Interviewer: You were how your mother faced some abuse because her brothers were in the army.

Marion: My brothers, yes. At the start of the troubles people abused her on the street because they were in the army.

Interviewer: You* had two brothers.

Marion: She had two brothers in it, yes. My mother's own daddy and my granddad on my father's side and my great-grandfather were all in the army, so I think my brothers were following suit.

Interviewer: Did that sort of abuse carry on or-

Marion: No, it stopped. Eventually they must have just got fed up, you know, and it did stop. And my brother actually moved out when he came home from the army, he moved to live somewhere else.

Interviewer: When did you first become aware of the troubles?

Marion: I think I became aware of the troubles the night they burned the mills on the Falls. I was living on the Antrim Road. We had slept right through the night and we didn't know till we woke up when somebody said the Falls road was burning – that was the first we knew. Naturally we went over to see if our mother was alright and we saw the devastation which was awful.

Interviewer: Where did your mother live?

Marion: She lived on the Falls, she lived just off the Grosvenor road.

Interviewer: So you came over the next morning?

Marion: We came over the next morning when we heard that it was burning to see if everybody was alright and they were. But it was just the main Falls road was the worst, you know the mills. There were no houses burned I don't think, I can't remember any houses being burned. Just the bank and all the mills right up the road. It was just like walking out of a time warp into another one; it was awful.

Interviewer: You told me a story about two men driving you to Turf Lodge, do you remember that?

Marion: Oh yes, about the wee boy not being well. My wee boy had taken a very bad eye and it was really, really terrible but there was a wee bit of a... I don't know what it was to this story and there was a bus which took people down to the Royal Hospital to get blood and I went round. It was like a first aid, and I took the wee boy round – he was only about five – and they said, "look, we're taking people in a bus down to the Royal – we'll take him – you come with him" So we came with him, I came with him to the Royal and the doctor told me to leave him here and to stay with him and we'll get the hospital* to see him but the doctor that they – he was a coloured doctor – he was in doing an operation. He came out and he said, "Oh my god, what an eye" I don't know what it was but like he'd been* punched in the eye. So he gave him a cream but we waited that long on the doctor coming out of the theatre, when we got out the bus had gone. So I was standing on the Falls Road with the child and it was like a ghost town – I mean there was not one single person on that road. So, these two fellows came in a car – they were

workmen – and they said, “where are you going?” and I said, “I’m going to Turf Lodge” and they said, “get in, we’ll bring you up. We’re going up that way.” So they were going to Norfolk’s* so they dropped me off and I walked on. But about a few weeks later I brought him back to the hospital as he was to go back again and I brought him back to the hospital and it was a very strange thing because when I brought him back, they couldn’t find the doctor. I had to give a description of the doctor – there was no such doctor on that day, there was no such a doctor in theatre that day of that description and I stood and argued with her and I said, “well then who treated him? Who gave him the ointment for his eye? He definitely did get this ointment and it was a coloured doctor, a young doctor with curly hair... ” They didn’t know anything but his eye healed up after about three days. I said, “Oh my god, was that a guardian angel?”

Interviewer: And the two men who drove you up home?

Marion: Yeah, the two workmen. One was an elderly man and the other was a young fellow. They must have been working but where they were working I don’t know because it was really eerie that day.

Interviewer: What time of the day was that?

Marion: It was about five o’ clock. The road – there wasn’t a bus, there wasn’t a car, there wasn’t a taxi – nothing. And I saw the car – and I was ready, prepared to walk when they stopped and said, “Where are you going, we’ll take you.” which was very good of them.

Interviewer: So you moved across from the Antrim Road to Turf Lodge?

Marion: We moved across from the Antrim Road to Turf Lodge.

Interviewer: And when would that have been?

Marion: That would have been about 41 years ago. We were in a rented house you see in the Antrim Road and the housing executive got us a flat in Turf Lodge.

Interviewer: What was the difference between living on the Antrim Road and living in Turf Lodge?

