

Transcrição da entrevista de Alinne Balduino Pires Fernandes com Patricia Burke Brogan

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Patricia B. Brogan	00:00	(...) our Prime Minister, our... Mr. Michael D. Higgins, president now, said that, and it changed everything. People began to speak then, you see.
Alinne Fernandes	00:10	About those issues?
BROGAN	00:12	About the way outcasts were treated.
FERNANDES	00:16	Right.
BROGAN	00:17	It was all under the carpet. Oh, here we are. Hi, how are you?
WAITER	00:21	Hi, how are you doing?
FERNANDES	00:23	Hello.
BROGAN	00:23	Nigel.
FERNANDES	00:27	She really knows everyone here, doesn't she? [laughs]
BROGAN	00:29	She does, she's very good.
FERNANDES	00:35	Sorry, I've got loads of books on the table [chuckles]. Thank you.
BROGAN	00:41	Thanks, Nigel.
FERNANDES	00:42	OK, so, this is on. Can I serve you some tea?
BROGAN	00:47	Just a little, yeah.
FERNANDES	00:55	Do you take it plain, or do you take some milk as well?
BROGAN	00:58	I don't take sugar, I don't... I take a little milk.
FERNANDES	01:00	Yeah? OK, so, I'll just serve myself.
BROGAN	01:04	I thought we might have lunch after a while, you know?
FERNANDES	01:08	Right, yeah.

BROGAN	01:09	When are you going back? What do you...
FERNANDES	01:10	Well, I have to take the bus back at a quarter to five.
BROGAN	01:13	Oh well, you have the whole day.
FERNANDES	01:15	Yeah, I do. So I've got a few hours. There you go.
BROGAN	01:18	And the Magdalene site is just over there. Across the road, up a bit.
FERNANDES	01:21	Right! Will you take me there?
BROGAN	01:23	I will, yeah.
FERNANDES	01:24	Perfect. OK, shall we get started?
BROGAN	01:28	Yes.
FERNANDES	01:29	So, I've got a few questions for you. They're on my phone, [Brogan coughs] you know.
BROGAN	01:32	Yeah.
FERNANDES	01:34	OK, so my very first question is: Could you tell me about what made you write Eclipsed? Was it really the first play you wrote? What led you right for the stage, in the first place?
BROGAN	01:51	The reason I wrote Eclipsed, even though I was afraid, I felt I had to give a voice and be a witness to the way the women were treated in the Magdalene Laundries. I entered a convent. I was a boarder in the Saint Louis Convent [inaudible], as a boarder. But I didn't want to enter with the Louis nuns because I felt that they were... that they educated mid-class and scholarship, I was there in a scholarship. So, I decided I wanted to work for the poor, and my great-grandaunt was a Mother... Mother General of the Mercy Order in the upper Leitrim area, Leitrim Sligo, towards the North. And I didn't go there, so I came to Galway, and I was... had passed through teacher training College at this stage, but my family were very... particularly my father, were very conscious of social justice.
FERNANDES	03:09	Your father?
BROGAN	03:10	My father, particularly. My mother was very good to the poor who came, you know, people who came begging, but she wasn't as vocal as my father about it. He was a

		veteran of the War of Independence – not the 1916 one, no, he was too young at that time, barely there, he fought as... in the War of Independence, was put into Mountjoy jail, and spent a year there. Then was let out, when the treaty was signed but he was on hunger strike for a little. So that was the kind of person he was, and I'm his daughter. It has passed to me now.
FERNANDES	03:55	What was his name?
BROGAN	03:56	Joseph Faolán [unsure about the spelling] Burke. Yeah, that's where I have the Burke. So I kept the Burke part, and then I married Edward Brogan, and added that on. So, when I entered, I was a teacher, and during the summer holidays of my first few months there, I was sent to replace a sister who was on holidays or ill in the Magdalene Laundry. I had to take over her duties, so I was brought up, and there I found what was going on. I was horrified, and, just, my whole life seemed to turn upside down. Because these women, young, middle-age and older women, and very old women in some cases, were locked away by society. The nuns didn't go out and take them in, with grappling hooks. The people outside just got rid of them and threw them in there. So, that changed my life, and I decided I couldn't go on, and they weren't paid for their work either, even though they should've been, they worked very hard. So that's why I wrote the play, to give those women a voice. Now, I didn't use any... They are all fictional characters in Eclipsed. I didn't use any of the names or the stories of the women, just the fact that their freedom was taken away from them. And they were really outcasts. And I've met a few of them who escaped and came out of it alive, and one particular woman came out, married, and had a family, and her children really don't want her to talk about it. It's still a stigma.
FERNANDES	06:06	Too painful?
BROGAN	06:07	Same, as it is a stigma to be in a convent and leave.
FERNANDES	06:13	Right, I see. Yeah, that's amazing.
BROGAN	06:15	So, I'm associated in all those ways.
FERNANDES	06:19	Yes, that's amazing. And how about the old women who were there? Had they been there for a very long time, when you were there?

