


**From:** Lucy Pollak <lucy@lucypr.com>  
**Subject:** Force of Change-LA Times Review  
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**To:** Russell Borski <rx33@case.edu>, Rick Crawford <rickcrawford1976@sbcglobal.net>, Peggy Goss <peggyleegoss@aol.com>, Brandan Halpin <brandanhalpin@gmail.com>, Becky Harrison <raharrison33@hotmail.com>, "Kevin P. Kearns" <kevinpkearns@yahoo.com>, Barry Lynch <celticsoul1@aol.com>, John Montana <johnmontana@sbcglobal.net>, "Sandra Kuker";  
 2 Attachments, 4.9 KB

[Congratulations yet again! This will be in tomorrow's LA Times - it's the Theater beat lead-off review.](#)

Lucy

# Los Angeles Times

April 7, 2006

## Defining Northern Ireland's troubles

■ Gary Mitchell's "The Force of Change" at McCadden Place Theatre in Hollywood is a grim testament to intractable divisions and blind allegiances that defy rational solution.

Illuminating the societal morass of present-day Northern Ireland from the insightful perspective of a native son, Gary Mitchell's "The Force of Change" is a grim testament to intractable divisions and blind allegiances that defy rational solution.

It's also a first-rate crime drama a la "Homicide" or "Prime Suspect," set in a Belfast police station where the distinction between good guys and villains becomes increasingly blurred in the course of two interrelated interrogations.

One team of detectives fast-track careerist Caroline (Peggy Goss) and her resentful older subordinate Bill (Barry Lynch) is racing against the clock to get information from a Protestant paramilitary thug (Rick Crawford) before they have to release him. Next door, a more seasoned pair of cops (John Montana, Kevin Kearns) chaff at grilling a petty thief (Brandan Halpin) when they believe they could do a better job than Caroline with the more important suspect.

In the clash of egos and motives pitting cop against cop, complex performances ensure it's not easy to take sides. Goss gives Caroline enough haughtiness and occasional lapses in professionalism to justify resentments of her colleagues, while Montana's would-be peacemaker becomes mired in moral compromise.

Looming over the interrogations is a police force undergoing change the Ulster constabulary transforming from its traditional role as protector of the Protestant population against Catholic insurgents to a pro-unification outfit that must adapt its old-boy network to accommodate not only Catholics but ambitious women such as Caroline.

John Swanbeck's focused staging guides us through the dizzying maze of Northern Irish politics with impressive clarity. Though Mitchell's characters remain too constrained by the issues they embody to truly stand on their own, polemics never overwhelm their compelling personal struggles.

- Philip Brandes

"The Force of Change," McCadden Place Theatre, 1157 McCadden Place, Hollywood. 8 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays (dark April 16). Ends May 7. \$15-\$20. (818) 780-0661. Running time: 2 hours.

Lucy Pollak  
Lucy Pollak Public Relations  
(818) 887-1499  
(818) 887-1474 (fax)