Marion: It was a big difference – an awful big difference. The Antrim Road was quiet and you know, people were going about their business whereas when we went to Turf Lodge you couldn’t get out to the shops, there was shooting from the Springfield Road, there was shooting down into Turf Lodge. There were times, I can’t really remember, but there were times now and again there would be shooting from Turf Lodge, but mainly it was into Turf Lodge. It was the army. It definitely was the army because I went out one day to the shops and a bullet missed me – I heard it whizzing past my ear. There was a bit of a lull and my aunt lived further down. She said to me, “run now, go now” and I went to run like it was a bad thing I done because they might have thought I was a gunman, you know, it was a stupid thing I done but I heard the bullet actually whizzing past my ear – I was very lucky.

Interviewer: A frightening experience.

Marion: Oh, very frightening. It was.

Interviewer: You talked about, how it was a difficult time to raise children. One of the things you talked about a particular day [...] you talked about... when you heard the rumour, obviously you took the children in off the streets.

Marion: Yeah, every time there was a terrible amount of rumours went round – all the time – "get the children in, there's going to be a gun battle" and you know, the poor kids were more often in the house than out playing. You know, you had to try and occupy them in the house and they were wanting out – you couldn't get out to play football, you couldn't take them to the park, you were afraid to out in case you didn't get back. My wee boy was into Star Wars and we used to buy him all the Star Wars stuff just to keep him in. Now, he was very good at sitting in but the wee girl wasn't; she just constantly wanted out and it was very hard trying to keep her in.

Interviewer: What years was that? You moved into Turf Lodge about '72... So did that go on for a long time in terms of keeping the children in or was that after* a particular period in time.

Marion: No, that went on the whole time you were living there. It went on for years.

Interviewer: You also talked about a time when that kind of threat came very close to your family because I think it was the result of mistaken identity but there was a gun put to your-

Marion: Yes. That was when I was living up here on the Springfield Road. We were in bed one night. My oldest son then was about sixteen or seventeen and he had bad asthma and he couldn't sleep at night and he got up and went to the living room and our door got kicked in. There was a dissident feud and when we got down the stairs... my youngest son and daughter were just standing at the top of the stairs just looking and there was a gunman lying on his stomach on the stairs. The gunman was pointing the gun at the two wee ones. Jinky* was shouting, "Oh don't, don't, don't, you've got the wrong house." We didn't actually know at the time but there was one in the living room so whoever they were looking for probably thought he'd be lying sleeping on the settee which my son was and when one of them shouted to the other, "It's not him, it's not him; get out, get out." So they ran into the house next door and they said to the *girl, "what's your name? What's your name?" And he wouldn't give his name – he said, "It's got nothing to do with you." Then they actually put the gun to that fellows head. When we got out my son told me they put him up against the wall with the gun to the back of his head. So he could have been shot dead that night but we do know the house that they were... the way in which the houses were situated – that was the mistake; they must have been told where the houses was and because of taking the third house in one street they took the third house in the first street instead of the second street. They got the wrong street. Luckily that night nobody was hurt or injured, however the fellow next door to us was ready to explode, he wanted to go after them, which was a stupid thing and a temper like he'd do an awful lot but we advised him to not go after them. They had ski masks and everything on them. It was really, really frightening. After that we never had a bother of any sort like that.

Interviewer: It was a difficult time to raise children.

Marion: Yeah, you didn't want them to see that. You were trying to keep them away from that; we used to turn off the news at night if there had been a bomb or a shooting we used to just turn the news off as

we wouldn't have let them see it because we definitely did not want them involved. We just said to them to keep it off until 7 o' clock or whatever but then you had them coming into your house so you couldn't stop them from seeing that. And my wee ones, they were in shock for days – they asked, "Why did that man do that?", "what did he want?" and "who was he going to shoot? And why?" You know, kids are curious. What do you say to them? Especially when you're trying to keep them away from it.

Interviewer: You spoke a few times about rioting in the local area, there was rioting at the garage.

Marion: Oh, god. That was funny that night. There used to be rioting all the time and we got used to it, we just said, "It will be over in an hour or so – they'll get fed up and all go home to bed."

Interviewer: Where exactly was the riot?

Marion: Just about where we are now.

Interviewer: Where was the garage situated?

Marion: I think the garage would have been about where the peace wall was.

Interviewer: On this side of the road?

