Blood in Derry:

Bloody Sunday 1972

By

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And the battle's just begun
There's many lost, but tell me who has won?
The trenches dug within our hearts
And mothers, children, brothers, sisters
Torn apart.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

To most Americans these song lyrics are undoubtedly recognizable. Mention Bloody Sunday to most people and the image conjured up is not of an event, but of a song, “Sunday Bloody Sunday,” by the Irish rock band U2. While the song depicts the grief and emotion of the event, few Americans know what the song is really about. What was Bloody Sunday? What happened on that day? Both the Irish and British are still grappling with the answers to these very same questions. Over twenty-five years have past yet, Bloody Sunday continues to be a topic of passionate controversy and debate. The only clear fact is that on Sunday, January 30, 1972, thirteen Irish civilians were killed by British soldiers, and another fourteen were wounded while marching for civil rights. There is still a search to find the truth of what happened on that sunny afternoon, and most importantly, why did it happen? The event is one surrounded with fierce emotion. Accounts and viewpoints of the event vary between those of Irish civilians and those of British military and security forces. While contradictory accounts make it difficult for the historian to come to a clear conclusion about what happened on Bloody Sunday, evidence suggests, that Bloody Sunday was the result of an attempt by the British government and security forces to execute a policy of lethal force against the civil rights marchers and to break the hold the Irish Republican Army (IRA) had on various parts of Derry.

This historian will attempt to sort through the myriad of opinions and eyewitness accounts of the event and bring to light a true vision of what transpired on Sunday,
January 30th in Derry. The opposing viewpoints of the Irish civilian, or British soldier, reflect a long history and culture of conflict between the Irish and the British. Many Irish feel that the actions by the British military were unadulterated murder, while the British government upholds that its soldiers were fired upon by civilian gunmen, and were thus justified in their actions. This stance of the British government therefore places extreme importance upon the question, who fired the first shot? This question, however, despite the importance given to it by the British government, is of little consequence. Of the thirteen civilians shot and killed, only one was found to be carrying weapons, which were discovered in suspicious circumstances. Therefore the question of who fired first is of little merit if those shot and killed by British soldiers were unarmed civilians.

The controversy surrounding Bloody Sunday stems largely from the varying perspectives of the events. The existence of these different accounts creates a great difficulty in discovering the truth of what happened on Bloody Sunday. This is exacerbated by an ongoing propaganda war in Northern Ireland between the British government and Irish republicans. This concern about the propaganda war was made clear by Prime Minister Edward Heath in a private meeting, held the day after Bloody Sunday with Lord Widgery, the man chosen to head the inquiry into Bloody Sunday in 1972. “It had to be remembered that we [are] in Northern Ireland fighting not only a military war, but a propaganda war.”¹ These confidential minutes, known as the 10 Downing St. Meeting surfaced for the first time twenty-three years after Bloody Sunday. Cold blooded murder of civilian civil rights marchers by British soldiers would only provide fuel for the Irish republican recruitment and propaganda machine, and therefore

be counterproductive in the government’s attempts to break the IRA. Thus, the British government’s attempt to win the propaganda war in Northern Ireland provides a motive for possible deception and misrepresentation of the events of Bloody Sunday.

Unfortunately for the British government, the military’s actions on Bloody Sunday, despite whether soldiers’ actions were justified or not, only bolstered the IRA’s strength. Britain failed to break the IRA, and in fact, brought the IRA new recruits and support.2

Since Bloody Sunday a wealth of information has come forth about what really happened on January 30, 1972. Four significant works depict and sort out the events of the day, and its aftermath. The Widgery Report, while criticized for a bias towards British soldiers, provides a culmination of evidence that includes eyewitness accounts and soldier statements. Eamonn McCann’s Bloody Sunday in Derry: What Really Happened provides an insight into the lives of the victims of Bloody Sunday. Another important text was Dr. Raymond McClean’s Road to Bloody Sunday. McClean examined many of those killed on Bloody Sunday. His notes in the appendix describe the types of wounds the victims suffered including the angles at which they were shot. This information is important since medical records for the wounded are sealed by the British government until 2052. The most crucial recent work on Bloody Sunday is Don Mullan’s Eyewitness Bloody Sunday. Mullan’s book contains eyewitness statements taken after Bloody Sunday that have never been published before. The new formed inquiry, known as the Saville Inquiry, headed by Lord Saville, has produced hundreds of documents of eyewitness and expert testimony. Furthermore, even more information will be available

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after the final report of the inquiry which will be published following the conclusion of
the tribunal in 2005.

To fully understand Bloody Sunday one must look at hundreds of years of history
before the event. It is a long history of conflict and division between Ireland and Britain,
and even amongst the Irish themselves. British rule in Ireland began a little over 800
years ago with the Norman invasion of 1169. The Irish successfully resisted the invasion,
confining the Normans to a small area around Dublin known as the Pale. With the arrival
of the Protestant Reformation in the early 16th century, Catholic Ireland was seen as a
threat to Protestant England. England feared Ireland might serve as a possible invasion
landing point for the Catholic Spanish or French. Thus for Henry VIII of England,
controlling Ireland became more urgent. He abolished Catholic monasteries, established
the Protestant Church of Ireland, and confiscated Irish lands and gave them to English or
Scottish settlers. This was most successful in Ireland's most northern province, of Ulster,
where many Protestant settlers were given Irish confiscated lands. This resulted in the
North becoming much more Protestant than the rest of Ireland. A failed Irish rebellion in
1916 led to a five year guerrilla campaign for independence against British rule in Ireland
carried out by the revolutionary Irish Republican Army (IRA). The war resulted in a
controversial treaty in 1921. Under the treaty, the twenty-six counties of southern Ireland
would become a free state, but the six, predominately Protestant, northern counties of
Ulster, Northern Ireland, would remain part of Britain. The Irish Free State as well as the
IRA refused to recognize the partition, and violence often erupted. Southern Ireland’s
government ended Britain's sovereignty in the twenty-six counties of Ireland in 1937, and
fully claimed its position as an independent republic by 1948.
Northern Ireland, still under British rule, continues to be anything but a unified society. The divisions are not just religious, but highly political as well. The majority of the population of Northern Ireland is Protestant. Politically, most Protestants are unionists, or loyalists. The Catholic minority, who most often consider themselves Irish, not British, are nationalists, or Republicans. The more radical Loyalists, on the pro-British side, and Republicans on the Irish nationalist side tend to support the use of political violence more than their moderate compatriots, however not all loyalists and Republicans condone the use of violence. Northern Ireland was given autonomy with a parliament in Stormont, County Antrim, but was dominated by the Protestant majority whose policies were politically and economically sectarian.

Political and social discrimination gave birth to the civil rights movement in 1967. The movement was led by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association which fought to end discrimination against Catholics.\(^3\) By 1971, the British government banned parades and marches under the Special Powers Act of 1922.\(^4\) The ban however was largely ineffective as a deterrent against civil rights marches. Most marches continued with little consequence. Furthermore, as a response to the protest movement and to an increase in IRA activity and recruiting, the unionist government in Stormont and the British government instituted internment without trial on August 9, 1971. Under the policy of internment, the defendant was not entitled to representation, or to a trial, and could be held for an indefinite duration of time.\(^5\) Hundreds of Catholic civil rights leaders were arrested and taken to internment camps. Author, Don Mullan vividly recalled "…being

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\(^3\) Mullan, XVII.
\(^5\) Dash, 15.
awaked in the early hours of that morning to the screams of near neighbors protesting the arrest of a family member."⁶ By the end of 1971 about 900 people were imprisoned under internment, most of them Irish nationalists.⁷ Internment may have assisted in breaking the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland, but it did not break the nationalist militant movement. The arrests shocked and angered Irish nationalists and drove more into the ranks of the IRA. Increased IRA activity led to the creation of several "No-Go" areas of Northern Ireland that were effectively controlled and policed by the IRA.⁸ It was this renewed strength of the IRA that the British government sought to break on Bloody Sunday.

