

April 4, 2006

The Force of Change

The McCadden Place Theatre

Mention political violence and few remember that one of the bloodiest and most pernicious conflicts has been in Northern Ireland between Catholics and Protestants. The Closet Space Theatre tackles the highly charged story by playwright Gary Mitchell whose vivid depictions focus on a police interrogation in Northern Ireland, but actually carries a much deeper subtext just below the surface.



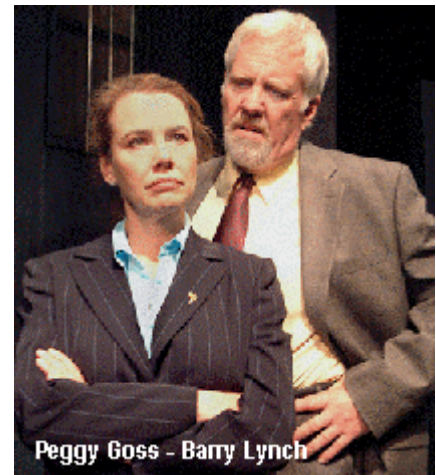
The action takes place in a police station in Belfast where the police try to get suspect Stanley Brown to admit his connection to the UDA, (Ulster Defense Association). Brown has been seen committing atrocities, but witnesses are few and his refusal to talk forces them to use alternate methods with another suspect called Rabbit, hoping to frighten him into ratting on Brown.

In direct contrast to Brown, Rabbit talks more than he should, succeeding in entangling the problem more for the police.

It soon becomes clear there's more at stake than getting Brown to confess. Personal issues between the four officers arise, revealing jealousies between Bill, a thirty-year veteran detective and his much younger and career oriented partner Caroline, who was promoted over him. With hints of sexism and blind ambition, Barry Lynch and Peggy Goss are excellent as the feuding partners who can't agree on how to handle the investigation.

John Montana and Kevin Kearns are the other officers attempting to diffuse a more serious problem with Bill, while Stanley, played by Rick Crawford seems to have gotten the upper hand. Brandan Halpin plays Rabbit.

As the investigation plods along, one can clearly see the characters' frustration and feeling of failure since they can't get useful information from either suspect.



Caroline begins to reveal several flaws in her seemingly impenetrable armor of strength, and Bill completely breaks down as he reveals how his weakness has compromised the department. In the end, the focus shifts as Brown is released and the officers prepare to confront a challenge that could rip the department apart. Director John Swanbeck uses low lighting, deep shadows and a spartan set to escalate the tension and conflict to the breaking point as the audience is taken on a realistic thrill ride that has many unexpected and exciting turns.

The Force of Change plays through May 7, 2006 at the McCadden Place Theatre, 1157 North McCadden Place, Hollywood, CA. Reservations at: (818) 780-0661.