Marion: Yeah. On this side, there was a derelict garage at which they were all rioting one night and we were getting out to make sure none of ours... to get them all in. There was an old man who lived on his own at the other side of the road and there was this single girl who went up to make sure – I think you called him Paddy, he was a piano teacher. Paddy was alright but she got smashed up the head with a brick. So she was lying at the corner – it was so funny and it wasn't funny – she was lying at the corner and the blood was pouring out of her head so her friend decided that she would go up to see if she was alright. So she got up and she got hit and she was lying at the corner. So there were casualties on this side of the road. Then an ambulance flies up the road, collects the injured from this side of the road, puts them in the ambulance, goes over to the other side of the road, puts the injured from that side of the road into the ambulance so all the rioters go in the ambulance together. We were kicking ourselves, we were saying that that ambulance will be rocking and rolling down that road. They were beating the hell out of each other and the next thing there were all put into an ambulance and taken to the hospital. Through it all there were funny times but most of the time you were scared out of your wits – you really were scared. You didn't [...] rioting. Alright, people got injured during rioting but rioting wasn't as serious as shooting. It was the shooting you had to watch; once you heard the shooting that was it, everybody came indoors and locked themselves in.

Interviewer: The rioting was really going on outside your front door then.

Marion: Yeah, it was. It absolutely was because this area was wide open and our area was wide open so the rioting sort of ended up on the middle of the road.

Interviewer: There was no wall at that point?

Marion: There was no wall, no. Just streets and derelict buildings were shopkeepers had left.

Interviewer: Do you remember what year that would have been?

Marion: That would have been 24 years ago – '89. My son was born in '88. The riots were literally outside your front door.

Interviewer: And you had a one-year-old in the house.

Marion: We had a baby in the house, yes. One night he was in a baby walker and he actually fell down steps and he cut his head. We picked him up to bring him to the hospital and we were coming out on to the front of the road when somebody threw a brick so we turned to go down the back way and the army were coming up and they said, "is there anything wrong?" I told them that there was a wee bit of rioting up there and told them that someone just threw a brick at us. I said, "that child has already cut his head as he fell, we're taking him to the hospital." So they came up and said, "It's alright. You go on and we'll go up and sort this out." So they told us just to go on down the back and get him checked out. That was very scary too because we didn't know how badly hurt Nathan was – we needed to get him to the hospital quickly.

Interviewer: Who tended to be involved in the rioting?

Marion: Mainly fellows but there were girls too.

Interviewer: Who's rioting with whom? Is it the Protestants and Catholics or-

Marion: It was definitely the Catholics and the Protestants.

Interviewer: It wasn't with the army?

Marion: Oh, no, no, no. It was the two sides. The army might have came along and they'd have all scattered but then they'd come back again when the army went.

Interviewer: So your recollection of it was that it was pretty persistent.

Marion: Oh yeah, it was nearly every night. But with the flush were it was there, you got people running down there and thinking, "Oh these people are coming over the flush and they're going to come down and they'll be in the streets." You know, people were terrified. One night there was on really bad riot and I mean it was terrible. Everyone was shouting and panicking and squealing. I think there were a couple of houses wrecked that night. It was awful. It was nearly like being in the heart of the troubles again because everybody was out in their pyjamas and slippers screaming and shouting, "get the police, get the army, get the papers." I don't think anybody slept the rest of that night. To be honest with you that peace wall was a godsend, at the time, because it kept the same sides apart and you got a night's sleep.

Interviewer: When did it start to go up then?

Marion: I remember them building it but I can't remember the year.

Interviewer: But it was after Nathan was born anyway.

Marion: Yes, it was after Nathan was born.

Interviewer: How do you think you coped all the way through the troubles?

Marion: I don't know. I don't know how anybody coped. I often say that even now, "How did we cope?" and if it ever, God forbid, should happen again, should we ever cope again? I don't think I could because I keep saying if anything like that ever happened again I wouldn't be here; I'd get out. When you're younger you can sort of make your way through it but I think as you get older you just don't want that. I don't think anybody wants that for at the time it was bad enough. It's when you've young children, you're afraid for them. It would be my grandchildren who I would worry about. I know Nathan's very sensible but it would be the younger grandchildren – the teenagers, it would them. But in saying that, it wouldn't be the troubles now you have to worry about. It's fellows from within the community – among each other. I think now Protestant and Catholic are starting to come together, which is a good thing, I can see a lot of friendships being made through... but it's coming now from within our own community.