In reaction to internment and the ban on marches, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association called for a protest in Derry on January 30, 1972. Officially known as Londonderry, Derry is also known as Free Derry to some nationalists. It is located on the north-west border of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland. At the time of Bloody Sunday in 1972, Derry had a population of about 55,000, more than half of whom lived

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⁷ Mullan, XXVII.
⁸ Mullan 1998, 34.
in the predominately Catholic districts of Creggan and the Bogside.\textsuperscript{10} The Bogside was comprised primarily of housing dating from late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, mixed with high rise flats built in the 1960s. The Creggan estate, west of the Bogside, was made up of public housing complexes built in the 1960s. Both areas were relatively poor and derelict, and in fact, all of Derry in general suffered from “high levels of unemployment, low investment, overcrowded housing, environmental deprivation and anti-Catholic discrimination by the state.”\textsuperscript{11} Furthermore, Bogside and Creggan residents dealt with the constant presence of British military, which had been deployed continually in Derry since 1969.\textsuperscript{12}

Internment had been in effect for six months before the march took place. This was largely due to the regularity of bombings and shootings in Derry. Member of Parliament, Ivan Cooper met with political representatives of the IRA and expressed his desire to organize a march against the policy of internment. He also voiced his concern about the occurrence of violence at the march.\textsuperscript{13} The IRA, which in 1969 split over various political and policy issues promised Cooper that it would not interfere with the peaceful march. Assurances from the IRA were encouraging and Cooper and the Northern Civil Rights Association continued with their plans for the march against internment.

Marches were still banned by 1972, but security forces often allowed peaceful protests to commence, but prevented protests from extending into certain areas of the city, such as commercial districts. Marches were usually peaceful with only minor

\textsuperscript{10} Mullan, XXVII.
\textsuperscript{11} Walsh, 1.
\textsuperscript{12} Mullan, XXVI.
\textsuperscript{13} Mullan, XXVII.
conflicts with security forces.\textsuperscript{14} There seemed little reason among the protest leadership to believe that the march on Bloody Sunday should be any different. However, a few seemingly insignificant actions by the government were original to the march on Bloody Sunday. First, Britain surprisingly chose to deploy the 1\textsuperscript{st} Battalion of the Parachute Regiment (Para 1) to conduct a scoop up arrest operation in which soldiers would round up and arrest as many protestors as possible. The decision to deploy Para 1 appears to be inconsistent with previous government response to marches and protests. Para 1 was known as the toughest unit in the British Army, trained to use arms as a first resort in defense.\textsuperscript{15} The deployment of Para 1 could be constructed as an attempt by the British government to reinstate the rule of security forces over Derry, and thus end the IRA control over parts of Derry.

The second anomalous occurrence was the withdrawal of a counter unionist demonstration planned for Bloody Sunday. The counter demonstration, organized by prominent loyalist Reverend Ian Paisley, was to take place in Guildhall Square at the same time as the anti-internment protest. Such protests were used by unionists to encourage security forces to act against civil rights marchers marching illegally.\textsuperscript{16} Oddly enough, unionists called off their demonstration after the government proceeded to put blockades in place preventing protest marchers from entering the city center. The acceptance of such a strategy would probably have been unsatisfactory to the unionists, however. Professor Dermot P.J. Walsh, suspects that unionists received assurance from unionists colleagues within higher positions of the government that it would be unsafe to

\textsuperscript{14} Walsh, 3-4.  
\textsuperscript{15} Walsh, 6.  
\textsuperscript{16} Walsh, 4.
participate in a counter march, as a more forceful response would be taken against the marchers.\footnote{Walsh, 5.}

Thirdly, before the march took place, the Government Security Committee had met to decide how to react in regards to the march on Bloody Sunday. Exactly what was decided in this meeting is unknown. The government’s official position was to prevent the march from going past the Bogside into the city center to prevent damage to the commercial area. The government erected a total of twenty-six barricades around all avenues to the city center.\footnote{Walsh, 4.} Each barrier was manned by an army platoon and by Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) forces. Reinforcements and reserves were provided by the 1\textsuperscript{st} Battalion of the Parachute Regiment, 1\textsuperscript{st} Battalion of the King’s Own Regiment, and two companies of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.\footnote{Walsh, 4.} Orders were given that no action was to be taken against the demonstrators unless they tried to break through the barricades or used violence against security forces. Furthermore, CS (a type of tear gas) gas was only to be use as a last resort should rubber bullets or water canons fail to suppress any unruly demonstrators.\footnote{Walsh, 5.}
The march commenced as planned on January 30, 1972. It was a beautiful day with early morning sunshine, a perfect day for a march; hopes were high for a large turnout. It was said by Fr. Andrew Dolan that the march was peaceful with a “carnival atmosphere.” A large number of Catholic men, women, and children came out to the march. Statistics vary over how many people actually took part in the march. Lord Widgery stated in his report that there were 3,000 to 5,000 marchers, organizers claimed 30,000, and Bernadette Devlin MP declared before Parliament that there were about 15,000. As they marched with high spirits, demonstrators sang traditional civil rights songs such as “We Shall Overcome” and “We Shall Not Be Moved.” The original march route had been to go to the Guildhall Square at the city center, but all entrances into the commercial city center were barricaded off by British soldiers.

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23 Mullan, XXXI.
The march started at Bishop’s Field and grew in size as it passed through Brandywell and along Leck Road towards to Bogside. If more generous estimates are to be believed, the crowd started with about 5,000 demonstrators and had swelled to 10,000 by the time it reached the Bogside Inn at about 3:25 p.m.\(^{26}\) Demonstrators continued to march along Lone Moor Road into Creggan and then down William Street. It was here at the junction of William and Rossville Street that the march became less peaceful. Some of the marchers, about 200 or so, mostly young people, reached the British army barricade, ahead of the truck leading the march. Some of the youths threw stones and bottles at the soldiers.\(^{27}\) Fr. Andrew Dolan recalled that, “A couple of stones were thrown but these were soon stopped by fellow marchers.”\(^{28}\) Stone throwing was not uncommon in Northern Ireland since the Battle of the Bogside, often taking the form of a recreational activity for many male youths. The army responded with rubber bullets, CS gas, and water canons.\(^{29}\) One of the marchers, Liam M. also recalled seeing “…four or five soldiers lying on top of the roof. They had no riot (gas) guns, but they had their SLRs

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26 McCann, 19.  
27 Mullan, XXX.  
29 McCann, 19.
[self loading rifles]. I got the feeling that they [the B.A.] were going to use them.”

Organizers of the march announced through their PA system on the head truck to turn right into Rossville Street and to go to Free Derry Corner for a meeting. Confusion over the instructions ensued and led to a break off from the main group of marchers, some went to Free Derry Corner, others stayed near the barricade. As Bernadette Devlin was about to speak at Free Derry Corner a “sharp burst of gunfire” could be heard from William Street and was then followed by a “continual rake of gunfire as if hell were let loose.”

Exactly what occurred once the shooting began is hard to determine. Military and civilian testimony conflict greatly over what happened in the streets of Derry. According to Widgery, the military Company Commander of Support Company sought to enter William Street by a route over a wall near a Presbyterian Church. The route over the wall however was hindered by wire. Thus, the Company Commander sent a group of soldiers to cut and remove the wire. Widgery claims a single high velocity round,

assumed to be from a sniper operating in the Rossville Flats, was shot at the wire-cutting party.\textsuperscript{33} The account of this shot, if correct, is of significant importance since it shows that first shot fired may have come from a civilian gunman. Furthermore exhibits the presence of a gunman in the Rossville Flats area that was willing to engage British soldiers. The Company Commander sent men to cover the wire-cutting party, who positioned themselves on the lower two floors of a three-storey dilapidated building on William Street.\textsuperscript{34} The soldiers were noticed by youths who began throwing stones at the soldiers. Just before four o’clock Soldier A fired two rounds and Soldier B fired three in response to the hail of stones.\textsuperscript{35} Soldier A was in an upper room and B was on the ground floor. Both claimed, in oral testimony seeing two smoking objects flying past the building and heard two explosions which they believed to be nail bombs.\textsuperscript{36} Both soldiers claim to have hit the same target, a youth named Damien Donaghy (15), although neither admits to hitting civilian John Johnston (59), who Widgery determined was shot by accident.\textsuperscript{37} Both testify seeing a man (Donaghy) holding an object in his right hand and making a striking motion with his left hand against a wall like that done to light a fuse.\textsuperscript{38}

