: They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts; His acts being seven ages.*” Gerry Conlon played many parts and he played them well. His acts were seven ages.

I’d like to thank my family for supporting me and especially my daughter, Berni. I’d also like to thank Martin, Tony, Shaun, and all those involved in any way in the production. It’s been a privilege and a pleasure.

– **Richard O’Rawe**

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I have an interesting connection to the Gerry Conlon story that precedes the writing of this play by about 40 years. It goes something like this.

In the mid-70s, I was working in councillor Jim Sullivan's Advice Centre in Cyprus St. in the Lower Falls. When I arrived at the centre one morning, a very worried-looking woman was waiting on it opening. She told me her name was Conlon and that she only lived two doors up. She explained that her son, Gerry had been arrested and she had no idea where he was. I contacted Jim Sullivan at his house who quickly arranged for Mrs Conlon and her husband, Guiseppe, to meet with prominent solicitor, Ted Jones. In turn, Ted Jones, established where Gerry was being held in England and arranged for Gerry's father, Guiseppe, to travel to London to arrange a solicitor for Gerry.

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All quite fantastic when I sit today and think about the huge story that Gerry Conlon, Guiseppe, Sarah and his family became. So away back in the day, by complete coincidence, I was probably the first person to write in a ledger that a young man called Gerry Conlon had been arrested. And even more fantastical, here I am today, co-authoring a stage play about his life.

When I made enquiries locally, I quickly found out that both the Official IRA and the Provisional IRA were 'after' Gerry for a catalogue of petty no-goodery, like breaking into pubs, houses, general thieving, etc.

Apart from his TV appearances, the next time I saw Gerry Conlon was at a funeral long after his release from prison. I still had it in my mind that Gerry was 'riff-raff' and I had no intention of making eye contact or greeting him. Fast forward several years and I had rekindled an

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Creative Notes

old friendship with Richard O'Rawe.

Both sons of dockers, Richard and I had been a part of the last intake of young dockers in 1971. We worked at the odd boat together and got on well. In more recent years, Richard and I would occasionally meet up for a chat. On one of these occasions, he informed me he had been meeting regularly with Gerry and would I be interested in going out with them for a drink? I outlined my apprehensions about the man but Richard assured me he had fundamentally changed and that I would enjoy his company. How right he was. Callously, knowing all about his miscarriage of justice via the public domain, I was more interested in asking questions about prison gangsters, the Krays, Mad Frankie Fraser, etc. Gerry obliged and we had a great night in the Duke of York pub with Gerry's consummate storytelling centre stage.

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In the next number of years, I invited Richard and Gerry to several of my plays, nights out which they both loved.

The last time I saw Gerry was about six months before he died. I bumped into him in the town and he told me he had a load of his father's letters in the house and would I be interested in turning them into a stage play. I agreed it was a great idea and he vowed to drop them down to me the next week. He never did. Instead we've got this play *In The Name Of The Son*, based on Richard's book. I hope it gives you some idead of the remarkable man Gerry Conlon was.

– Martin Lynch

Director's note

Being afforded the opportunity to work on such a powerful piece of theatre as *The Gerry Conlon Story*, was an opportunity I really didn't have to think twice about. As soon as Martin approached me about taking the reigns of *In The Name of the Son*, it didn't take long for me to give him my answer. Absolutely!

Being a Falls Road man myself, I had grown up with the Gerry Conlon story from the Guildford 4 case to the Birmingham 6 case, to the wrongful imprisonments, to the cases being thrown out of court, to the consequent apologies from the British Government. The world was soon aware of the story after Jim Sheridan brought the script to the big screen starring Daniel Day Lewis. Richard and Martin's script provides an audience with a deep insight

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Creative Notes

into the personal journey of Gerry Conlon on his journey into wrongful imprisonment then consequently his release and what happened after jail.

We all know the story of the trial and imprisonment but unlike the movie *In the Name of the Father*, this play tells us the story about what happened to Gerry AFTER jail. A sequel to Jim Sheridan's wonderful movie if you like, albeit on a much more personal level as Richard the writer was tasked by Gerry Conlon himself to write the story...Richard being one of his best friends and confidants.

For me, this is a such an exciting angle for a director to explore as we get an opportunity to delve into the psyche of a person who was almost institutionalised and how they struggle to adapt to the changing world into which they are now thrown. Gerry's journey after prison is so full of highs and lows, achievements and turmoil that it makes for perfect

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theatre; the one place we come to see light being shone into dark corners.

With a great script and an incredible talent in the one man who carries the entire show, Shaun Blaney, this play has been an absolute pleasure to spend time working on. I hope that you get as much from it as I have in what is undoubtedly an incredibly moving yet ultimately uplifting, inspiring and entertaining piece of theatre.

– Tony Devlin

In the Name of the Son

About the Company



Green Shoot Productions (GSP) is dedicated to commissioning and producing new writing for the stage to the highest possible standards.

