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Gerri Garner's Entertainment File

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“THE FORCE OF CHANGE”

OVER AT THE MCCADDEN PLACE THEATRE, THE CLOSET SPACE THEATRE HAS THE AMERICAN PREMIERE OF GARY MITCHELL'S, INTENSE TALE OF POLITICAL MACHINATIONS, AN UNFLINCFIING STORY OF LIFE IN THE PROTESTANT COMMUNITY OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN “THE FORCE OF CHANGE”. THIS PLAY WAS A SENSATION WHEN IT PLAYED LONDON, AND EARNED MITCHELL THE EVENING STANDARD'S MOST PROMISING PLAYWRIGHT AWARD. IT IS SAD AND IRONIC THAT MITCHELL AND HIS FAMILY HAVE BEEN IN HIDING SINCE LAST NOVEMBER, WHEN THREATS FROM THE UDA (ULSTER DEFENSE ASSOCIATION) FORCED THEM TO FLEE THEIR HOME IN BELFAST. IT SHOWS VARIOUS POLICE OFFICERS' PERSPECTIVES COPING WITH THEIR DUTIES EXAMINING TWO DETAINEES IN TWO INTERWEW ROOMS AT CASTLEREAGH POLICE STATION IN BELFAST IN 2000.

BACKGROUND: THE UDA, THE ULSTER DEFENSE ASSOCIATION WAS FORMED IN 1971 AS AN UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION FOR THE VARIOUS LOYALIST FACTIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THESE PARAMILITARY GROUPS COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO ENSURING THAT NORTHERN IRELAND WOULD REMAIN PART OF THE UNITED KINGDOM. IT EVOLVED INTO A CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION DEEPLY INVOLVED IN DRUG TRAFFICKING, AND OTHER MONEY MAKING CRIMINAL ACTIWTIES THROUGH SIX LARGELY INDEPENDENT 93RIGADES”. MURDER, SHOOTINGS, ARSON, EXTORTION, AND ASSAULTS ARE ITS TRADE MARKS.

THE STORY FOLLOWS FOUR OFFICERS INTERWEWING TWO MEN. CAROLINE PATTERSON (PEGGY GOSS), IS THE LEAD INTER WEWER TRYING TO STOP A VERY DANGEROUS VIOLENT MAN STANLEY (RICK CRAWFORD). HE IS A POWERFUL FORCE IN UDA. HE IS CLOSE MOUTHED, ALWAYS REFUSING TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS, BUT HE MAY HAVE INSIDE HELP. IN ANOTHER INTERROGATION ROOM IS A YOUNG PUNK, RABBIT (BRANDON HALPIN), WHO IS BEING INTER WE WED BY MARK (JOHN MONTANA), AND DAWD (KEWN KEARNS) FOR JOY RIDING IN A STOLEN CAR AT OVER 100 MILES PER HOUR. THEY BELIEVE HE WAS ORDERED BY PERHAPS STANLEY TO STEAL THE CAR, BUT HE TOO ISN'T TALKING, ALTHOUGH HE IS MORE VULNERABLE. ALL THEY WANT IS FOR HIM TO IMPLICATE STANLEY, SO STANLEY WON'T WALK OUT OF THE STATION A FREE MAN ONCE AGAIN TO PURSUED HIS REIGN OF TERROR.

THIS IS STRONG MATERIAL. IT IS AN ANTI TERRORIST PLAY, AND THE POLITICAL GAMES PLAYED BY PUBLIC OFFICIALS. ONE COMPROMISED OFFICER GIVES OUT INFORMATION PUTTING CAROLINE'S FAMILY IN DIRE JEOPARDY.

RUSS BORSKI'S SET, OF DARK DANK HIGH WINDOWS, CREATE A FEELING OF DESPAIR, ALONG WITH HIS' ASTONISHING SOUND, UNDER THE SUPERB DIRECTION BY JOHN SWANBECK, GIVING INTENSE K LJMANITY TO ALL OF THE OFFICERS, EVEN BILL (BARRY LYNCH), A THIRTY YEAR VETERAN OF THE FORCE. THE ENTIRE ENSEMBLE OF “THE FORCE OF CHANGE”, ARE MAGNIFICENT.

THIS IS EXEMPLARY THEATER, AND A MUST SEE PRODUCTION. IT IS OUR CRITIC'S PICK. DON'T MISS IT!

“THE FORCE OF CHANGE”, AT THE MCCADDEN PLACE THEATRE, LOCATED AT 1157 NO. MCCADDEN PLACE, PLAYS THURSDAYS THROUGH SATURDAYS AT 8, AND SUNDAYS AT 2. FOR TICKETS PLEASE CALL AREA CODE (818) 780-0661.

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