Soldiers may have in fact believed that their firing was justified, or perhaps they were just careless in their shooting of Damien Donaghy and John Johnston. Widgery determined neither of these men were attempting to throw nail bombs.\textsuperscript{39} The account of events given by Damien Donaghy and John Johnston is far more likely, however. Fifteen year old Damien Donaghy came down William Street at about 4 p.m. To his left he saw

\begin{itemize}
  \item Widgery, 35.
  \item Widgery, 35.
  \item Walsh, 116.
  \item Walsh, 116.
  \item Widgery, 36.
  \item Widgery, 37-38.
  \item Widgery, 39.
\end{itemize}
three soldiers lying on a ledge and two inside the derelict building of Abbey Taxis.\textsuperscript{40} This is consistent with military statements concerning the position of the soldiers. Donaghy heard a rubber bullet bounce off the wall and ran to pick it up. As he bent down to pick up the bullet he heard a shot ring out and was hit in his right hip.\textsuperscript{41} Donaghy therefore was near a wall, but wasn’t, as soldiers had thought, striking a fuse, but picking up a fallen rubber bullet. John Johnston, age 59, was walking down William Street with the intention of calling on a man in Glenfada Park.\textsuperscript{42} He saw soldiers in firing position in a burnt out house. He turned and looked at the soldiers and heard a shot which hit him in the right leg and another in the left shoulder.\textsuperscript{43} John Johnston, who was able to give a statement following Bloody Sunday, later died on June 16\textsuperscript{th} as a direct result of his wounds.\textsuperscript{44}

These first shots are telling of the rest of the events of Bloody Sunday. Such actions by the soldiers reflect either levels of high anxiety, making the soldiers jumpy and carelessness in their actions, or an enforcement of a policy of indiscriminate lethal force. Overwrought carelessness seems unlikely however, as the soldiers of Para 1 were well trained and experienced soldiers. Furthermore there is little evidence to support soldier statements that they were under attack. Donaghy and Johnston both determined innocent by Widgery, claimed not seeing or hearing any explosions or shooting except for those by the soldiers. Furthermore, what makes these first shots very interesting is the fact that they were fired even before the scoop-up arrest operation order was given. These first

\textsuperscript{41} “Eyewitness Statement: Damien Donaghy, Schoolboy, Age 15,” Mullan, 17.
\textsuperscript{43} “Eyewitness Statement: John Johnston, Age 59,” Mullan, 18.
\textsuperscript{44} Mullan, 15.
shots may have very well been a planned attempt by the soldiers to elicit a response from the IRA in order to draw them into the fray. In doing so, British security forces would be able to arrest or kill many IRA men and help break the IRA control of some areas of Derry.

The 1st Battalion Parachute Regiment (Para 1) was to conduct the scoop up operation to “arrest as many hooligans and rioters as possible.” Lieutenant Colonel Wilford, the Commanding Officer of Para 1, had companies A, C, and Support at his disposal to conduct the arrest operation. At 3:55 p.m. Para 1 requested to commence the arrest operation.

Serial 147, 1555 hours from 1 Para. Would like to deploy sub-unit through barricade 14 to pick up yobbos in William Street/Little James Street.
Serial 159, 1609 hours from Brigade Major. Orders given to 1 Para at 1607 hours for one sub-unit to do scoop up through barrier 14. Not to conduct running battle down Rossville Street.

Because the orders were given over a secure wireless link the orders were not recorded precisely. The only record is the aforementioned log maintained by the Brigade Operations Room. Therefore, some controversy exists over who gave the order to commence the arrest operation. Lord Widgery’s Report concluded that Brigadier Patrick MacLellan, Commander of 8 Brigade, gave the order. Chief Superintendent Lagan of the RUC, who was in the Brigadier’s office at the time, however, testified before Lord Widgery that he had formed was under the assumption that Para 1 acted without the authority of MacLellan. Lagan may well have been correct. The orders call for a limited deployment of one sub-unit to conduct an arrest operation around barrier 14 and

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45 Widgery, 20.
46 Widgery, 27.
47 Widgery, 30.
48 Widgery, 31.
not penetrate far down Rossville Street. Lieutenant Colonel Wilford however exceeded his orders and deployed all three companies, A, C, and Support. It was only Support Company, however, that opened fire that afternoon of January 30th.\textsuperscript{49}

By 4:10 p.m. when the order was given to conduct the scoop up operation, British paratroopers moved down Rossville Street into the Bogside, despite orders not to penetrate far down Rossville Street. In a further inconsistency with orders, Support Company advanced through barrier 12 and down Rossville Street, not barrier 14 as initially requested. The order, given by Major 236, was to advance through barrier 12 and arrest as many rioters as possible.\textsuperscript{50} Support Company proceeded with a convoy of ten vehicles. The Mortar Platoon was in the lead, commanded by Lieutenant N, which traveled in on two armored personnel carriers (APCs) carrying 18 other men. Following behind was the Command APC of the Company Commander, which carried Major 236. Next came two empty APCs belonging to the Machine Gun Platoon. These were empty however as the men had been detached earlier. These were followed by two soft-skinned 4-ton trucks carrying 36 men of the Composite Platoon commanded by Captain SA8. Two more APCs carrying the Anti-Tank Platoon, which included Lieutenant 119 and 17 other men, brought up the rear.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{49} Widgery, 28.  
\textsuperscript{50} Widgery, 42.  
\textsuperscript{51} Widgery, 40.
Fr. Edward Daly recalled the scene before the arrival of the military units,

The crowd had built up to there from the barrier that the army had erected near the old City Cinema site, a little past the junction with Chamberlain Street. I could hear some jeers and shouts at the army. There were some comments made that brought about cheering and laughter. Then some missiles, stones, and bottles were thrown. I could not see from where I stood exactly how many were involved in this but it wasn’t a very intensive barrage by Derry standards…There was no reaction form the army for a time, perhaps three or four minutes, and then CS gas and purple-dye water canons were used to disperse the crowd.53

The crowd fled the area up Chamberlain Street, along Rossville Street, and up William Street. However, once the military vehicles appeared in William Street the crowd again retreated and began to run in fear back south. A steward on the march Anthony M. remembers seeing a crowd of youths coming into Rossville Street throwing stones back in the direction of William Street.54 This crowd was joined by others running from C Company on Chamberlain Street.55 The crowd, however, split, with some running along Rossville Street on the west side of Block 1 of the Rossville Flats, and the others running

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55 Widgery, 42.
into the courtyard north of the Rossville Flats, housing complexes each three blocks long and about ten storeys high.\textsuperscript{56} Those fleeing feared arrest and injury from the perusing soldiers. Eyewitness Tony D. reported seeing

Two soldiers came down to Rossville Street with a man in a black suit – half walking and half dragged, receiving blows from the muzzle of the soldier’s gun and from the butt of the other soldier’s gun...Whilst on the ground, I saw him kicked by two other soldiers. They lifted him and threw him bodily into the Saracen [sex-wheeled armored personal carrier].\textsuperscript{57}

The APC commanded by Lieutenant N turned left off Rossville Street and halted in the Rossville Flats car park. The second APC, led by Sergeant O stopped further down the street in the courtyard of the Rossville Flats near the north end of the western No. 1 Block.\textsuperscript{58} In the process the two APCs ran down two civilians, 18-year-old Alana Burke, and 53-year-old Patrick Campbell.\textsuperscript{59} Both were injured, but did not die form their wounds. The rest of Support Company established itself in Rossville Street. According to Major 236, as he and the driver dismounted, he was fired upon by 15 rounds of low velocity bullets from the direction of Rossville Flats.\textsuperscript{60} There is debate however as to whether these shots did indeed occur, as no civilian evidence documents hearing or seeing these shots. Major 236 testified seeing the Mortar Platoon firing aimed shots towards the flats, but could not see precisely what they were firing at.\textsuperscript{61} Electrician, John J. McDevitt stated that as soon as the APCs stopped the doors flew open and a machine

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{56} Widgery, 12.
  \item \textsuperscript{58} Widgery, 41.
  \item \textsuperscript{59} Mullan, 30.
  \item \textsuperscript{60} Widgery, 49.
  \item \textsuperscript{61} Widgery, 49.
\end{itemize}
gun fired from the open door. The other soldiers began firing their rifles from the hip at no one in particular.62

