

L07: RUBY MILLIGAN INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Interviewee: Ruby Milligan [pseudonym]
Interviewer: Dr Fearghus Roulston
Interview summarisers: Dr Jack Crangle and Prof Liam Harte
The interview was recorded as a single audio file with no section breaks

L07: Ruby Milligan	Start time: 00:00:00	Finish time: 01:23:26	Duration: 01:23:26	Brief description of content:
00:00–09:59	Born in 1972 and raised on a farm near Loughgall in Co. Armagh. Describes the close-knit nature of the local community and how it shaped her. Attended a small, two-teacher primary school and passed the eleven-plus, after which she found the transition to a large all-girls' secondary school difficult initially. Explains that her family was Presbyterian, but not particularly devout, although weekly church attendance was 'non-negotiable'.			
10:00–19:59	She enjoyed languages at A-levels and after leaving school in 1990 studied French and Spanish at university. Her family lived in a mixed area and had Catholic friends, but she knew from an early age not to discuss politics or religion with Catholics so as not to 'invite trouble'. Recalls her vivid memories of the 1981 Maze hunger strikes, the death of Lord Mountbatten in Co. Sligo in 1979 and the killing of a local prison officer. Her family, though not overtly political, were committed unionists and her father was in the Orange Order, which to her was 'more like a man's club than anything particularly political'. Recalls a widespread 'genuine fear' when growing up that militant republicans 'wanted Protestants out' of the area her family lived in.			
20:00–29:59	Recalls being 'mystified' at the demonisation of the Orange Order by republicans and explains that her father was completely non-sectarian, both socially and as an employer. She studied at Strathclyde University, in part because of her strong desire 'to get out of Northern Ireland just to see a bit of the world'. She expected to return to work in NI, but work was scarce when she graduated. Spent a year in Spain and a year in France during her degree studies. Recalls her time abroad as both daunting and exciting, which enabled her to develop her independence.			
30:00–39:59	Describes her time in Spain and France, including meeting another NI language student who was much more homesick than she was. Notes how little French and Spanish people knew about NI or the Troubles. Explains that she herself generally avoids discussing divisive or controversial political topics such as the Troubles or Brexit in social and work contexts. After graduating from Strathclyde she did a business course at Napier University and then worked in Edinburgh for four years before securing a job in the Netherlands in the late 1990s.			
40:00–49:59	Spent seven years working in Leiden, during which time she enjoyed travelling in Europe and made regular visits to see her family in NI, where her sister is a police officer and her brother a church minister. Recalls her memories of the peace process when she was still living in Edinburgh. Voices her antipathy to 'Sinn Féin talking about equality of victims' and refutes the party's claim to be progressive. Describes herself as being on the political left, but distances herself from Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party because she 'cannot abide anybody who will make excuses for violence'. In 2006 she moved to London, which 'sort of feels like home' now.			
50:00–59:59	Explains that she has an aunt, an uncle and several cousins who also live in London and is not aware that any of them ever experienced anti-Irish hostility. She attends the Free Church of Scotland, which has a diverse, multinational			

	<p>congregation, which she jokes is atypical for a Presbyterian church. She has no current plans to return to NI, but speculates that she might consider doing so in retirement. Discusses trade and customs regulations in light of Brexit. Expresses scepticism about claims that Brexit acrimony could reignite conflict in NI: 'I just have a feeling [...] the whole border question is being made more than it has to be. I can't imagine in this day and age it can't be worked out'.</p>
01:00:00–01:09:59	<p>Expresses her views of the current state of politics in NI, including the electoral prospects of the DUP, the likelihood of Irish reunification and the issues of integrated education and the teaching of the Irish language in schools. States that there was no class divide in her rural community when she was growing up. Despairs at the ignorance of younger people in Britain about NI: 'I think there's a new generation here that just has no awareness of it at all and they probably wonder why, what Britain is doing in Northern Ireland really cos they just have not any historical perspective'.</p>
01:10:00–01:19:59	<p>Recalls her memories of the Loughgall ambush in 1987 in which nine people died. States that she would usually identify as Northern Irish if asked about her nationality. Believes that many people abroad are unaware of or confused about the distinction between NI and the ROI. Discusses the influence of her rural Presbyterian background on her outlook and disposition. Describes how Loughgall has changed and become more prosperous since the peace process, which she thinks is typical of NI more broadly. Places value on her stoicism, a trait she thinks was shaped by her parents' example and having endured the Troubles: 'it might be bad but, you know, you've got ups and downs and you just get on with it and eventually you'll come out the other side'.</p>
01:20:00–01:23:26	<p>Concludes by noting that her great-aunt's father was a policeman who was shot during the first wave of the Troubles in the 1920s. Links his police service to that of her sister in today's PSNI, saying: 'she always wanted to be really on the frontline'.</p>