

# FOIA MARKER

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CO081

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Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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CO 081  
98 OCT 15 PM 6:11

October 16, 1998

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: SAMUEL BERGER (K) *in*

SUBJECT: Letter to Jean McBride -- Northern Ireland

Purpose

To respond to a letter from the mother of a Northern Irish shooting victim.

Background

Mo Mowlam secured in August the release of two British soldiers convicted of killing a Northern Ireland Catholic, Peter McBride, in 1992. The action came just before the first release of paramilitary prisoners and clearly was intended to balance the ledger of benefits for all parties to the conflict.

Peter's mother, Jean McBride, wrote you with a bitter complaint that the early release was unfair to her class of victims (British/Protestants who perpetrated crimes against Catholics are often perceived as being treated better than Catholics who killed Protestants). In particular, she was dissatisfied that the two soldiers, convicted killers, were being taken back into the British army. That was the case at the time, but the two have now been separated because of their convictions.

In your reply, you express empathy for her suffering and anger at the early release, noting that a just peace is the greatest legacy for her son and the other victims of 30 years of conflict.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the letter at Tab A.

Attachments

Tab A Letter to Jean McBride  
Tab B Incoming correspondence

*OK AD*  
*RT*  
*OK pmf*  
*10/19*

cc: Vice President  
Chief of Staff

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Dear Mrs. McBride:

I read your letter with understanding and appreciation for the pain and loss that only you can fully know. Too many lives, young and old, have been lost in Northern Ireland these past thirty years. No loss is greater than that of a mother. Please accept my sincerest condolences.

The Good Friday Accord shows all of us the way to make the suffering and injustices of the Troubles a thing of the past. I saw for myself the cost of human suffering in the eyes of the people of Omagh. I talked to the survivors of that terrible blast, to the bereaved and other innocents. I was impressed by the dignity, courage and capacity for reconciliation among the people of Omagh, and all of Ireland. I was impressed by the commitment to make the promise of the Good Friday Accord a reality. A just peace is the greatest legacy to your son and all the other victims of this terrible conflict.

When I spoke to your newly elected representatives in Belfast, I urged them to build a more just society where human rights are birthrights and where every citizen receives equal protection and treatment under the law. These must be the benchmarks for the new Northern Ireland.

Again, thank you for writing. I have stated my unequivocal support for implementation of every part of the Good Friday Accord and will continue to work for peace in Ireland.

Sincerely,

A  


Mrs. Jean McBride  
The Pat Finucane Center  
1 West End Park  
Derry, Northern Ireland  
BT48 9JF United Kingdom



# PAT FINUCANE CENTRE

Towards Human Rights and Social Change

3.9.1998

To President William Clinton

Dear President Clinton,

My name is Jean Mc Bride and I am writing to you as a mother who has lost an 18 year old son, Peter, on September 4 1992. Peter was shot by two members of the Scots Guards, a regiment of the British Army. Though both men were later sentenced to life imprisonment a major campaign led by former British Army officers called for their early release. Official British Army premises and resources were used by the campaigners.

Yesterday the two guardsmen who murdered my son were granted early release. None of the normal release procedures were followed. We were promised that the two guardsmen would not be among the first wave of prisoner releases. In fact they were released earlier than other prisoners. The releases did not take place under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement. The British Government has treated us shamefully in this affair and has shown total insensitivity towards our hurt and grieving. The reason is not difficult to understand. The victim was a working class Irish Catholic while the perpetrators were members of the British Army. The two men convicted of the murder of my son entered prison as members of the Armed Forces. They left prison this week still members of the Armed Forces. The Government has refused to dismiss them.

There is a hierarchy of victims in this conflict. Those families who have lost loved ones through the actions of the British Army and the RUC are marginalised, ignored, blamed and deceived. The British Government has acknowledged the pain felt by some victims while exasperating the pain felt by others.

Peter will be six years dead tomorrow. His killers have rejoined the British Army though convicted of murder. Closure is therefore impossible for my family until the State also accepts that it has violated human rights and created victims. I would appeal to you to use your influence to ensure that the British Government treats all victims and all perpetrators equally.

Yours,

Jean Mc Bride

OCT 1 9:47

# NSC PACKAGE

10-19-98  
(date)

RM:

OK FOR SIGNATURE PER PHIL CAPLAN/SEAN MALONEY.

RETURN ALL LETTER(S) AND ORIGINAL MEMO(S) TO

STAFF SECRETARY'S OFFICE.

u  
(initials)

Okay for Signature by  
Staff Secretary Phil Caplan  
Date 10-19-98

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 19, 1998

Dear Mrs. McBride:

I read your letter with understanding and appreciation for the pain and loss that only you can fully know. Too many lives, young and old, have been lost in Northern Ireland these past thirty years. No loss is greater than that of a mother. Please accept my sincerest condolences.

The Good Friday Accord shows all of us the way to make the suffering and injustices of the Troubles a thing of the past. I saw for myself the cost of human suffering in the eyes of the people of Omagh. I talked to the survivors of that terrible blast, to the bereaved and other innocents. I was impressed by the dignity, courage and capacity for reconciliation among the people of Omagh, and all of Ireland. I was impressed by the commitment to make the promise of the Good Friday Accord a reality. A just peace is the greatest legacy to your son and all the other victims of this terrible conflict.

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Again, thank you for writing. I have stated my unequivocal support for implementation of every part of the Good Friday Accord and will continue to work for peace in Ireland.

Sincerely,

*Bill Clinton<sup>A</sup>*

Mrs. Jean McBride  
The Pat Finucane Center  
1 West End Park  
Derry, Northern Ireland  
BT48 9JF United Kingdom

981020

MEMORANDUM FOR: WH STRIPPING DESK

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: TO: MCBRIDE, JEAN  
SOURCE: PRESIDENT  
DATE: 19 OCT 98  
SUBJ: PRES LTR TO MCBRIDE MOTHER OF NORTHERN IRISH VICTIM

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REQUIRED ACTION: FOR DISPATCH

DUE DATE: 21 OCT 98

COMMENT:

FOR



JOHN W. FICKLIN

NSC RECORDS MANAGEMENT OFFICE