Fr. Edward Daly, who took part in the march, never heard a nail bomb explode all afternoon, but did indeed hear the couple of rounds fired by soldiers on William Street.64 Daly’s statement concurs with the majority of civilian statements, which are contradictory to soldier statements that describe nail bomb and firearm attacks from the IRA. As the APCs came towards Rossville Street, Fr. Daly ran with others for the courtyard of the flats. As he was running a young man running beside him smiled, seemingly amused at as seeing the priest running in such a fashion. This young man running next to Fr. Daly was Jack Duddy (17) the first casualty of Bloody Sunday. Isabella Duffy remembers seeing a soldier go down on a knee and fire his rifle at Duddy.65 Fr. Daly vividly recalls young Jack Duddy’s death,

I remember hearing the first shot, and simultaneously the young boy already mentioned, [Duddy] grunt or gasp just, beside me…He fell to the

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64 “Eyewitness Statement: Fr. Edward Daly, Priest,” Mullan, 140.
ground…I looked back over to the courtyard and saw this man earlier referred to lying on his back, with his head towards me…I could see blood coming out over his shirt.66

Fr. Daly waving a blood-stained white handkerchief, leading a group of men carrying a shot Jack Duddy to safety.67

Fr. Daly held a white handkerchief and in a crouched position went to Duddy. When he reached him, he found Duddy’s hands absent of a weapon of any kind.68 During the time Fr. Daly and a few other men were aiding the injured Jack Duddy, a civilian gunman appeared from the last house on Chamberlain Street. He fired two or three shots at the soldiers before being yelled at by Fr. Daly and others that he would get them all killed, and moved away.69 The cruelly ironic aspect of Duddy’s death is that according to Widgery, Duddy was hit for a bullet meant for someone else.70 This is most likely the case; Duddy’s sister, Kay, describes him as quiet and that it “would have taken a lot to rile him.”71 Duddy’s description and location do not match any of the accounts given by soldiers, and there is no evidence that Duddy was a bomber or gunman.

68 “Eyewitness Statement: Fr. Edward Daly, Priest,” Mullan, 141.
69 “Eyewitness Statement: Fr. Edward Daly, Priest,” Mullan, 141.
70 Widgery, 72.
Jack Duddy was the only fatality in the car park area of the Rossville Flats, but he was not the only casualty that day. In addition to the injuries of Alana Burke and Patrick Campbell mentioned earlier who were hit by APCs, four others were shot and wounded in the car park area. Mary Friel, a housewife, saw soldiers arrest Patrick McDaid (24) and two youths who were running across the car park. They were put into the APC and the soldiers threw CS (a type of tear gas) gas on them, causing the three to jump out of the APC. “They put McDaid up against a wall beside Chamberlain Street. He had his hands on his head and they shot him…It was an execution.” If indeed it was an execution style shooting as Friel described, McDaid was very lucky as he survived his gunshot wounds. One of the other wounded was 25-year-old, Michael Bridge. Charles McLaughlin, a DuPont employee, recalled seeing Bridge gathered around with some others gathered around Fr. Daly giving the last rites to Jack Duddy. He then saw Bridge jump to his feet and he “…ran a few yards from this group of people. He spread his arms wide and he shouted in the direction of the troops at the corner of Rossville Street Flats. I heard him say, ‘Shoot me too.’ He said it a second time and with that a shot rang out hitting him in the leg.” Little is mentioned in soldier statements or eyewitness statements regarding the two other wounded, Margaret Deery (37), who was wounded in the leg and Michael Bradley (22).

Shooting also broke out around Free Derry Corner where the meeting of the civil rights marchers was to take place. This shooting however did not come from the troops

75 Mullan, 30.
who had just arrived around the Rossville Flats area, but from snipers on the Derry Walls.

Bernadette Devlin had just walked up to the platform to speak when school teacher,

Thomas D. noticed,

…army snipers move into position on Derry Walls overlooking the
speakers’ platform. Suddenly without warning, the air was filled with the
sound of hails of high-velocity bullets. I heard them hitting the walls
around me...I had heard bullets whistling over my head. This came from
the walls where I had seen army snipers take up position.76

Many other civilian statements also report fire coming from snipers operating on the
Derry Walls. Evidence was given by Tony H. who testified, “A priest pulled up in a Red
Cross car. He was looking for injured people. He got out of the car. I told him to take
cover. He had hardly done so when a bullet hit the far wall. It came from the Walls.”77

The existence of snipers firing from the Derry Walls is a crucial aspect in the
circumstances surrounding the casualties of John Young, William Nash, and Michael
McDaid. The wound trajectories of these three men show the bullet entering their bodies
downward, thus suggesting they were shot from snipers operating on the Derry Walls.78

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78 Dr. Raymond McClean, The Road to Bloody Sunday, (Londonderry: Guildhall Press, 1997), 165.
The image above shows the last few moments of 31-year old Patrick Doherty’s life.

Taken by French photographer, Gilles Peress, it shows an isolated Doherty attempting to inch towards safety. Charles McLaughlin, who also witnessed the injury of Michael Bridge, saw Doherty from the front window of his house. Doherty was on his stomach facing Fahan Street. McLaughlin shouted “For God’s sake don’t go across or they will shoot you,” but they did shoot at Doherty. The first shot missed and struck the wall behind him, the second hit its target striking him up on the right side of his body. Doherty futilely cried for help as he lay bleeding to death for twenty minutes before ambulances could reach him.

The circumstances surrounding the death of Bernard McGuigan are unquestionably one of the most terrible of Bloody Sunday. Hearing Patrick Doherty’s cries for help he attempted to reach him, not wanting him to die alone. With a white handkerchief he took a mere two steps before he was shot in the head, and killed instantly. McGuigan was described as “…the most passive man I have ever met.” by his workmate, Willie Curran. All eyewitness statements deny McGuigan had a weapon; however Widgery found lead on his hands and on the scarf covering his head. Widgery,

81 “Eyewitness Statement: Charles McLaughlin, DuPont Employee,” Mullan, 44.
82 Mullan, 37.
however, accepted Bernard McGuigan’s wife’s testimony that McGuigan never owned or wore a scarf.  

Sean Dermot, an 18-year-old apprentice mechanic witnessed the death of Hugh Gilmore. He claimed that Gilmore was moving down towards the barricade across Rossville. Gilmore was on top of the barricade when he jumped up clutching his stomach shouting, “I’m hit, I’m hit.” McDermott, along with a nursing student, Francis Mellon, went to Gilmore and tried to stop the blood flow, to little avail. Daniel McGowan (37) was also wounded in this area, along with Patrick Campbell who was hit by an APC.

A great deal of action was seen in the vicinity of the rubble barricade. It was here that five individuals were shot and killed. Like most areas in which the events of Bloody Sunday took place, it is hard to determine exactly what ensued. Soldiers’ statements vary and are in contrast to eyewitness accounts. Seventeen-year-old Kevin McElhinney was shot as he tried to scurry to safety through a Rossville Flats doorway. McElhinney was in the company of three other youths and was urged by a civilian, Patrick Joseph Fox, to come inside the hallway where it was safer, “We got them safely in, but the fourth lad [McElhinney] was just coming round the end of the door when he let a scream and I told the other man the young fellow was hit. He kept coming all the same and we dragged him in. I saw the blood spurting from bullet wounds in his side.” McElhinney was obviously fleeing the shots of soldiers, not engaging them hostilely. This statement is further

85 Widgery, 75.
88 Mullan, 38.
89 Mullan, 48.
corroborated by the fact that the bullet wound entered through McElhinney’s buttock, thus the shot clearly came from behind.