Interviewer: You spoke about remembering some rioting down in Lanark way...

Marion: Oh yes, the protesting. We were only nine months in the street when my youngest son witnessed a shooting – a fellow was shot dead at the top of our* street. He was actually in the garden when the fellow was shot dead. So the people decided to get out and block Lanark way because they said they took that route to escape and there was rioting down there and one side was coming out because the Catholics were in Lanark way with placards and whatever. One fellow actually got knocked down; a car sped up and hit him, so that started a full-scale riot. It was quite bad there too. Then things seemed to settle again, you know, it was bad what happened to the fellow in our street but-

Interviewer: What was the name of the guy?

Marion: John Judge.

Interviewer: Was it his kid's birthday party?

Marion: Birthday party, yes. My wee boy had been at the birthday party – he was twelve, he and his friend. It was a terrible night because we didn't have the railings on the top of our walls at the time and my wall, my wall just went straight round and Jacky* was sitting on the wall with his back out towards the Springfield Road and there was a mini-series on and I called him in and I said, "I'm going to make a cup of tea so if you want to watch this mini-series come on in." It was a beautiful night and both doors were lying open and he lay down on the settee to watch this mini-series and the next thing we heard was the shooting. So I ran out and when I was in the hall and he grabbed me by the back of the neck and pulled me in. We stood behind a glass panel and we saw three guys come running down the street after two other fellows who were with John Judge. They got into a car at our door and away they went. But as soon as they went, we ran up the street and my wee girl who was about 14 at the time, she said, "daddy, there's somebody lying here." He had worked in a hospital and he had done a first aid course and approached the man to check how badly injured he was but he said, "no, he's dead. He's definitely dead." It was awful; his brains were lying beside him. They shot him in the back of the head. My wee boy

couldn't be found be found for half an hour and when the police came, we went up and I said, "my wee boy was in that garden* and we can't find him."

Interviewer: He was at the party?

Marion: He was at the party. What happened was, when they saw the car coming they pulled on masks. My wee boy said to his wee friend, "there's a sneak* attack." He told me afterwards that he thought it was the IRA coming into kneecap somebody. They all ran in and locked my son out but he was crafty enough to run round the side of the house and lie on his stomach and he witnessed the whole killing so when they went away the detective came down with him and he asked, "is this your wee boy here?" and we said, "Yes. Where was he?" he replied, "Well, he's in shock here. He was lying round the side of the house and from what he's told us we need to interview him" and I said, "Well, you'll not be interviewing him tonight because look at the state he's in." My wee lad – he's 34 now – and he has never ever got over that. He used to wake up screaming that there was a man with a gun at the window looking in at him. Then he was running back and forward giving statements and then we had to go as we were all involved. The whole street was involved and it was terrible at that time too – for that girl and her three kids too. A lot of people moved out. If you had have seen the people who moved out of that street following that; there were about eight families that moved out. But we said, why should we move out? We had got good houses; we had lived in dumps for years and we had got good houses and we said, "No, we're not going to move."

Interviewer: There were obviously very high levels of fear. **

Marion: Oh, very. Everybody was watching everybody and no matter what stranger came into the street, you were in with your door locked, looking out to see who they were looking for; you were afraid to open the door. The housing executive actually put in peepholes so you could see anybody who came to your door.

Interviewer: But they didn't close Lanark Way.

Marion: They didn't close it, no. It was only later I think they put the gates on because there was a lot of protesting and people fighting to get the gates up or locking them up at a certain time of night to use it as a getaway. [...] They never wanted the gates up originally but with the protesting going on and that fellow being shot; they had to put the gates on. I know it's awkward for the people because there are good people living on this side of the road but it was just a choice of closing these people off or someone getting shot. Which is the better option? I do feel sorry for the people here because if there is a fire or if there's a medical emergency it is a detour for them. It's not fair for them.

Interviewer: When Lanark way opened up, was the wall already there?

Marion: I think it was, yeah. I can't remember that far back but I'm near sure it was. I think both of them were done together.

Interviewer: You were saying that one of the ways that people coped was the humour of the situation... almost like a survival technique.

