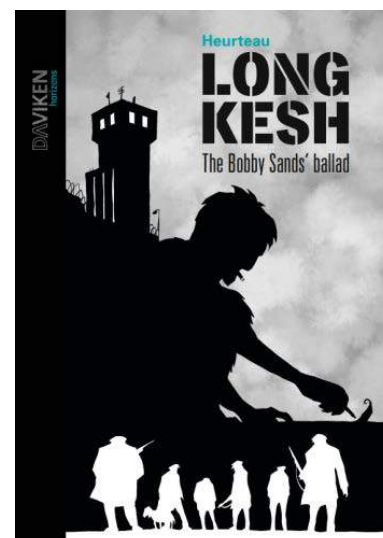


# Long Kesh, The Bobby Sands' ballad

Type : Polar  
Tranche d'âge : over 13 years old  
Illustrations : Black and White and shade of grey  
Format : A4  
number of pages : 160  
Reliure : Intégra

ISBN : 978-2-492707-02-5  
Price : 29,70€ TTC



## Stéphane HEURTEAU

Audidact, he started at the age of 15 in a printing house as a designer/model maker, from 1982 to 1988. Then, he worked in an agency as a graphic designer and illustrator until 2000. At the same time, he developed his own comic book and obtained his first publications in Sapristi from 1993.

It was in 2001 that his first work, *La Balade de Gwen*, was published by Éditions Terre de neige. Prolific author and recognized watercolorist, passionate about Brittany, Scotland and Ireland, enlightened cinema expert, he works as a freelance illustrator for communications while continuing his work as a comic strip artist and giving courses in Nantes. Currently, he is exhibiting his series of illustrations "Bretagne 2870", dystopic portraits of Breton towns and sites, inspired by the world of Tampa (two self-published albums).

## AN INSIDE COMIC-INVESTIGATION

### Keywords:

Ireland, Bobby Sands, IRA, Thatcher, jail, political status, fight for civil right

### Summary

In September 1977, in Northern Ireland, Bobby Sands, an IRA Militant, was sentenced to 14 years in prison for illegally possessing firearms. He was imprisoned at The Maze detention centre, better known as Long Kesh. This is where a battle for rights and dignity starts leading him to a dramatic 66-days hunger strike.

### More than a relaunch, a grasp taking homage

With *Long Kesh*, Heurteau offers a demanding cartoon report, a truly immersive experience inside a prison environment. A lesson of courage, humanity and freedom to the extreme that still powerfully resonates 40 years later.

This special edition is :

- introduced by Sam Millar (*On the brinks*, *The bespoke hitman*, *Bloodstorm*, *A darkness of bones*)
- an only 200 copies first printing.

This work of fiction was inspired by the events  
that took place in Long Kesh between 1976 et 1981.

The text on pages 77, 78, 79 is a poem by Bobby Sands  
which was put to music by Brendan Mc Farlane, titled *Sad Song for Susan*.

Stéphane Heurteau

# P R O L O G U E

Bobby Sands died on hunger strike after 66 days in the notorious British gulags called the H-Blocks. Nine more of his comrades died shortly after that. Bobby and hundreds of other political prisoners had been fighting for political status prior to the hunger strikes. They came to be known worldwide as the Blanket Men because they were naked, and only permitted to wear one coarse *blanket* which caused rashes and irritation to the skin.

I am proud to say I was one of the Blanket Men, and regarded Bobby as a great friend and comrade. We were in adjacent cells for many years and shared our love of books and storytelling. I and my comrades were beaten and tortured every day by sadistic screws, be it physical, psychological or sexual. The British Government gave the screws *carte blanche* to torture us as much as possible, and were highly rewarded for doing so. No visits of our families were permitted. No books or writing material were allowed. Nothing but an empty cell. The so-called « food » was nothing better than animal swill. I personally lost almost half my body weight by the time I was released. My family did not recognise me and cried when they saw the state of my health, how badly I had deteriorated.

When I was finally released from the H-Blocks I had been detained for 10 years as a political prisoner. I travelled the world, and eventually became a writer. I wrote of my experience as a political prisoner in my bestselling memoir, *On The Brinks*, which was critically-acclaimed around the world and received numerous literary awards.

Many books, graphic novels and films have been made about the H-Blocks and the Hunger Strikers. Some have been well-made, such as *Hunger* by Steve McQueen, while others have fallen short of describing the sheer horror of the H-Blocks. None of them really touched on the torture of the prisoners and the nightmare we endured.

However, that has all changed with Stéphane Heurteau's monumental work.