Our key objective is to develop and produce plays that are socially and politically relevant to Northern Ireland. In delivery, Green Shoot Productions seeks to make professional theatre accessible to all and to contribute to the canon of Northern Irish theatre.

In the Name of the Son

Timeline



In the Name of the Son

Timeline

1 Mar 1954

Gerry Conlon is born in Lower Falls, Belfast to parents, Guiseppe and Sarah.

1973

He becomes a bit of a tearaway, petty thief, etc.



Gerry Conlon and Mother Sarah Conlon.

Oct 1975

Along with Paul Hill, Paddy Armstrong and Carole Richardson, Gerry is tried and sentenced to Life for the bombings.

Guiseppe and the Maguire family are also sentenced to long prison terms.

1966

Gerry Conlon develops a daily ritual of small-time gambling on the horses.

1974

Gerry moves to London to escape the wrath of the IRA for his petty activities. Later that year, Gerry returns to Belfast and gets arrested at his home and flown to England for questioning about Guildford bombings. Within a few days, his father Guiseppe goes to England to get Gerry a solicitor and, along with the Maguire family, is also arrested and charged with making bombs.

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Timeline

1980

After five years incarcerated, Guiseppe passes away in prison. The guilt Gerry feels about his father's death weighs heavily on him – he starts to have the most awful recurring nightmares. (The same nightmares stay with him all his life.)

1990

Gerry receives his second amount of Govt. compensation money and buys a small basement flat in Tuffnell Pk.



1989

In October, Gerry and the rest of the Guildford 4 are released from prison after serving 15 years as innocent people. Gerry launches into a campaign to have the Birmingham 6 case reviewed. He receives his first Government compensation money. He travels to USA to lobby on behalf of the Birmingham 6 and receives a promise that the US Congress will hold a Hearing on the issue

Along with Paul Hill, Gerry appears on RTE's Late Late Show with Gay Byrne.

Sisters Bridie & Anne hand in hand with Gerry as he walks out a free man.

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Timeline

1990

On his second trip to USA, Gerry speaks at a Congressional hearing and meets Gabriel Byrne where they discuss the making of a movie about Gerry's prison experiences.

Gerry's autobiography, *Proved Innocent* is published.

1991

The Birmingham 6 are finally released after 17 years of wrongful imprisonment.

1992

After being anti-hard drugs for three years, Gerry does his first crack-cocaine and is immediately hooked.

1990

Gerry and Johnny Depp tour Ireland on their way to see the Dingle dolphins.

Gerry meets director Jim Sheridan about the possibility making a movie adaptation.



Johnny Depp
& Gerry Conlon.



Jim Sheridan
& Gerry Conlon
in LA.

1992

He meets his first serious girlfriend, Minty.

In the Name of the Son

Timeline

1992

Daniel Day Lewis agrees to play Gerry in the movie, with Jim Sheridan now confirmed as director.



Daniel Day Lewis at the Oscars.

1994

Gerry attends the Oscars and spends a good portion of the night in the gents toilets bantering the world's top movie actors.

1995

Gerry is now a hopeless drug addict and meets fellow addict, Angie – she becomes his second long-term girlfriend.

1993

In the Name of the Father is made and receives seven Oscar nominations. Gerry is very disturbed by scenes in the movie portraying a bad relationship between him and his father. He leaves the screening.



Sister Bridie, Gerry and Mother Sarah Conlon at the Premiere for *In the Name of the Father*.

1995

His final Government payment of £240K comes through. It's squandered within 12 months.

In the Name of the Son

Timeline

2000

Gerry is desperate to come off crack-cocaine and moves to Plymouth where he is referred to Counsellor, Barry Walle. Over the next two years, Barry works diligently with Gerry until he is completely clean in 2002.

2007

Gerry moves back to Belfast to live with and look after his elderly mother, Sarah.



Paddy Hill (Birmingham 6) and Gerry Conlon.

2005

Prime Minister, Tony Blair publicly apologises to Conlon and Maguire families gathered at Westminster for their wrongful imprisonment.



Gerry Conlon holding apology from Tony Blair.

2007

Paddy Hill asks Gerry to get involved in MOJO – a campaigning group for miscarriages of justice. Along with Paddy, Gerry campaigns for multiple causes around the world.

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2008

Gerry's mother, Sarah, passes away.

Shortly after this, Gerry meets an old Belfast girlfriend who reveals to him he has an 18 year old daughter, Sara, who is studying LAW at Queen's University.

21 Jun 2014

Following a very short illness, where he has breathing and coughing difficulties, Gerry is diagnosed with cancer and passes.

In the Name of the Son

Biographies – Creative Team



In the Name of the Son

Biographies – Creative Team



Richard O'Rawe Writer

Richard O'Rawe was born in Belfast's Lower Falls area. His best childhood friend was Gerry Conlon, who would go on to be wrongfully convicted for the Guildford pub bombings. Before Gerry died in June 2013, O'Rawe promised him that he would write a biography of his life after his release from the Old Bailey in 1989 and, in 2017, fulfilled that promise when *In the Name of the Son: The Gerry Conlon Story* was published. The book was highly praised by critics as “...a *salutary and important book*” (Carlo Gébler, *Irish Times*) and received a public endorsement from Johnny Depp who also wrote the foreword.