Marion: Yes, that's what it was. It was to make the best of what's happening; you just went along and tried to live normally. It was only when something happened like a bomb attack that the fear really hit you, other than that you were trying to live as normally as you could. You were doing your shopping, you were going to the schools – honestly I don't know how people survived it. [...] Looking back now, you don't know how you did it.

Interviewer: Are there any particular moments that kind of stand out for you as more light-hearted?

Marion: There are a few things. I think people then stuck together more than people now; they would have helped each other out. Now that it has sort of calmed down, people are living different lives and they don't want to know. I said to Jackie yesterday, "Wait 'till I tell you something; people have changed since the troubles." And honestly, I don't care what anybody says, there're people who've lived with mental illnesses from it. You can see it in people's attitude and in the way they get on. I think some people aren't coping too well without the troubles. For all those years you were living a certain way and you may say, overnight it stopped. So people had to change their whole attitude. If, God forbid, the troubles crept up again, I wouldn't be here.

Interviewer: When we were in the big group, some of the women were remembering the excitement of the soldiers first arriving and going to discos and stuff with the soldiers. I think you said you knew lots of girls who had been with the soldiers.

Marion: Oh, yes. I know about five from around our area who had babies to soldiers and I remember one girl who later on became a neighbour of mine and her daddy actually went down to Albert Street Barracks and put a poster up saying, "Please do not let this girl into the disco" – his daughter. She said that she was raging at her daddy. But at the end of the day they're human beings, you know, they're like you and I, only they're wearing a uniform.

Interviewer: So, some of these girls actually ended up marrying and living with the soldiers?

Marion: Oh, yeah. I know one girl – my friend's sister married a soldier and they went to England to live, which was a very wise thing to do. She has a daughter now who is now a model. Her daughter is absolutely beautiful. She came home with her baby to her sister's wedding. You know, it was when things were starting to sort of stand down. She stayed away until things did calm down and then she came home for her sister's wedding.

Interviewer: I suppose when you think about it, I don't know if it was like this or not, the peculiar thing was that when the soldiers first arrived, they tended to be welcomed by the Roman Catholic community so you can understand young soldiers, girls, you know.

Marion: Yes, going with the soldiers.

Interviewer: Yeah, whatever way it works out. But then of course, in a relatively short period of time the soldiers became unwelcome...

Marion: Yeah, they became the enemy.

Interviewer: ...So that makes it difficult for girls caught up in that...

Marion: That situation. Yeah, they became targets too, then. I met one woman – a soldier was shot and was dying – and she went out and put a pillow under his head and a blanket round him and she held him till the ambulance came and that woman never got peace to live, but never gave in. You know, she held her own and she lived in her house – she's still in it. She ignored them when they shouted at her. One day I heard her turn around and say, "Well, at least I'm a Christian and not like you; I'm not an animal." No matter what your feelings, how could you walk past somebody who was hurt? You couldn't do it. She was in the shop one day and she said, "It could have been my son. That's the way I look at it; it could have been my son."

Interviewer: This is just a small thing, but you mentioned something about soldiers barracked in Beal Feirste* school?

Marion: Yeah, just up the road here. I think that where that Owenvale home now. There were soldiers up there.

Interviewer: And what did you call the school?

Marion: Vera Foster. In fact I think it might have been a wee bit further back – Vera Foster. I know there was a billet* up there – they were nearly all over the place – everywhere you went you saw soldiers billeted in the Springfield Road.

Interviewer: I remember seeing a photograph of a lookout post at the corner of Kashmir Road.

Marion: Yes, Kashmir Road. They took over – it was a doctor's house, a large old house – and they took that over too.

Interviewer: So you were living surrounded by soldiers.

Marion: Yeah, we were surrounded by them.

Interviewer: What effect did that have for everyday life?

Marion: If you were to pass them, there was nothing said – no words spoken. Now people might have given them a dirty look or whatever but there was no real animosity. To be quite honest, then you were not so much afraid when you were about because you knew they wouldn't have let anything happen to you. You know, you sort of felt a wee bit secure that way because there's an army post there and you thought, I'll be alright walking down that road. I don't know about anybody else but I felt more secure.

Interviewer: You were also saying to me when you were in Turf Lodge, they were the ones shooting in at you?