BROGAN	06:27	Yeah, some of them spent their lives there. And one of the characters, Nellie-Nora here...
FERNANDES	06:35	Yes, I was going to ask you about...
BROGAN	06:36	She sort of is... And never... there was nobody called Nellie-Nora there, but she is a combination of those women, or a voice for those women.
FERNANDES	06:49	Right. Yes. Very interesting, yeah. OK, so that leads me to my next question. OK, so having read some of your short bios on the internet, and carrying out research about Eclipsed and its context, it's impossible not to wonder whether you see yourself in the character of Sister Virginia, [sighs] so... [chuckles] besides having spent some time as a novitiate, is that correct?
BROGAN	07:17	Yes, that's right.
FERNANDES	07:18	Have you ever come close with a situation like hers? That of handing in the keys to one of the penitents?
BROGAN	07:24	Handing in the...
FERNANDES	07:25	The keys. To one of the penitents, yeah.
BROGAN	07:27	Oh, the keys. Well, that's how I felt when I was there, when I was put in charge of them. I just felt... I went on strike with them, actually.
FERNANDES	07:40	You did?
BROGAN	07:41	I did.
FERNANDES	07:42	And how did it happen?
BROGAN	07:43	One morning, those who knew me came up to me and said, in their... the way they spoke, "We're going on strike, sis". It was a strike. Going on the "rans", in the way they put it. But that meant strike. And I...
FERNANDES	08:01	How did they call it?
BROGAN	08:02	The "ran". I don't know how they spell it, it was a strange word, it was kind of a corruption I suppose, of some...
FERNANDES	08:09	Right, yeah. That's one word, the "ran".
BROGAN	08:11	The "ran"... It could be W-R-N or R-A-N, or something like that. But I didn't write that down no, because I

		<p>wasn't so sure of how you spell it. But... and I... here I was, in charge, with my bundle of these... these women. So, most of them had no place to go, you see, and I knew that. At least I was told that. That if they got out, these are penitents, nobody wants these women, so Mother Victoria, when I challenged her about it – the woman, the superior; she wasn't Mother Victoria, she's fictional –, when I challenged her, I suppose, "Why are they here? Why? What has happened?". And I was told that they had broken the sixth and ninth commandments of the Church. And they were... they would tempt men if they were let out [chuckles]. And... the way, it's strange, sort of, an attitude to them, so... but I knew that most of them had no place to go, so if I used my keys to let them out, in the way they were dressed, they'd be brought back again, again by the van man, who brought the laundry in. So, I began to pray. That was my refuge, and I started to pray, and they all sat down then, in a kind of a circle, most of the women, not all of them, around the floor. It was a very cold, stormy, wet, slabby floor, and they... look I went over, and I joined them. I sat down beside them, and they looked at me. And I began to say the rules a bit softly, because what could I do? So, after awhile, they stood up and went back to work. And that was the end of the strike, which didn't last very long, but I don't think I have that in the play. I think I mentioned it in my memoir about the place. So, I knew then that I couldn't stay. The only way I could do anything for them, I thought first, was to stay and encourage them [inaudible], and feed them, and look after them, and object to, and get better clothes for them, but no. There's a little bit of Sister Luke in the other play, you know. And... then, of course, when I tried to leave, it took ages to leave, even though I hadn't final vows. It took ages because they didn't want me to leave.</p>
FERNANDES	11:20	They didn't want you to leave?
BROGAN	11:21	The nuns didn't.
FERNANDES	11:23	Oh, ok, the nuns didn't.
BROGAN	11:24	The sisters didn't want me to leave. And most of them are walking around now out since [inaudible]. I meet some of them for lunch.
FERNANDES	11:31	Oh, right, you do? [laughs]

BROGAN	11:33	Sister Trace. She still kept her name, Trace.
FERNANDES	11:35	Right! So you're still friends after...
BROGAN	11:38	Oh, just... Just one, yes...
FERNANDES	11:40	Even after the strike and everything.
BROGAN	11:42	But there's just one sister who crosses the road when she sees me coming, you know? She's the only one, and then there's another bossy one who kind of comes in here for lunch too, and we kind of... [both laugh] look at one another...
FERNANDES	11:57	And was there anyone like Brigit in the Magdalene Laundry where you went?
BROGAN 12:03	12:03	Brigit... yeah. There would have been... yeah, one, with a bit of bounce in her, and courage. Yeah, most of them were... the way it becomes institutionalised after a short time, that's the trouble in a place like that. You could become... and so the nuns were institutionalised, it just... it was...
FERNANDES	12:30	So they just accepted it, really. Resigned.
BROGAN	12:34	Yes, that's it. Yeah, so, nobody exactly like Brigit. Brigit really is based, for me, on... Is that alright?
FERNANDES	12:47	Yes, it's working fine, just double-checking.
BROGAN	12:49	Because Saint Brigid is our patron, Saint of Ireland. That's why I called this character Brigit. And she was a Bishop of the Church, by accident, and she had her glass of ale and all that, and founded a convent. And she stood up to the Vatican, even.
FERNANDES	13:08	How come by accident?
BROGAN	13:10	Saint Mel came to visit... Saint Mel from Longford. There's a cathedral named after Saint Mel in Longford town – it was burned down there accidentally, a few years ago, but it is rebuilt now and it's beautiful. But he went over, as he was a bishop, he went over to Brigid and she... There were a few glasses of ale, she... he liked his drop of ale and she liked her drop of ale, and, by accident, he... blessed her, ordained her bishop. While he was in the...
FERNANDES	13:53	Because he was drunk, basically?