The shot that hit McElhinney most likely came from Soldiers L, M, or, K. The accounts of these three soldiers are similar, but vary in several significant ways. Soldier M alleges that he saw two men crawling in the direction of the Rossville Flats each appeared to have a weapon underneath him.\textsuperscript{91} He further claimed that he fired two shots; each hitting their target.\textsuperscript{92} One of these may have well been McElhinney, but there is not a second body to support this version of events. Furthermore, eyewitness statements make no mention of McElhinney carrying any firearms. The story of Soldier L is largely the same, seeing two men heading for the flats, but in this version, only one man was carrying a rifle. Interestingly enough, Soldier L claims to have shot and hit both men, even the one not carrying a rifle.\textsuperscript{93}

It is Soldier K however, that Widgery found to be the most likely shooter. Soldier K was a qualified marksman whose rifle was equipped with a telescopic lens.\textsuperscript{94} He reported a version of events concurrent with the scene Soldiers L and M described, except that only the man in the rear, who was probably McElhinney, appeared to be carrying a rifle. Soldier K fired a single shot, which he thought hit his target, but wasn’t exactly sure, and saw the man crawl until he got to the door and was pulled inside, as civilian evidence describes.\textsuperscript{95} These accounts to a fair degree describe the circumstance, in which McElhinney was shot, but debate remains concerning the issue of the supposed rifle he or another man was carrying. Civilian evidence does not document the presence

\textsuperscript{91} Walsh, 137.
\textsuperscript{92} Walsh, 137.
\textsuperscript{93} Walsh, 136.
\textsuperscript{94} Widgery, 80.
\textsuperscript{95} Walsh, 135.
of such a weapon, nor did forensic evidence conclusively prove his firing of a firearm. If McElhinney was in possession of anything it would have been a paint bomb he had made to throw at soldiers, telling friend Paul Coyle, “I’m going to make my mark today.”96

Neither soldier nor eyewitness testimony provide evidence for the presence of such a device. Thus, the paint bomb was already thrown or was never brought in the first place. Therefore it is more likely that the soldiers were mistaken in their assessment of McElhinney’s possession of a firearm, and that McElhinney was undoubtedly merely attempting to escape from danger.

Seventeen-year old Michael Kelly was shot while standing on the Rossville Street barricade. The bullet entered his abdomen from the front. The evidence of the bullet recovered from Kelly confirms the bullet that killed him came from Soldier F, who was operating in the Glenfada Park area. Soldier F admitted to firing two shots into the Rossville Flats from Glenfada Park, one of which he claimed hit an alleged nail bomber on the barricade, presumably young Kelly.97 Furthermore, Fr. Dennis Bradley testified to seeing a soldier, most likely F, firing four to eight rounds from the Glenfada Park area in the direction of the Rossville Flats forecourt.98 Thus, Soldier F may have been responsible for other dead or wounded in the area around the Rossville Flats and barricade. Widgery concluded that Kelly was not firing a firearm, and not throwing a bomb at the time he was shot.99

Three of the deaths, John Young, William Nash, and Michael McDaid are extremely controversial due to the conclusions made by the Widgery report that one of

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97 Mullan, 55.
98 Mullan, 55.
99 Widgery, 79.
these men shot a firearm. It is interesting that Widgery makes the most serious allegations against these three men, as the circumstances in which they were shot are suspect. The trajectory of the bullets that entered the bodies of John Young, William Nash, and Michael McDaid, suggest that they were not shot by the ground unit of soldiers operating around the barricade area, but by soldiers on the Derry Walls. This is supported further by Robert J. Breglio, an independent ballistics expert and former detective for the New York Police Department’s ballistics squad, who declared that “…the angles of trajectory of bullet wounds of three deceased named: John Young, William Nash, and Michael McDaid, originated from an area in the vicinity of the Derry Walls and from a height that would inflict wounds of this angle trajectory.”  

100 The use of snipers clearly suggests that the British military had adopted a practice of lethal force for Bloody Sunday. Furthermore the use of such a lethal force policy would be consistent with a British attempt to expunge Derry of its IRA presence. Soldier 156 goes further to acknowledge that shots came from army snipers operating in derelict buildings near the city walls.  

101 Soldiers’ statements of those positioned in the vicinity of the Derry Walls are often as confusing and contradictory as the statements of those soldiers operating on the ground. However, the testimony of Soldier 227 is very interesting, in his acknowledgement, “I saw two bodies left on the far side of the barricade. I did not see any of those at the barricade armed. If they had been carrying weapons I think I would have seen them…”  

102 In this statement Soldier 227 admits that the barricade was in the view of the soldiers on

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the walls, and furthermore that none of those around the barricade were armed. Not all soldiers saw events in the same way, such as Soldier 012, who alleged he saw armed civilians in the vicinity of the barricade. Widgery’s account concurred more with the report of Soldier 012, declaring that one or more of Young, Nash, and McDaid were armed.

Widgery came to the conclusions about who fired a firearm by conducting a forensic test on the deceased, known as the paraffin test which looks for lead contamination. Samples are taken from the firing hand of the firer, one and looks for an even distribution of small lead particles on the back of the hand and between the forefinger and thumb, which are deposited by propellant gases when a firearm is discharged.\(^{103}\) This method is far from foolproof. Lord Widgery admitted lead contamination could also occur from:

(a) being close to someone else who is firing;
(b) being within 30 feet of the muzzle of the weapon fired in one’s own direction;
(c) physical transfer of lead particles on contact with the body or clothing of someone who has recently fired a weapon;
(d) the passing at close range of a bullet which has been damaged by contact with a hard substance and which may spread lead particles from its damaged surface;
(e) direct contact with lead in, say the trade of a plumber or whilst loading a firearm.\(^{104}\)

Therefore the chance for contamination was great in a situation such as Bloody Sunday, where many people were exposed to lead particles.

John Pius Young (17), Widgery concluded, was undoubtedly one of the young men throwing stones at soldiers from the barricade.\(^{105}\) It is incredibly hard to determine

\(^{103}\) Widgery, 70.
\(^{104}\) Widgery, 71.
\(^{105}\) Widgery, 76.
which soldier may have been responsible for Young’s death. Soldiers P, J, U, C, K, L, and M all stated that they fired from the Kells Walk area at youths with firearms or who were throwing objects from the barricade. However, it is more probable that Young wasn’t shot by any of these ground unit soldiers operating in the area at the time, but by a soldier firing from the Derry Walls. The paraffin test showed particles on Young’s left hand consistent with the exposure to the gases released from a discharged firearm.\footnote{Widgery, 76.} It is more likely, however that these particles came from the hands of soldiers from Para 1 who picked up Young’s body. Widgery concedes this possibility, but still finds that

> When his [Young] case is considered in conjunction with those of Nash and McDaid and regard is had to the soldier’s evidence about civilians firing from the barricade, a very strong suspicion is raised that one or more of Young, Nash, and McDaid was using a firearm. No weapons were found, but there was sufficient opportunity for this to be removed by others.

This statement ignores accounts such as those of Soldier 227, Assistant Chief Constable of Renfrew, Bute, and Mr. Robert Campbell, who testified seeing no weapons among the civilians near the barricade. Furthermore, Widgery’s contention that the weapons were removed is completely delusional, since no one was either able to or willing to risk going near Young, Nash, or McDaid, to confiscate any weapons out of fear of being shot. The only such man to do so was Alexander Nash, whose son, William, was laying near Young on the barricade; yet he too was shot in his efforts to reach his son.

William Nash fell close to Young and McDaid, the three shot in a relatively close time span. Nash was shot in the chest, which would imply that he was facing the soldiers. Conversely, eyewitness statements have Nash running, not engaging soldiers, “I saw a man dressed in a brown suit and with a black hair, running over loose stones of the
barricade towards Free Derry Corner. As I caught sight of him he fell back and rolled over on his mouth and nose on the Free Derry side of the barricade…”

Widgery finds it possible that Nash’s killer may have been Soldier P, who describes seeing a man behind the barricade with a pistol, whom P fired four shots at, three of which hit their target. There are problems with Soldier P’s statement however. Soldier P also shot an alleged nail bomber, whose fizzling nail bomb fell at his feet, but incredibly did not explode. Most significant though, is the fact that no victim near the barricade had three bullet wounds. 

Also, the fact that Nash seemed to be running, not engaging soldiers, and that the bullet trajectory of Nash’s wound was elevated, like Young’s, suggests a shooter from a more elevated position such as the vicinity of the Derry Walls. Widgery also contends that Nash may have handled a firearm since paraffin test results show distribution of lead particles on the web, back, and palm of his left hand. However, as in the case of Young, this could have come from the contact with Para 1 soldiers.

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108 Walsh, 132.
109 Widgery, 78.
Michael McDaid, top left, dressed in his Sunday best. Moments later he was hit in his left cheek by a bullet.110

Michael McDaid was killed by a single shot to the face. The bullet struck him in the front of his left cheek. A photograph taken of McDaid seconds before he was shot shows him walking calmly with his back to the soldiers near the barricade, a few feet from Michael Kelly, who had just been shot. One cannot see his hands, but dressed in his Sunday best, he did not appear to be holding a firearm, and was certainly not engaging soldiers. This photograph and the trajectory of the bullet wound, supports that McDaid, like Young, was shot by a sniper in the Derry Walls area. The paraffin test on McDaid’s corpse found an abnormal amount of lead particles on McDaid’s jacket, and one large particle on his right hand. Widgery concluded, therefore, that McDaid was likely near someone who fired a firearm, rather than that he handled one himself.111 Analogously to Young, these particles were likely transferred by the hands of soldiers.

