

**OLLSCOIL NA hÉIREANN**

**GAILLIMH**

**DÁMHA NA nDÁN IS AN LÉINN CHEILTIGH**

**Ard-Dioplóma i gCumarsáid Fheidhmeach**

**SCRÚDUITHE NA BLIANA 2000-2001**

**SEIMEASTAR I**

**GAEILGE**

**Pádraig Ó Héalaí  
Cáit Ní Dhomhnaill**

Uair an chloig a cheadófar.

1 Cuir Gaeilge ar an sliocht seo:

‘His mother was in court throughout the trial and obviously had neither knowledge nor suspicion of his paramilitary involvement. When he was sentenced his mother broke down in a state of great distress, which was clearly audible, and must have been heard by her son. He did not give any indication that he was aware of it. Her pain was, for me, a reminder that the person sentenced to imprisonment is seldom the only one to suffer.’

The words are those of Sir Robert Porter, who was a judge in Northern Ireland from 1978 to 1995. They come from a number of interviews which record the memories of those who passed through

the Crumlin Road courthouse in Belfast — prisoners, court officials, lawyers, RUC men, the canteen manager and others.

Their impression form part of the programme for *Convictions*, a thrilling production by the Tinderbox Company which has been one of the hits of the Belfast Festival.

The courthouse which has seen so much anger and grief since it was built as a House of Correction in the 1840s, is dilapidated now. It was designed by Chalres Lanyon whose fine buildings include Queen's University and the Custom House in Belfast.

Some people think the courthouse should be pulled down and replaced with a shopping mall or an entertainment complex to wipe out the past. Others like architect Dawson Stelfox, believe that the buiding and its painful memories should be preserved in a way that will help both communities in Belfast.

The challenge is to repossess it in a way that gives due recognition to its painful history but allows the building to become a vital part of the city's future as well as its past. Dawson Stelfox is right to emphasise the part a building like the Crumlin Road courthouse could play in helping to liberate both communities from the traumas of the past.