BROGAN	13:55	She probably got rounded to it, anyway [Fernandes laughs]. She was a great woman. As we hear, like, she was extraordinary.
FERNANDES	14:04	Right, amazing.
BROGAN	14:06	And I did a lot of research on her, but it's hard...
FERNANDES	14:10	When was that? Sorry, is it the 17 <sup>th</sup> century? I'm a bit lost. Saint Brigid...
BROGAN	14:15	Yeah, right...I'd say... yeah, I'd say...
FERNANDES	14:16	Around the 17 <sup>th</sup> century?
BROGAN	14:18	Yeah. And they still light candles to her, and the feast goes on, and around here, in the West of... this side of the channel anyway, they still have Brídeogs which are little Brigids of [inaudible], and you dress up, and you go around begging. And they put a bush out, and they tie rags to it. You see that on television, sometimes, actually. And it's supposed to be this really half-pagan, and she was... there was a little bit of paganism still there, in her... pity I didn't bring more notes with me now, but I can always send out some to you.
FERNANDES	15:03	Sure, yeah.
BROGAN	15:05	And, her father was a chieftain, and her mother was a slave woman. So she had that little bit of mixture.
FERNANDES	15:17	Yes. So it was a bit of a syncretic, sort of thing, you know. Saint Brigid's cross is also, sort of half-Celtic and half-Catholic...
BROGAN	15:26	Yeah, Pagan and Christian.
FERNANDES	15:30	Amazing, very interesting.
BROGAN	15:32	It is amazing, it's a whole extraordinary story. The more you think about it, the more you find out. And the more you dig... even though they're oral... it's oral... mostly oral tradition.
FERNANDES	15:47	Yes, absolutely. And how much is there of you in Sister Virginia?
BROGAN	15:56	Well, I wrote her, so... [chuckles] And I wasn't as courageous as she was, but I suppose that's what I'd like to have been.

FERNANDES	16:09	More of an alter-ego kind of thing?
BROGAN	16:11	Yeah, that's the word. I think I wrote that somewhere, yeah. Little bits of it are true to life, where the seminarian comes in to visit Sister Brigit. This seminarian came in to visit me, and brought me the [inaudible].
FERNANDES	16:29	Oh, he really did?
BROGAN 16:30	16:30	That really happened, and actually, he was a Dominican Father, and he... wasn't a seminarian at the time he came to visit me, but he pretended to be.
FERNANDES	16:43	He pretended to be?
BROGAN	16:44	He pretended to be.
FERNANDES	16:45	Just to be able to see...
BROGAN	16:46	Pretended to be, because he would see me, yeah. And he was interested in me, right, when I was at the dances. [Fernandes chuckles] I think he was the one who gave me the last dance, before I entered the convent. But anyway, he became... he entered the Dominican Father's afterwards. And he arrived here in Galway, and at that point he saw the play [laughs]. It was strange how it fitted, but he died there a few months ago. But every time I pass the Dominican Church, I say hello. Our things.
FERNANDES	17:21	And when were you at the... working at the Magdalene Laundries? What period was that?
BROGAN	17:26	The late-fifties, 1950's. [inaudible] the building is demolished. But there was...
FERNANDES	17:37	Is that the site we are going to visit?
BROGAN	17:39	Yeah, that's the site. The convent is still there, and the facade is to be preserved, and the arch made through which the vans... the laundry vans, I mean... and then there's a road up which has changed its name now... It's... that's the way they came, all sorts of mechanical or industrial names. And the people in Galway, they sent their laundry in there, and their laundry then went round the country, round County Galway, County Clare, County Mayo, and picked up at shops, and then came back with the baskets and they cleaned [inaudible] in the baskets. Now there's a terrace, you'll see, there's a

		terrace of houses, and that's called a Magdalene terrace. It's just a short terrace. People don't like calling it that now, some of the ones who...
FERNANDES	18:40	Because of the stigma attached to it?
BROGAN	18:45	That's where the drivers lived with their families.
FERNANDES	18:52	All right. OK, can we move on to my next question?
BROGAN	18:56	Yes.
FERNANDES	18:58	Just double-checking the recorder again, all fine... You are a multi-talented visual artist and writer. You're very precious about stage directions in this. And there is something quite visual in the way you describe settings, including lighting and colour, this painting affects the way you're writing for stage.
BROGAN	19:23	Definitely, yes, that's very definite.
FERNANDES	19:24	How so?
BROGAN	19:26	I can see it, you know. I'm strict, I can be strict on it. Caroline Fitzgerald directed most of the English versions. I don't know what happened in other places, but they didn't ring me up or emailed me for... but, it's as I... it's my image, in my head and the way it should be out there. But I know a director has to change it, and that's one of the reasons I didn't give it to Druid. Because I felt Gary Hynes wouldn't take my... and that she'd make her own of it. I suppose I'm selfish, but that's...
FERNANDES	20:13	[laughs] You're allowed to be! You're entitled. It's your play.
BROGAN	20:17	Yes. Well, thank you. Actually I was listening to her last night, looking at her in [inaudible] programme she was on, and would you believe – it's about religion. But, anyway, she's famous, very famous as a director. And very bossy, as she said herself so. [both laugh]
FERNANDES	20:45	For how long have you been painting?
BROGAN	20:49	All my life, since I was babe, since I was about... you know, the way children start. And my father was an artist. Not a trained artist, but he had that gift of putting it down on paper, watercolour mostly, pen and ink sketches, that kind of thing.