All three young men lay upon the barricade, dead or dying, for fifteen to twenty minutes before soldiers came to retrieve the bodies.112 No one was allowed near the bodies. As mentioned earlier, this included William Nash’s father, Alexander Nash,

I went into Glenfada Park and I heard shooting. I turned back to Rossville Street and as I turned I saw three bodies at a wee barricade across Rossville Street. I identified one of the bodies as my son, William Noel Nash. I ran across and put my hand up to stop the shooting so that I could lift my son out of the way. I could see that he was dead. As I was trying to stop the shooting bullets were striking the barricade and I received two bullet wounds.113

111 Widgery, 77.
112 Mullan, LXXI.
Debate surrounds the circumstances in which William Nash’s father, Alexander, was shot. Civilian statements claim that he was shot by the army. The army, on the other hand, in particularly, Soldier U, claim Nash was hit by a civilian gunman. Soldier U testified seeing an arm and a pistol emerge from a door of the flats. The gunman, according to Soldier U, fired two shots. The first struck the ground near the front of the barricade and ricocheted into Alexander, wounding him in the shoulder. The second shot struck William Nash in the head. Widgery accepted this version of events finding it likely the alleged civilian gunman, in an attempt to not expose himself to soldiers, fired recklessly, without taking proper aim. There are discrepancies with Soldier U’s version of events, however, importantly, that William Nash was not shot in the head, but in the stomach. Furthermore, while some civilian statements testify to the occasional presence of an IRA gunman, none mentioned a gunman such as that described by Soldier U.

There is immense dissension regarding the soldiers’ retrieval of the bodies of John Young, William Nash, and Michael McDaid. When the Saracen (six-wheeled armored personnel carrier) came at around 4:30 to retrieve the bodies, the three young men had already been there for fifteen to twenty minutes, without the assistance, of parents, pastors, or paramedics. Mary Harkin, a machinist, saw the soldiers retrieving the bodies, “Troops dragged the three bodies by the feet and dumped them like refuse into the back of the Saracen.” Oddly, four other bodies, those of Hugh Gilmore, Bernard

114 Mullan, 48.
115 Walsh, 133.
116 Widgery, 78.
117 Mullan, LXXI.
McGuigan, Paddy Doherty, and Jim Wray which lay within thirty yards, and within sight of the soldiers, where not retrieved.\textsuperscript{119} It wasn’t until 6 p.m. that the bodies of Young, Nash, and McDaid were taken to the hospital, which was over an hour from the time the bodies were retrieved.\textsuperscript{120} Why did it take so long to bring the men to the hospital? Even more disturbing is the possibility that McDaid may have still been alive when put into the Saracen.\textsuperscript{121} Since these young men were most likely shot by snipers, they are the most obvious example of the military’s use of lethal force against the marchers or of alleged IRA men. Furthermore, by retrieving and holding the bodies, the military undoubtedly hoped to temporarily conceal the fact that these men were not shot in a close fire fight, but by a sniper yards away with a telescopic lens. Keeping this information hidden was undoubtedly crucial for the British government in presenting its case that the soldiers were justified in their use of force.

Many fleeing civilians took shelter from the shooting in the courtyard of Glenfada Park. Four of the soldiers of Para 1, Soldiers E, F, G, and H, however, were initiating a pincer movement to prevent a retreat from the Rossville Street barricade.\textsuperscript{122} This decision may have been carried out under the initiative of Corporal E, and without the sanction of the Platoon Commander, Lieutenant 119, who describes a different version of events. Lieutenant 119 said he ordered Soldiers E and F into the courtyard of Glenfada Park to trap an alleged gunman who had been firing from the barricade.\textsuperscript{123} Upon seeing the soldiers, many of the crowd, fearing for their safety sought to flee through the alleyway leading to Abbey Park. Many of those trying to escape through the alleyway were

\textsuperscript{119} Mullan, 143.
\textsuperscript{120} Mullan, LXXI.
\textsuperscript{121} Mullan, LXII.
\textsuperscript{122} Mullan, 54.
\textsuperscript{123} Widgery, 81-82.
wounded, including Joe Friel (20), Michael Quinn (17), and Daniel Gillespie (31).\textsuperscript{124} Patrick O’Donnel, another of the wounded, was shot while throwing himself on top of Winifred O’Brien to protect her.\textsuperscript{125} Soldiers E, F, and G testified having been attacked by the group of civilians and having returned fire in kind. The activity in the Glenfada Park ended when 20 to 30 civilians were arrested on the orders of the Platoon Commander, Lieutenant 119, who arrived in the area after the shooting had concluded.\textsuperscript{126}

Jim Wray sits down (bottom left) in peaceful protest in the street, wearing a handkerchief to protect himself from the effects of CS gas. Minutes later he would be shot in Glenfada Park.\textsuperscript{127}

James Wray was killed near the alleyway leading to Abbey Park. He fell, wounded from a shot in the back. He was shot outside of his grandparents’ house, most likely trying to seek shelter there.\textsuperscript{128} Housewife Bridget O’Reilly recalled seeing Wray attempting to raise himself from the ground, when a soldier ran up to him and shot him.

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{124} Mullan, 54.  \\
\textsuperscript{125} Mullan, 54.  \\
\textsuperscript{126} Widgery, 82.  \\
\end{footnotes}
again. A girl from the First Aid post ran to Wray’s aid, but was fired upon by soldiers, causing her to dive to the ground. It is very difficult to assign the responsibility for Wray’s death or any of those killed in the Glenfada Park area to any particular soldier operating in the area. Widgery acknowledged the evidence was too confusing and contradictory, enhanced by the lack of photographic evidence.

Soldier G, who could have possibly shot James Wray, was standing in the alleyway when he spotted seventeen-year old Gerard Donaghy coming into view. Donaghy’s death was witnessed by schoolboy, Malachy Coyle (14), “I saw a youth wearing a dark blue suit panic, and start running. One of the soldiers shot him in the stomach, before he had even made a step. The soldier had shot him from almost point blank range.” According to post-mortem forensic evidence of the bullet retrieved from Donaghy’s body, the bullet belonged to the soldier mentioned in Coyle’s statement, Soldier G. One of the most controversial aspects of Donaghy’s case, is what occurred after his death. After Donaghy was shot, he was taken by Hugh Leo Young (brother of John Pius Young) to Raymond Rogan’s house at 10 Abbey Park. Donaghy arrived “…unconscious and his intestines seemed to be protruding out of his stomach.” Rogan and Young volunteered to take Donaghy to Altnagelvin Hospital, and drove until he reached Barrack Street, whereupon he reached an army barricade of the Royal Anglian Regiment. The response from the soldiers at the barricade was less than helpful,

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1.40 Widgery, 81.
1.42 Widgery, 82.
1.44 “Eyewitness Statement: Hugh Leo Young,” Mullan, 121.
“I was immediately pulled out at gunpoint, thrown against a fence. I attempted to protest, as I had a wounded man, but was told to shut up or I would be shot.” Young was treated in a similar manner,

In Barrack Street we were stopped at an army barricade and pulled out of the car. I said to the soldier ‘What about that dying young fellow?’ and he said, ‘Let the bastard die.’ I said ‘You are just an animal.’ He then put me up against some railings, pointed his gun at me and told me that if I blinked he would blow my head off.

Rogan and Young were arrested, and Rogan’s car, with Donaghy’s body still in the backseat, was driven away by two British soldiers. Donaghy was not taken to the hospital, but to an army medical outpost on Craigavon Bridge. While still lying in the backseat of the car, he was examined twice by an army medical officer, who pronounced Donaghy dead. Not long after these examinations, four nail bombs were found on Donaghy. A nail bomb was found in each of his jacket pockets, as well as one in each of his front two pant pockets.