Marion: Yeah, they were. Now I don't know if people in Turf Lodge were shooting out but I just remember that particular day when they fired in. My aunt's cousin was shot dead by them on interment day. He was shot up in the field that day. But then you got caught up in it too because when you heard

that somebody has been shot dead, you think to yourself, “Oh my God, they’re bad; they shouldn’t be doing that.” You did feel hatred but then it wore off again, you know, you say to yourself, “Well, they’re fighting a war. He was an innocent victim but they were fighting a war.” And I believe innocent victims were the worst off because they weren’t doing anything; the gunmen had guns in their hands, these people hadn’t. That’s why you felt angry because they’re shooting innocent people and these other people who are running around with the guns are getting away with it. Even now, you get these punishment beatings and people beating each other up and these dissidents who are walking about with guns... nobody seems to be interested in them.

Interviewer: Overall, how do you feel things are now for you, in terms of life?

Marion: Brilliant. You’ve more freedom, you can do what you want, you can go where you want – I actually think you can speak out more. I mean, if we were downstairs and someone said something, you wouldn’t get offended, you know, maybe a protestant woman says something, you join in, you see. You can say, “Oh, that’s right” or “Do you know what happened on our side?” or, “Do you know what’s happening now?” We’re all in agreement that these men are making money out of all this and we’re the people who are taking the hassle of it all. Honestly I think that now, things are brilliant.

Interviewer: That’s not a bad note to end on.

Marion: Honestly, I sometimes say to myself, I know I’ve lived through it and all but I think it has taught us to appreciate more – appreciate life now as it is, you know, our kids are grown up now and they have kids of their own. During the troubles you didn’t have time to appreciate your children as you were always saying to them, “Get you in”, “Get you up the stairs”, “Don’t you be going out”, “Where did he go?”, “Where did she go?”, etc. You were sort of hounding your kids then, where now the kids have that wee bit of freedom and if they are out late you’re not worried so much. We have a wee grandson who comes to stay, he comes in at 10:30, but if he’s five minutes late it used to be, “Oh my God, where is he?” where now you’re saying to yourself, he’ll be alright – he’s held up and you can relax. Back then if he had been five minutes late you would’ve been ringing the hospitals but that’s all gone now. We’re a bit happier. Even walking to work in the dark nights... we used to come up in a gang, you would say, and nobody would have attacked us because I was the youngest and the rest were in their sixties and if anything would have happened... I remember getting out of work early one night-

Interviewer: Where were you working?

Marion: In the Royal. I said, “Can I get home early? I need to get home.” And she said, “Certainly. You go.” She let me go and a bomb went off at Springfield Road Barracks. It went off just as I had hit* my own house. The next night I went in she said, “Do you know something?” and I said, “What?” and she replied, “My heart was in my mouth last night.” I asked why and she replied, “If I had been caught on letting you leave early” to which I replied, “never mind that I could have been blown to bits!” [Laughter] We laughed that night about that. But that was the sort of thing you did laugh about. That was the risk you took – if I had have waited ten or fifteen minutes I could have been caught up in that. I’ve had lucky escapes. I think that applies to everybody. People come and say to you “Wait ‘till you hear what

happened to me; I was nearly shot" or, "I was nearly blew up" or, "I was hurt." But you don't have that fear now; that fear's gone.

Interviewer: So when you were leaving, often you would stay together in a gang.*

Marion: Oh yeah. We all worked in different places but they used to open the gate at 9:00 and let us all out. We used to meet up and stand at 8:55 and then anyone who worked round here – we all walked up together. I was always the last to leave because the rest all live further down. I used to walk up cut through one of the streets and come up the back. I never ever walked the front.

Interviewer: Because that was like an interface.

Marion: That was like an interface, yeah, and you don't know what... a riot could have started at the drop of a hat. They locked the gate up and opened it at 9:00.

Interviewer: They locked it up just for security.

Marion: For security reasons, yeah. There were two ways in but the main one was the Falls Road entrance. So many people came out of there and got their taxis up the road or walked up.

Interviewer: And you would have come round and walked up the Springfield?

Marion: Yes. Honestly, it was like pensioner's convention; all hobbling up the road. And then a girl who worked in the Royal moved up beside me, which was better for me because then I had company the whole way up. Many a night she and I ran that road. If we had have heard a noise it was like fire coming out of our heels. But thank God it's all away now. It's all gone.