FERNANDES	21:09	So you actually learned painting from him, or...? You learned to paint with your father?
BROGAN	21:15	Well, no, then I set up, but I did train, I did go to college and that, but I suppose I broke some of the rules, as usual.
FERNANDES	21:31	How do you mean?
BROGAN	21:32	Well, the rules of – you know, I made my own of the landscape and that. It's more- I did... I spent over twenty years in the etching workshop, in NUIG now, and every time, every... With etching, it takes about seven years, it's such an extraordinary, extraordinary method. And I developed soft ground etching, as I went on, so...
FERNANDES	22:11	Very interesting.
BROGAN	22:13	No, that isn't soft ground etching, the other one. The blue one isn't. No, that's...
FERNANDES	22:22	Oh, yes, the stained glass one.
BROGAN	22:27	Yeah, in which you can see, that's zinc, which I painted with tar, you know, part of it, and then I preserved it with tar, putted into the acid – the back always has to be protected, and printed it out, see how it's getting on, but you see, the influence of the convent still there, and the inner-life...
FERNANDES	22:52	Yes, definitely, like a mosaic...
BROGAN	22:55	Yeah. And the inner-life of everyone, I suppose. It's been [inaudible] about what happened, preserved more, that's why... in NUIG, I have given the plate to NUIG, some of the plates, anyway. I did others in copper, and bigger ones as well. This is a smallish one, but suited the cover. And that was in Barcelona, that was a print from that, in an exhibit in Cadaqués, in Barcelona, near where Picasso used to live [both laugh], so...
FERNANDES	23:34	And how about the cover of Eclipsed? Have you had any part in this?
BROGAN	23:38	Yes, I had, you see, just the head with the crucifix.
FERNANDES	23:43	Yes.

BROGAN	23:44	And I wasn't... the publisher did that. But they're the bars of the sale and of the... So, I suppose that's it. But...The first edition of that with Salmon was the...
FERNANDES	24:08	A profile, no?
BROGAN	24:09	It was I suppose influenced by, you know, that ancient Greek woman... the neck... Nefertiti or something... you know the one.
FERNANDES	24:21	Hang on a second. Are you talking about the poet, no?
BROGAN	24:23	About?
FERNANDES	24:24	The poet?
BROGAN	24:25	No.
FERNANDES	24:26	No.
BROGAN	24:29	A sculptor.
FERNANDES	24:31	Oh, OK... Don't know, don't remember.
BROGAN	24:37	I'll look it up. I should know, but I'm beginning to forget things, so many things have happened.
FERNANDES	24:42	I know, yeah. It's been a long life, right? Full of achievements.
BROGAN	24:46	A long life, yeah. Extraordinary life, somebody could say.
FERNANDES	24:50	Indeed, yeah. Right, OK. So my next question is going to be: All penitents – I think somehow we have already answered this question, so if you feel you have already answered it, you just ignore it, and we'll move on to the next one. All penitents from Eclipsed have very peculiar treats. Their background stories that are reviewed throughout the play make them even more intense and involving. We want... we feel that we want to know more about them. When creating characters, how do you get started? Are they a result of a combination of stories you've heard? People you've met?
BROGAN	25:37	I try not to take any particular woman's story. I felt that belonged to her. But an image would come to me, and then I developed that, that's it. But I knew that I had to have different, you'd say, age groups, from older women to middle-aged women, and women who were

		institutionalised, say Nellie-Nora, or... Nellie-Nora happened by accident, I wanted a singer, someone who sang, this is way back now, at the beginning of the draft for the play. And it just happened, I said to myself, Nellie... what will I call her? Will I call her Nellie, which is musical, or Nora, which is musical in another way? And then I said Nellie-Nora. It just happened. It was given to me.
FERNANDES	26:38	Interesting, yeah. And it is a quite musical play, in a way. There's a lot of music.
BROGAN	26:43	Yeah, it is because my first training was in music, yeah, you know. I was... with piano now, and then I played in an orchestra in school, and I did the church organ in college, I majored in that. But I used to play the harmonium then, in the local church in the country, where we lived, and [inaudible], a harmonium, it wasn't, you know... So, my dad was very musical too, as well as my mother, so he sang an awful lot while we were growing up.
FERNANDES	27:20	And do you sing?
BROGAN	27:22	I used to sing, but then my voice problem. I was in choirs and that, but... I couldn't say I was a soloist, by any means.
FERNANDES	27:34	Right, more of a choir person.
BROGAN	27:36	Yeah. So it helps to be in a choir, because then you're part of a group. And helps you to live with people.
FERNANDES	27:46	That's very true, yeah. I find the cradle scene, from Act One, one of the most beautiful ones in Eclipsed. I really love that scene.
BROGAN	27:57	Yeah, that's it. It's my favourite.
FERNANDES	27:58	Is it? Oh, it's my favourite too.
BROGAN	28:00	I'm still struggling with the faith, you see.
FERNANDES	28:02	Right, interesting. I love Sister Virginia's soliloquy, in the way her prayer is juxtaposed with, and disturbed by, a multitude of voices. She goes through a true existential crisis there. Have you felt that you've also gone through one yourself, after your experience with the Magdalenes – well, we've already sort of answered that. And I mean