There is some evidence to suggest that these bombs were planted on young Gerard Donaghy. One of the bombs in his jacket was squeezed so tightly into his pocket; it needed to be cut out. His sister Mary Doherty recalled, “He was wearing skin-tight jeans and a jacket that was so tight. You could hardly get a packet of cigarettes into his pockets, or your money out, his clothes were so tight.” Certainly not an ideal location for a nail bomb that would need to be thrown in haste at its target. Furthermore Hugh Leo Young, “…tried to find his identification from anything in the two top pockets of his

137 “Eyewitness Statement: Hugh Leo Young,” Mullan, 122
138 Walsh, 147.
139 Walsh, 148.
140 Walsh, 148.
blue denim jacket, but found nothing.” This piece of information is important, as undoubtedly Young would have come across these nail bombs. The other nail bombs in Donaghy’s pant pocket would also have been readily identifiable. Donaghy’s pants were tight with pockets in the front rather than the side, so the nail bombs would be easy to see. In fact, the first bomb discovered was partly sticking out of his pocket. Yet such nail bombs were not found by Hugh Leo Young, Dr. Swords who had examined Donaghy’s body after he was shot, Soldier 150 who drove Donaghy to the bridge, or by the army medical officer who examined him twice. How is it with this many examinations that nail bombs so readily visible were never seen? The most compelling answer is that the nail bombs were planted on Gerard Donaghy following the medical officer’s final examination. The presence of nail bombs on Donaghy would have supported Britain’s attempt to win the propaganda war against the IRA. Nail bombers operating in the area, would indicated the presence of the IRA, and thus could provide legitimacy for the soldiers’ use of lethal force.

Conflicting testimony makes it difficult however to determine exactly how or who planted such bombs. There is evidence that the Donaghy’s body may have been moved to a different position following the medical officer’s final examination. Furthermore, there was an abundant amount of time after the examination for the bombs to be planted. The most likely perpetrator of the planting was a sergeant in the RUC (Royal Ulster Constabulary), PN7, who worked with explosives in quarries, thus having access to explosives. He was not the commanding officer of the bridge, but took it upon himself to check for the identity of Donaghy; in doing so he discovered one of the

142 Walsh, 148.
143 Walsh, 148.
144 Walsh, 150.
bombs in Donaghy’s pant pockets. Discrepancies occur, however, between PN7’s testimony and that of the medical officer. PN7 claims never to have seen the medical officer, and claims that he checked Donaghy immediately after the car arrived. The medical officer however, testified that he only heard about the nail bombs being found about five minutes after completing his final examination. While the evidence is compelling that bombs may have possibly been planted on Donaghy, Widgery still found Donaghy basically guilty of criminal activity, declaring the bombs were most likely in Donaghy’s pockets throughout the course of the day.

Seventeen-year old Gerald McKinney was following just behind Donaghy when Donaghy was shot. Upon seeing the soldier in the alleyway, presumably, Soldier G, McKinney shouted “Don’t shoot, don’t shoot!” Docker Peter Kerr recalled hearing his son scream hysterically from the other room, “They’ve shot a man and he had his hands up.” Autopsy supports this claim that McKinney’s hands were in the air when he was shot. William McKinney, (no relation) ran to help Gerald McKinney. As he bent over Gerard, he was shot in the back and killed. New medical evidence actually suggests that William may have been shot in the back twice. The paraffin tests on Gerald and William’s hands and clothing tested negative, confirming they did not fire a firearm, nor were they close to anyone else who may have done so.

145 Walsh, 149.
146 Walsh, 150.
147 Widgery, 84.
150 Mullan, 54.
151 Mullan, 55.
152 Widgery, 83.
In the cases of James Wray and Gerard Donaghy, their killer was Soldier G, as concluded from forensic evidence. The McKinneys were therefore likely shot by Soldier E, who claims to have shot a nail bomber, or Soldier H, whose version of events even Widgery did not accept. Soldier H, like Soldier E, claimed to shoot an alleged nail bomber. The unbelievable aspect of Soldier H’s story, however, is his supposed firefight with a gunman in a window. Soldier H claimed that he fired a shot at a rifleman in a window of a flat on the south side of the Glenfada Park courtyard. The rifleman withdrew, but returned and Soldier H fired again, a process which according to Soldier H continued until he had fired 19 shots, with a break to change his magazine. It is highly unlikely such an action should cyclically repeat for a full 19 shots. There is no military or civilian testimony that supports H’s version of events. In fact Soldier 027 testified that, “Soldier H fired 22 rounds, but was stupid enough too boast about it within the sergeants hearing before he could spread them out, i.e., add a few to each of our tallies.” Furthermore, photographic evidence showed that no shots had been fired through the window in question. Thus, according to Widgery, “19 of the shots fired by Soldier H are wholly unaccounted for.” Although Soldier F also was operating in the area, Soldier F’s own testimony and along with civilian reports suggest that his shots were fired from Glenfada Park in the direction of the Rossville Flats forecourt.

Lord Widgery placed a great deal of importance on the question, “Who fired first on Bloody Sunday?” The significance of this question is debatable. An opening shot by a civilian gunman may have indeed made soldiers feel that there was a threat from civilian

153 Widgery, 83.
155 Widgery, 84.
156 Mullan, 55.
gunmen, that is, the IRA. On the other hand, except in the case of Gerard Donaghy, no weapons were ever found near those shot and killed by British soldiers. Furthermore, evidence supports that the soldiers of Para 1 were planning on executing a policy of lethal force against marchers and alleged IRA men before the march even took place. Widgery was also unable to conclude that any of those thirteen killed on Bloody Sunday were specifically guilty of any serious criminal offense.

As previously mentioned, MP Cooper had received assurances from both branches of the IRA that they would not interfere with the peaceful march. However, the IRA did not completely disappear. The Provisional IRA, the mainstream branch of the IRA, promised that all of its weapons would be withdrawn except for those of the men participating as stewards for the march.\textsuperscript{157} This can be seen in the testimony of retired taxi cab driver Frankie Boyle to the Bloody Sunday Inquiry, who reported seeing weapons being moved out of the Bogside by six cars and twenty-five men and women who loaded weapons wrapped in plastic bags from a district neighboring the Creggan estate in the early morning of January 30, 1972. Boyle reported seeing the same cars and people who had removed the guns at the march, but “…were having nothing to do with the march and were staying in Creggan.”\textsuperscript{158} The “Official” IRA also withdrew all weapons from the Bogside except for those held by the local Bogside Unit which would be removed to local safe dumps.\textsuperscript{159}

IRA cars were patrolling the Creggan area during the march, but the IRA men were not to fire except in defense. Shots were fired possibly by both branches of the IRA

\textsuperscript{157} Mullan, XXXVI.
\textsuperscript{159} Mullan XXXIV.
however. An eyewitness, Anna O’D., stated that the first shots came from the British Army positioned on the Presbyterian Church wall in Great James Street, however, “A man appeared with an old rifle behind the taxi office in William Street, and fired one shot – hitting nothing. Other bystanders advised him to put the gun away, as it would draw fire – which he did immediately.” Anna O’D testified to the presence of a civilian gunman, yet after the point when the British soldiers had already opened fire. Eighteen-year old Kevin M. also saw an IRA man open fire with a pistol, but this was after the army had already fired. Fr. Edward Daly also saw a man with a pistol in the courtyard of the Rossville Flats. The man was a member of the Official IRA and had defied orders and carried a personal weapon because he believed the crowd might have been infiltrated by military intelligence. The Official IRA man admitted to firing three shots after the soldiers had opened fire and killed Jack Duddy and wounded Michael Bridge, with the explanation, “I lost my temper.” Fr. Daly stated to the Bloody Sunday Inquiry however, that "I cannot recall the soldiers reacting or firing in his direction. I do not believe they were aware of him." This further contributes to the discrepancies in soldiers’ statements. If one of these few attacks by the IRA was not even noticed by the army, how do the soldiers account for the barrage of bullets that came down upon them? IRA fire, such as in the case of the gunman seen by Anna O’D or Fr. Daly, was often short lived as bystanders discouraged such shooting out of fear that it would draw army fire. This was the case with a man near Chamberlain Street, who stepped forward and

162 McCann, 144-145.
fired two or three shots from a revolver, whereupon civilians immediately told him to “Fuck off!,” out of fear of British army return fire.\textsuperscript{164}

