Almost exactly fifty years ago, an illegal Civil Rights march in Londonderry in Northern Ireland was broken up by the local police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Hitherto, Northern Ireland, although a constituent part of the UK kingdom, was an unknown quantity for most British people, who knew or cared little about its endemic sectarian problems, and its one-sided and discriminatory system of government. Had the march taken place in 1958 rather than 1968, it very likely would have remained only an item of local interest and controversy. However, the presence in 1968 of three television crews, who recorded what transpired, meant that the problems of the Province were cruelly exposed, leading to a spiral of violence known as ‘the Troubles’ which would cost the lives of some 3,600 people in the succeeding decades.


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The article then examines the extent of RTÉ television news coverage of the affairs of Northern Ireland, and assesses the content of this coverage as well as the editorial priority afforded to this story, before turning finally to a short review of viewership levels and reactions among the Irish television audience. At the end of the 1980s, the relationship between the Irish state and RTÉ vis-à-vis news broadcasting was determined by the Broadcasting Authority Act (1981). Alongside the requirement to report news in an objective and impartial manner, RTÉ was (as now) prohibited from broadcasting ‘anything which may reasonably be regarded as being likely to promote, or incite to crime or as tending to undermine the authority of the state.’ The capital of Northern Ireland is Belfast. Northern Ireland population is approximately 55% Protestants which they are the majority and 45% Catholics. This country is divided depending on the religious and political lines. The term used in Ireland and the United Kingdom to describe this conflict was the Troubles. This term was to describe the violence of 1919-1923 (Encarta). But after the Friday agreements the conflict stopped on 1 March 1999. The death of Mark’s was broadcasting in the televisions and newspapers but he does not need all these things to remember this awful tragedy. Mark’s anger started to become bigger and bigger with time even it’s stared to pulling him down into despair and hopelessness.