		that in the sense of really turning your life upside-down. Do you consider yourself a Catholic?
BROGA	28:34	I do. I consider myself a Catholic. I go to mass.
FERNANDES	28:38	You do?
BROGAN	28:39	I think the mass is the most extraordinary celebration of life on Earth, whether you're a Catholic or... no matter what, it's the lifting up of the human spirit to the greatest spirit. You can call him God, or spirit, or being, but I... that's, yeah. I go to mass as regularly as I can. I used to go everyday, but then this put me back a bit. My brother... my only brother was a Catholic, Roman Catholic priest, and we were very close.
FERNANDES	29:18	As Father John, in the play.
BROGAN	29:20	Yeah. We were very close, and he died suddenly one day, after saying mass.
FERNANDES	29:27	How tragic.
BROGAN	29:28	He said the ten o'clock mass, came out of the church, some parishioner asked him to sign a mass card, you know, but that isn't... if you want an intention, you get a mass card, signed by the priest. Went in to his church, got the keys of his car, started the car, and the neighbour was still there, luckily, and came out, there was this short driveway from about here and out that door, and then you got out on to the main Worthing road, it's South England, Worthing is down there. And it was lucky, because he died in the car. Just gone.
FERNANDES	30:18	Wow. Was he young, then?
BROGAN	30:21	Well, he wasn't that young, he was late-seventies, seventy-five or six. And of course we miss him terribly. I have three sisters, but we miss him terribly.
FERNANDES	30:35	Yeah, of course. Was he the eldest of the family?
BROGAN	30:38	He was, yeah. But very close to me, fifteen months between us.
FERNANDES	30:42	All right, yeah, OK.
BROGAN	30:44	So we kind of grew up together, and had our fights, and our battles. And I was tiny, but he was six foot two, with a big, you know, not thin – well, because he had a

		bypass, and that was ten years before he died, we knew that, you know, it could happen, because of his heart. Left ventricular failure.
FERNANDES	31:08	And that was it, then.
BROGAN	31:10	And that was it. And he was cremated. And the flowers, and the dust was put on the flowers, in Worthing, the South of England. But lucky, if he had got out onto the road, if there were an accident, there might have been another death, see, from...
FERNANDES	31:34	That's very true, yeah. That's very true.
BROGAN	31:36	So, we... Yeah, he said mass and that was it. I still talk to him, I believe his spirit is around.
FERNANDES	31:43	Yes. And when was that, that he passed away?
BROGAN	31:50	The eleventh of April, five years ago.
FERNANDES	31:53	Five years ago? So it's fairly recent.
BROGAN	31:55	It is, yeah. My husband died five weeks before that.
FERNANDES	31:01	Oh wow.
BROGAN	31:02	He died on the first of March.
FERNANDES	32:03	Wow, two very big losses in a row.
BROGAN	32:07	Yeah. It was just nothing but funerals. And you don't get time to kind of...
FERNANDES	32:13	Digest the whole thing?
BROGAN	32:14	Mourn, and... you're pulled and... Then my sister Clara, her husband, got pancreatic cancer, is just the worst form, and he lived for five years and he died the following June. But they have children, he had grand-children and [inaudible] has grand-children, so the line goes on.
FERNANDES	32:42	Yes, exactly. Do you have children yourself?
BROGAN	32:44	No.
FERNANDES	32:45	You chose not to?
BROGAN	32:46	My children are my plays.

FERNANDES	32:48	Your plays, yeah.
BROGAN	32:50	It wasn't, you know, I just wasn't given them, they didn't come, so...
FERNANDES	32:53	Right, OK. So, you wrote Eclipsed in the late-1980's, right?
BROGAN	33:02	Yeah.
FERNANDES	33:03	An emblematic decade for female playwrights in Ireland, with Charabanc and all that. Have you had any involvement with Charabanc? Have they affected you, have they influenced you somehow?
BROGAN	33:15	Which is?
FERNANDES	33:17	Charabanc?
BROGAN	33:18	Oh, Charabanc. No, somebody suggested, when I wrote it, that I should send it to Charabanc. But I heard something anyway, Mary Jones, I heard something, and...
FERNANDES	33:41	But you didn't really know them or anything?
BROGAN	33:44	I didn't know them. I didn't want to be with all these women, do you know.
FERNANDES	33:50	[Laughs] Why not?
BROGAN	33:52	[Laughs] And I sent it to Derry, Tom Kilroy, the playwright, and a few actors had got together, and the poet, who died lately, that wonderful poet. There was a group of poets, mostly male there, up in Derry, and I sent it to them, you know, the script as it was.
FERNANDES	34:27	Was Seamus Heany one of them?
BROGAN	34:29	Pardon? Seamus Heany, yeah. He wrote a play or two, he wasn't really a playwright, marvellous poet. And Tom Kilroy is a very good playwright, and I still meet him, now and again, he's... I think he's in America at the moment. But we miss Seamus Heany, just the fact that he was such a wonderful poet and human being. But I sent it to them anyway, and I got a letter back, to say that they were re-reading the play, and they'd be back to me. And I waited for nine months, and nothing