Hundreds of eyewitness present on Bloody Sunday all state that they did not see nor hear the civilian use of gunfire nail bombs, or petrol bombs. However, the Official IRA acknowledged seven unauthorized shots, and one defensive shot.\textsuperscript{165} Thus, the large attack of bombs and bullets described in soldiers statements, conflict greatly with the accounts of civilians who saw little if any IRA activity. To launch an attack on the British army during the march would have been a foolish and unintelligent move by the IRA. The IRA would have known that such an attack would result in the injury or death of their family, friends, and neighbors. This is conveyed by a leading member of the IRA at the time,

\begin{quote}
It would have been madness for us to try anything that day. For a start, our parents and brothers and sisters would all have been on the march themselves and we would have been using them as cannon fodder. If you look back at all the other marches at the time you will find that the IRA used none of them as cover for operations. Neither politically nor militarily would it have made any sense.\textsuperscript{166}
\end{quote}

With the type of offensive the army claimed to have been launched at them, one would expect to find more casualties or damage to the APCs by bullets, or bombs. However, no evidence of any such injury or damage exists.\textsuperscript{167} In fact Michael Clarke, who was jailed for bombing offenses in the 1970s, and was the explosives officer in the IRA at the time of Bloody Sunday, testified before the Bloody Sunday inquiry that no one asked him for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{164} Mullan, 107.
\item \textsuperscript{165} Mullan, XXXIV.
\item \textsuperscript{166} McCann, 148-49.
\item \textsuperscript{167} Mullan, 108.
\end{itemize}
bombs or detonators in connection with Bloody Sunday.\textsuperscript{168} An IRA offensive did not occur until two or three cars of IRA gunman arrived, which opened fire on army positions.\textsuperscript{169} This occurred after the shooting was already over and the soldiers of Para 1 had already withdrawn from the Bogside.

It strikes me that the army ran amok that day and they shot without thinking what they were doing. They were shooting innocent people. These people may have been taking part in a parade that was banned, but I don’t think that justifies the firing of live rounds indiscriminately. I say it was without reservation: it was sheer unadulterated murder.\textsuperscript{170}

These strong words given at the Bloody Sunday inquest by the Derry city coroner are felt by many in Northern Ireland and the world. Why did the British army open fire on a crowd of civilians? Undoubtedly there was the presence of a small number or IRA gunman on Bloody Sunday. Eyewitness statements overwhelmingly claim that the first shots came from the British soldiers not from the IRA. Even Widgery had trouble sorting out the contradictory and confusing nature of soldiers’ statements, and also found that despite a suspicion, some of the casualties had fired or handled weapons during parts of the afternoon, “None of the deceased or wounded is proved to have been shot whilst handling a firearm or bomb.”\textsuperscript{171} If none of those shot were found with weapons or proven to have used such weapons, then the soldiers shot and killed innocent civilians. Widgery concluded that, “There was no general breakdown in the discipline. For the most part the soldiers acted as they did because they thought their orders required it.”\textsuperscript{172}

If this is indeed the case, and in fact soldiers acted under orders, the British military and


\textsuperscript{169} Mullan, 107.

\textsuperscript{170} McCann, 9-10.

\textsuperscript{171} Widgery, 99.

\textsuperscript{172} Widgery, 100.
government chose to pursue a policy of lethal force. Such a policy is most accurately represented in the use of snipers on the Derry Walls which probably shot and killed John Young, William Nash, and Michael McDaid.

One of the most interesting new developments of Bloody Sunday is the statement of Soldier 027, a former member of the Paras Anti-tank Platoon. Soldier 027 is the only soldier to come out and speak out about the events on Bloody Sunday, and the only soldier whose version of events differs from his fellow soldiers and the British government. He described the night before January 30, “We were all in high spirits and when our Lieutenant 119 said, ‘Let’s teach these buggers a lesson – we want some kills tomorrow,’ to the mentality of the blokes to whom he was speaking this was tantamount to an order – i.e., an exoneration of responsibility.” Thus Soldier 027 reveals the sanctioned use of lethal force against the crowd. Additionally, Soldier 027 was unable to see the barrage of bullets and bombs that soldiers claim assaulted them,

I raised my rifle and aimed, but on tracking across the people in front of me could see women and children, although the majority were men, all wildly shouting, but could see no one with a weapon, so I lowered my rifle…I remember thinking, looking at my friends…do they know something I don’t know? What are they firing at?

As the soldiers returned to their APCs Soldier 027 recalls everyone, including himself laughing and joking, talking about how many rounds they had fired. Some admitted to using their own personal supply of dum-dum bullets [illegal non-army issued hollow point bullets], “Soldier J, for one, fired 10 dum-dums into the crowd, but he has still had

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173 Mullan, 203.
his official quota he got away with saying that he never fired a shot in the subsequent investigation.\textsuperscript{175}

Soldier 027 reveals higher level government involvement in the cover up of the truth of Bloody Sunday. Upon preparing his statement for the Widgery tribunal, the two crown lawyers stated, “Dear me, Private 027, you make it sound as though shots were fired at the crowd, we can’t have that can we?”, whereupon, the lawyers tore up Soldier 027’s statement and presented him 10 minutes later with a new one, and “told with a smile that this was the statement I would use when going on the stand.”\textsuperscript{176}

Soldier 027’s evidence supports that the events of Bloody Sunday were orchestrated at a higher level than that of the military alone. The British government and military have made a constant effort to subvert the truth and win the propaganda war in Northern Ireland. In 1996, Madden & Finucane Solicitors, the law firm acting on behalf of the families of those killed on Bloody Sunday, received several classified documents from the Public Records Office, London.\textsuperscript{177} On the cover page listing the released documents, was an item labeled HO 219/56, which stated “Closed for 75 years.”\textsuperscript{178} HO 219/56 was the medical records of the injured. Curiously, the British government had these records sealed until 2047. By 2047 many of the wounded will likely be dead. This information may very well coincide with post-mortem data of the dead by Dr. Raymond McClean, which shows a raised trajectory of some of the bullet wounds, such as those of John Pius Young, William Nash, and Michael McDaid. Dr. Raymond McClean’s evidence therefore supports the theory of snipers firing from the Derry Walls, an idea

\textsuperscript{175} “Statement of Soldier 027,” Mullan, 207.
\textsuperscript{176} “Statement of Soldier 027,” Mullan, 208.
\textsuperscript{177} Mullan, 177.
\textsuperscript{178} Mullan, 178
completely ignored by Widgery. Soldiers also expressed a lack of concern for the wounded, as was seen in the case of Gerard Donaghy, and in fact hindered the activities of aid workers attempting to attend to the wounded. This was especially true in regards to pastors and the Ambulance Corps of the Knights of Malta, who were intimidated and arrested by British soldiers and security forces.\textsuperscript{179} Such a policy clearly indicates the British army’s desire to eradicate the IRA from Derry. If the soldiers did indeed believe the men shot were IRA men, evidence suggests that they would rather seem them die than arrested.

Finally, another stinging piece of evidence found was a memo written by General Sir Robert Ford, the Commander of Land Forces in the North, not long before Bloody Sunday, entitled “The Situation in Londonderry as at 7\textsuperscript{th} January 1972.”\textsuperscript{181} Within this memo General Ford expressed concern about “Derry Young Hooligans,” and that “I am

\textsuperscript{179} Mullan, 128.
\textsuperscript{181} Mullan, 218
coming to the conclusion that the minimum force necessary to achieve a restoration of law and order is to shoot selected ring leaders among the DYH [Derry Young Hooligans], after clear warnings have been issued.\textsuperscript{182} Another senior military officer, Lt Col Harry Dalzell-Payne, in a paper, “Marches in 1972,” wrote “We must take stronger military measures which will inevitably lead to further accusations of "brutality and ill-treatment of non-violent demonstrators.” These declarations from senior military officials in Northern Ireland clearly show an opinion that lethal force against the crowd was a viable option to restore law and order. The military and the British government were prepared to use what ever means necessary to reassert control over Derry and end the status-quo of IRA ‘no-go’ areas.

Bloody Sunday is one of many painful memories ingrained into the hearts and minds of the Irish. The new Saville Inquiry seeks to hopefully find the truth and resolution to this heart wrenching event. Undoubtedly, its outcome could play a significant role in the healing process towards a lasting peace in Northern Ireland. For over 30 years, truth and justice have been sought for the victims and their families. In the face of so many years of secrecy these goals may prove to be elusive. The opportunity is there, however, for healing and for justice. Only time will tell if the British government is willing to seize that opportunity.

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