

Time to Think

Open University Journeys in British and Irish prisons during the years of conflict, 1972-2000

Oral History interview clip transcript

Name of Interviewee:	Joe Doherty
Interviewed by:	Jenny Meegan
Date of interview:	05/07/2011

Important

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this transcript, however no transcript is an exact translation of the spoken word, and this document is intended to be a guide to the original recording, not replace it.

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Clip title:	Would you be interested in Education?
Duration:	00:01:41
Clip start point in full interview:	00:19:49
Clip end point in full interview:	00:21:30
Interview identifier:	018_S_01

Description: Joe Doherty recalls the change of culture and emphasis from prisoners doing military drilling in the Provisional IRA Compounds (the Maze and Long Kesh Prison) in the 1970s to the focus on education when he returned to prison in the Republican Wings of the H Blocks (the Maze and Long Kesh Prison) in the early 1990s and how he then started his Open University studies.

Transcript:

So Joe, you got released in '79 and then somehow you ended back in the H Blocks, how did you get there?

Well I was out about half a year or something, I was arrested and went to Crumlin Road [Gaol]. In the Crumlin Road, I escaped oh yes I escaped from Crumlin Road. When the Hunger Strikes, when Bobby Sands and all died we got word on to go for it so I escaped, was on the run and ended up in the US, so I was in the American prison for nine years. I had an opportunity to do, they call it a GED, it is like a high school equivalent. I didn't embark on it as I thought I would only be there a few months before I would get sent back, but I didn't do any education over there. I wrote books and poems and plays and different things. I kind of self learnt and stuff like that there. It was, only when I was extradited back in 1992 when I went into the H blocks. That was a whole new experience, this is not the Cages because the first thing I said is "What time is drill in the morning?" And they said "Drill?" I said "There will be drill", they said "No drill, there is no more drill, there is no more", there was no more kind of military lectures, and everything was geared towards first and second level education. So the education officer [from the Republican prisoners] came to me and said, "Would you be interested in Education?" and I said, "Yes", I mean I gobbled it up, so I was like doing three or four, five, GCSEs and then A Level and then he said, "Would you fancy doing OU?" I just missed it by a couple of weeks, I would have had it the year before, that's when I started 1994.