		happened. And then I heard they had split up the company.
FERNANDES	35:06	Right. How was it called, the company?
BROGAN	35:09	That's what I'm trying to think.
FERNANDES	35:11	OK, [laughs]. I should probably do some research on that, so yeah.
BROGAN	35:19	But anyway.
FERNANDES	35:20	Take your time if you want.
BROGAN	35:21	I gave it to a local company, then. Sean Evers and David Quinn.
FERNANDES	35:31	Oh, yes. Punchbag.
BROGAN	35:33	Quinn. David Quinn directed it. Sean Evers wanted to direct it, and I didn't think he was suited, he was too much of a businessman, into money and that kind of thing. And David was... I just thought he'd be better, but of course I kept an eye on him, I was down there with my book [Fernandes laughs] and my objections. And they did try to change it. This went on tour, and they tried to change it, and I objected it strongly, so I was going to take it from them, I wouldn't sign the agreement.
FERNANDES	36:14	What was it that you didn't quite like about it?
BROGAN	36:17	They tried to copy some English playwright who was twisting things sideways, you know. They were putting their own... See, they didn't have any idea of what I was talking about, I felt...
FERNANDES	36:40	Did you feel it... Was it because it was a male director, or...?
BROGAN	36:44	Well, partly. Even though David Quinn's mother knew what I was talking about, I felt... but you see, it was such a shock to people, they just didn't realise what was going on down the road.
FERNANDES	36:59	Just around the corner.
BROGAN	37:01	Yeah. They just thought they were just a little bit odd, these women, and that they were sort of prostitutes.
FERNANDES	37:09	Right. So they had no idea, really.

BROGAN	37:12	No, they didn't seem to have it, no. Maybe some of them did, those who put their daughters in there, to get rid of them.
FERNANDES	37:17	Exactly, yes.
BROGAN	37:19	Or to get... The brother was getting married, and he couldn't have another woman in the house with the baby, you know.
FERNANDES	37:27	Wow, yeah. [sighs] Ok, so my next question...
BROGAN	37:32	Now it's different all together, and Ireland has changed completely. I know loads of them who have their babies and don't marry the men at all.
FERNANDES	37:43	And that's OK.
BROGAN	37:44	It is, yeah.
FERNANDES	37:45	They're not really stigmatised for that?
BROGAN	37:47	No, no, no. Well, a little... maybe, it depends on these odd little things, but most people are accepted.
FERNANDES	37:56	OK, so I think that leads us to my next question. Eclipsed has brought up issues which most certainly were ahead of its time, as we've already talked about. They still are problems nowadays, the problems of Eclipsed are still problems nowadays, they still exist. How does it feel to see that women's rights have been overlooked for so long? And here, have things really changed much, since the 1980's, when you wrote the play originally?
BROGAN	38:36	Partly, just not completely. I mean it was really terrible, I mean... It depends, still have... I mean, even, "Oh, she's the one that wrote the play" type of thing, do you know? That kind of a thing. I'm a human being, and I did write the play, but.... Wonder why a person would say that. Is it because it thought it was good, or bad, or... I'm off the point now, what did you ask me again?
FERNANDES	39:23	How do you... How does it feel to see that women's rights have been overlooked for so long?
BROGAN	39:32	I supposed it started in the Garden, as Mother Victoria says [laughs].
FERNANDES	39:36	That's very true. Yeah, that's very true.

BROGAN	39:38	It was her fault.
FERNANDES	39:40	And it's everywhere. It's the same in Brazil.
BROGAN	39:43	Is it? Oh...
FERNANDES	39:45	Yes. I'm going to tell you more about this, and, you know, because we had a reading of my translation last Thursday.
BROGAN	39:52	Good!
FERNANDES	39:53	And there were a lot of women crying in the audience, you know, because they could really relate to that.
BROGAN	40:00	Yeah, that happens.
FERNANDES	40:01	Yeah, it really does. One of my students, she came by to watch the reading, and she sent me an e-mail, thanking me for that reading. She was like "You have to keep doing this, because it has touched me so much". So, well, she thanked me, and I want to thank you for having written this play.
BROGAN	40:20	Thank you, yeah. Well, I had to do it, I had to write it. What would I do? My life wouldn't have been... My paintings, of course, and that, but... It's a combination of painting and poetry and theatre. So I just went out there and... It's like my daughter, telling this story, if I had a daughter.
FERNANDES	40:43	Yes, exactly, yes...
BROGAN	40:46	And she's travelling all over the world.
FERNANDES	40:48	Yes, she is! And she speaks many languages, as well.
BROGAN	40:51	That's right!
FERNANDES	40:54	[laughs] Are you OK to carry on? Would you like to take a break?
BROGAN	40:58	Do you have many more?
FERNANDES	40:59	I do, actually, I wrote down too many questions. [laughs] If you're... OK, hang on a second, let's see how many we've got here...
BROGAN	41:10	I'll do more... two or three more, and then we break.
FERNANDES	41:13	OK [laughs]. Fair enough.