In 2019, Richard was approached and commissioned by Martin Lynch to co-write a stage play with him of *In the Name of the Son: The Gerry Conlon Story*.

In 2022, Richard published his new novel *Goering's Gold* based on the story of Nazi Reichsmarschal, Hermann Goering, and is currently developing a six-part TV Series based off his novel *Northern Heist* with Foal films.

In the Name of the Son

Biographies – Creative Team



Martin Lynch Writer

Born and brought up in Belfast, Martin Lynch has combined his roles of writer and producer for over 25 years.

He has written plays for a wide variety of Theatre companies, including the Turf Lodge Fellowship Community Theatre, Lyric Theatre, Charabanc Theatre (all Belfast), Abbey Theatre (Dublin), East 15 and Paines Plough (London).

He was Writer-In-Residence at The Lyric Theatre 1981-82 and The University of Ulster, 1985-88.

His plays have been produced at theatres across Europe and the USA.

A production of *Dockers* was nominated for a Los Angeles Drama Critics Award.

His best-known stage plays include *The Interrogation Of Ambrose Fogarty*, *Chronicles Of Long Kesh* and (with Grimes & McKee) *The History Of The Troubles (Accordin' to My Da)*.

In the Name of the Son

Biographies – Creative Team

Lynch founded Green Shoot Productions and since then has produced several smash-hit shows including: *Chronicles of Long Kesh, Two Sore Legs, Meeting at Menin Gate, We'll Walk Hand in Hand and My English Tongue, My Irish Heart.*

For Green Shoot, Lynch is currently working on a Community Theatre Project in Tiger's Bay, North Belfast.

In the Name of the Son

Biographies – Creative Team



Tony Devlin Director

Tony Devlin was born and raised in West Belfast and graduated from Mountview Theatre Academy in London in 1999

with a BA Hons in Acting.

He has landed roles alongside Bruce Willis and Colin Farrell in *Hart's War* and has worked with Stephen Spielberg and Tom Hanks on *Band of Brothers*, as well as Irish movies such as *Aithrí/Penance*, *Bad Day for the Cut*, *Breakfast on Pluto* and *H3*.

Devlin is a huge Irish language enthusiast and has featured in TG4's *Seacht* and *Marú*.

Devlin is also the founder and Artistic Director of Brassneck Theatre Company which he founded in 2007 and has directed seventeen shows for the company.

Directorial credits include: *Conversations with Angels*, *In The Name Of The Son*, *Dog D.L.A Afternoon*, *A Brassneck Christmas Tale*, *Something in the Air*, *Gibraltar Strait*, *A Station*

In the Name of the Son

Biographies – Creative Team

Once Again, The Blue Boy of Glenmore, What The Reindeer Saw, Carol's Crissmus, Belfast Rising, Che Guevara's Night Off, the double-award-winning The Holy Holy Bus & Man In The Moon, the multi-award-winning A Night with George, The Sweet Bottle, Lemonade Sandwich, It's A Wonderful Life, So It Is, Basra Boy, 1981, Fishers of Men and Love Matters.

In the Name of the Son

Biographies – Cast



Shaun Blaney **Gerry Conlon**

Shaun Blaney was nominated best actor at the 2022 Irish Times Theatre Awards for his performance in *In the Name*

of the Son: The Gerry Conlon Story.

A graduate of Queens University Belfast and film tutor with MN Academy London. Winner of best actor at the 2015 IAWTV awards for best actor in a drama series.

Theatre credits include the 25th Anniversary production of Marie's Jones' *Stones in His Pockets* (The Barn/Lyric theater), *Three's a Shroud* (GBL), *Inventors* (Kabosh), *The Man Who Fell to Pieces* (Tinderbox), *Comet* (Replay), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Ruff theater) and *Bouncers* (Guildford Fringe).

Film and television credits include *Bloodlands* (BBC), *St Mungos* (BBCNI), *Game of Thrones* (HBO), *Frankenstein Chronicles* (ITV), *Halo: Nightfall* (Scottfree/343) *Farr* (RTE) and *Made in Belfast* (Village films).

About the Festival

Who We Are

Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki Auckland Arts Festival champions change-making, the environment, ambitious ideas, powerful voices and unique experiences that open our eyes, our hearts and our minds.

Taking place each March in New Zealand's largest city, and reflecting its contemporary, multicultural nature, the Festival challenges its community to be courageous, to be bold, and to explore new ways of reflecting the world around us.

Through the incredible work of artists here in Aotearoa and across the globe, we aim to unify, uplift and inspire our audiences – the people of Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa, and all who visit.

To learn more about us, tap here. 

The Auckland Festival Trust Ph **+64 09 309 0101** Email info@aaf.co.nz

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