BROGAN	41:16	Because, you see, my... I'm getting... I won't be able to answer properly.
FERNANDES	41:19	I know, you probably get tired. Do you want me to put this away? Yeah, OK. Do you consider yourself a feminist?
BROGAN	41:29	I never call myself any "ist".
FERNANDES	41:32	Never.
BROGAN	41:34	I'm a human's right person. But everyone thinks I'm a feminist, [Fernandes laughs] and if they think it, well they must...
FERNANDES	41:41	They've labelled you that way.
BROGAN	41:44	Yeah, that came up in this conference now...I'm writing – This is going off the point now, but I'll give you a copy of the... I'm writing a... for the 1916 Celebration, you see, it was taken over again by all the male playwrights and poets and that, and I decided, well, they're not part of the history. When Pádraig Pearse, General Pádraig Pearse, in Easter week, wanted to, had to... it was the wish of the rebels that they would surrender, and he was told that no surrender would be accepted, it had to be unconditional surrender. But there was a woman called Elizabeth O'Farrell. And she had... she did an awful lot of work, she went through, looked after them, was a Cumann na mBan, even though she hadn't joined Cumann na mBan. That's... Countess Markievicz had a company called Cumann na mBan, the company of... the company... it seems to be, what word would be... a group of women, together. And women did not...
FERNANDES	43:20	An association, kind of thing?
BROGAN	43:22	Pardon?
FERNANDES	43:23	An association?
BROGAN	43:24	Yeah. Actually, there was a meeting across the road. This was a store, and there was a meeting across, where the pharmacy was. These women met with Countess Markievicz and Maud Gonne for the first time, across there. Just across the road here. That's just part, but, nobody passed [inaudible] [laughs]. Elizabeth O'Farrell, even though her name, "Elizabeth", is very English, but she was... rebel. And she looked after the

		<p>patriots, and when Connolly was shot in the GPO, where it started, she got bandages and, even though she wasn't... she was slightly... She had medical experience, but trained to be a midwife after the rebellion... but wasn't noticed, and she took the letter. She stood beside Pádraig Pearse, when he was giving his letter of unconditional surrender to General William Lowe, the British brigadier. It had to be... unconditional. And that meant that all those rebels were executed one by one in Kilmainham Gaol. And I've written a poem about it, and I sent it to the Irish Times, but of course Fintan O'Toole won't publish it. Because he is a [inaudible]. It's only a work in progress, but... Yeah, I'll give you this. That's the poem, and I read it the other night in Kennys. And she.... There was a photograph taken at the time. And they airbrushed her out of the picture.</p>
FERNANDES	45:27	[Scoffs] They did?
BROGAN	45:28	It was a British Officer, that's what's sad about. And all you can see was her boots, sticking out beside Pádraig Pearse's boots, even though she had given them the letter and [inaudible] looked after them. Now, she wasn't executed, because she was a woman.
FERNANDES	45:44	Wow. So she...
BROGAN	45:46	That's what the poem is about, and if you want to ask questions about it...
FERNANDES	45:49	Very interesting. OK, may I keep this copy?
BROGAN	45:51	So, that's a feminist... that's for you.
FERNANDES	45:53	This is a feminist piece, yeah, definitely. OK, thank you so much. OK, so, maybe just two more questions, and we break? How do you feel being a female playwright in Ireland, a country of so many famous and prolific male writers? Is it...?
BROGAN	46:14	See, I was a very quiet person, as you can imagine, when I came out of... President Higgins said that, we met here in the store, it was an association called Tuairim, which challenged the... what did he call it... the [inaudible] or something like that, challenged the rules, and questioned things. And I'm a questioner. You are today [Fernandes laughs]. I'm still questioning, but, anyway... He said, he called me this quiet person, and

		then when it happened, when the play came, he was just amazed that this quiet person could challenge the whole...
FERNANDES	47:07	The whole system, really, yes.
BROGAN	47:12	And then, you see, I suddenly became... Was in the limelight, and I found difficult, you know. I really found it difficult. I'm used to it now, and I'm sort of tougher, you know. But I'm really, you know... Was breaking a lot of rules, and I had challenged the Church, had challenged society, had challenged the State, and... I suppose the opinions of all these rich people, so. Is that an adequate...
FERNANDES	47:47	Yes, it's a very adequate answer. You said that you almost lost your voice at that time. What were you afraid of, that would happen to you? Was it just the stress of being in the limelight, or were you actually afraid of something?
BROGAN	48:05	Partly the limelight, but it was, I suppose, the battle between being quiet and being vocal. In a kind of psychological way.
FERNANDES	48:14	Right, an inner thing.
BROGAN	48:15	Yeah. And I suppose I was crouching, you know, when you're afraid you do this, and I didn't know that. I didn't know it was associated until Richard Brennan, my... the man who brought... I used to drive out to a man, he would make me stand out there, and you know, get my shoulders and stand properly.
FERNANDES	48:38	Right, like some actual training of how to appear in public.
BROGAN	48:41	Yeah, and the nun thing too was there, you know, you go around with your head down.
FERNANDES	48:47	Yes.
BROGAN	48:48	And the hands in your sleeves.
FERNANDES	48:49	Submission, yeah.
BROGAN	48:50	And you're humble, and you try to be humble, and you don't... There was a custody of the eyes, people are amazed about that. They question "What is custody of

		the eyes?". So, it's a whole different world. I suppose I did it, I wrote it, that's it.
FERNANDES	49:17	Yeah, this is a very good answer, actually. Who would be your favourite playwright? Who would you say are your...
BROGAN	49:31	The first one, what do you call her... what do you call the... the Greek one, I have her up...
FERNANDES	49:37	Sophocles, Euripides...
BROGAN	49:39	Sophocles.
FERNANDES	49:40	Alright.
BROGAN	49:41	Sophocles's... What's the woman...
FERNANDES	49:45	The woman? Greek one?
BROGAN	49:48	Yeah. I have it in a big note, it's up over my desk, and now I'm going blank. And I like the man who wrote The Island. Sorry... You know the man who wrote The Island? He's South African, I think. There's a lot of freedom, you know, fight for freedom there. And I like Brian Friel's... the one about the death... Oh, what's wrong with me, I can't...
FERNANDES	50:29	Do you know Olive Schreiner?
BROGAN	50:31	Olive?
FERNANDES	50:32	Olive Schreiner. 19 <sup>th</sup> century... writer?
BROGAN	50:36	No.
FERNANDES	50:37	She was South African, and she was really... she was like, a real activist as well. I bet you would enjoy reading her.
BROGAN	50:42	Yeah, I heard the name now, but I don't know her work, no.
FERNANDES	50:43	She's got short stories... I can send them to you, they're all available online.
BROGAN	50:51	Really?
FERNANDES	50:52	She's got beautiful short stories. She was a true visionary, and she really fought for human rights as well, so you'd probably enjoy that.

BROGAN	51:00	Yeah, and she had a lot to do down there.
FERNANDES	51:02	Yeah, definitely. Well, still there is, you know. Still is... yeah...
BROGAN	51:07	See, if I were at home now, I'd be able to point out all of the names... Things up in the...
FERNANDES	51:12	[Laughs] Yeah. OK.
BROGAN	51:19	It's the one... the play, where her brother is killed, and she wants him buried.
FERNANDES	51:27	Oh, hang on. I know which one you're talking about. I just went completely blank now.
BROGAN	51:41	Yeah, see, because we're... It happens.
FERNANDES	51:45	Yeah, it really does.
BROGAN	51:46	I worry about it, when I can't remember, but there's no point in worrying.
FERNANDES	51:50	I forget things all the time, and I'm 32. Can you imagine how worried I get?
BROGAN	51:56	Oh, don't!
FERNANDES	51:57	[Laughs] Just too many things happening in my mind at the same time. OK, right. Are you planning to write any other plays, or are you done with the theatre?
BROGAN	52:13	I've been challenging myself again about it. But it'd be a different type of play. You know, Stained Glass at Samhain was very different from Eclipsed. The Japanese loved the Stained Glass at Samhain it's... See, it's very hard to direct, because there are so many... I'm told it's very hard. I don't think it is, but you know, all the coifs and the stuff that you write on Sister Luke, and it's, I suppose, very poetic, and visually... when we put that on in Galloway we had no money, and I went down, and I had a trolley to Ryan's shop, imagine... Role of muslin, huge, brought down to the Town Hall, and we cut it, and I got someone from... students from the university to help me and Caroline Fitzgerald said she'd direct it for me, and not take any money. Because there was no money. Michael Diskin [unsure about the spelling] gave us the Town Hall, and we didn't have to pay for that. And Geraldine Plunkett, I wanted her as Sister Luke. Then I had to make puppets,

		because the in-laws, the characters, we couldn't afford to pay extra, those extra characters...
FERNANDES	53:56	Right! So they had to be puppets?
BROGAN	53:58	They had to be puppets! [Both laugh]
FERNANDES	53:59	Wow, that's amazing.
BROGAN	54:01	And they weren't big enough, some of them. And then the umbrellas were great, because I got a great bargain in the black umbrellas down in Ryan's shop too.
FERNANDES	54:11	Alright... Well, that's amazing.
BROGAN	54:16	It was all done on nothing, you know, and the generosity of people. But they did a great production of that, out in America. Eileen Kearney, she wrote about it, she liked that play. Eileen Kearney, K-E-A-R-N-E-Y, she has Irish connections, and her husband was in theatre design, and they're both retired now. Charlotte Hedwig [unsure about the spelling] has retired as well, but she's acting instead of being a professor. And it goes on, you know. There's a reading now, which happened the other day, over in... Where is she now, he's in Montana, and she met somebody from Ireland, and they emailed me back. And I sent them the poem after, too. This woman was airbrushed out of history... I'm going backwards and forwards now in my conversation. Elizabeth O'Farrell. Will you remember her name? You will, you have it there.
FERNANDES	55:24	Yeah. No I will, it's all here, it's good. Would you like to take a break now?
BROGAN	55:29	Yes
FERNANDES	55:30	Okay, Let's do it.
BROGAN	55:31	Because I won't remember anything.
FERNANDES	55:32	[Laughs] Fair enough.