When I first saw Stéphane Heurteau's harrowing illustrations of Bobby Sands, the Hunger Strikes, and the Blanket Protest, I was overcome with many emotions and flashbacks. It is a powerful and *bona fide* work, not just of art, but of history. It is a book that needs to be read by all who want to understand the horrors and injustice of the H-Blocks, the torture of naked and defenceless political prisoners and the unconquerable spirit of the Hunger Strikers.

**Sam Millar**

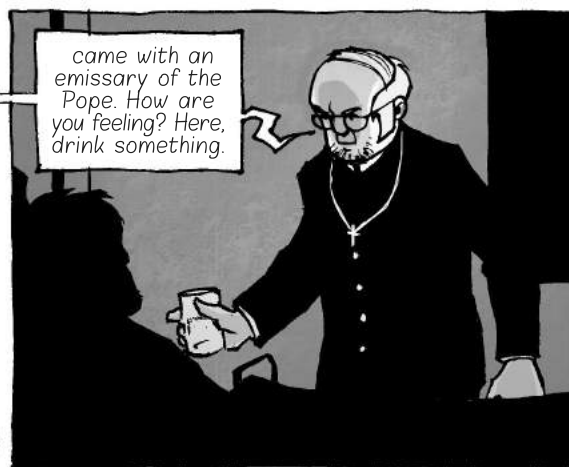
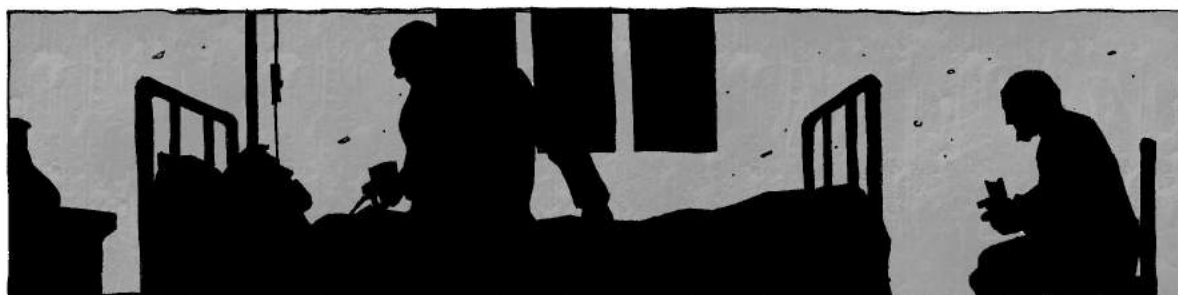
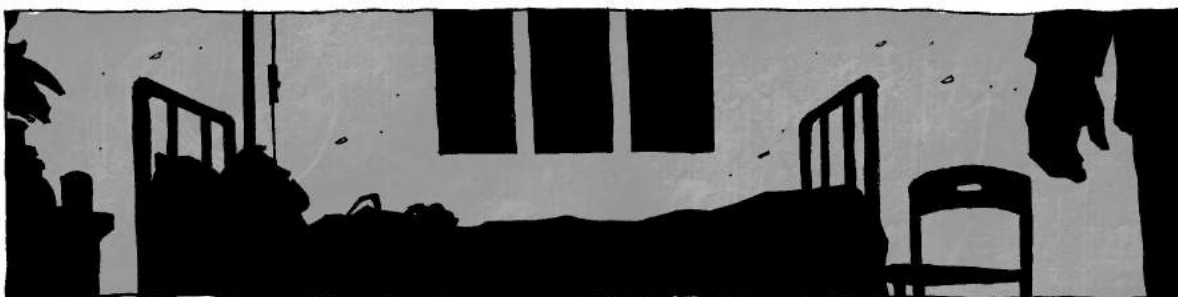
author and Bobby's teammate,  
*On The Brinks*.

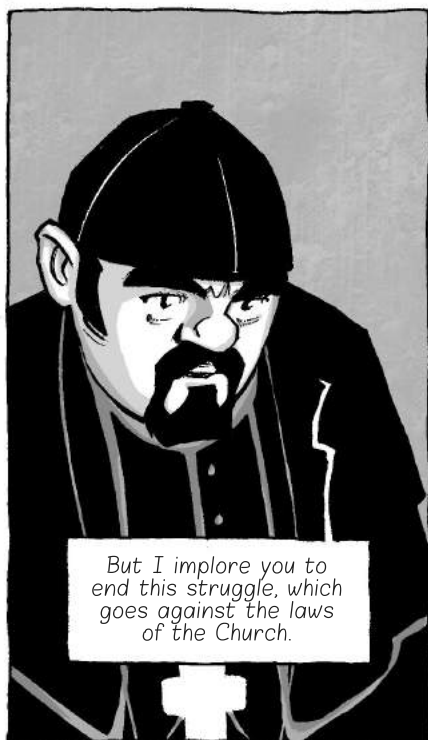
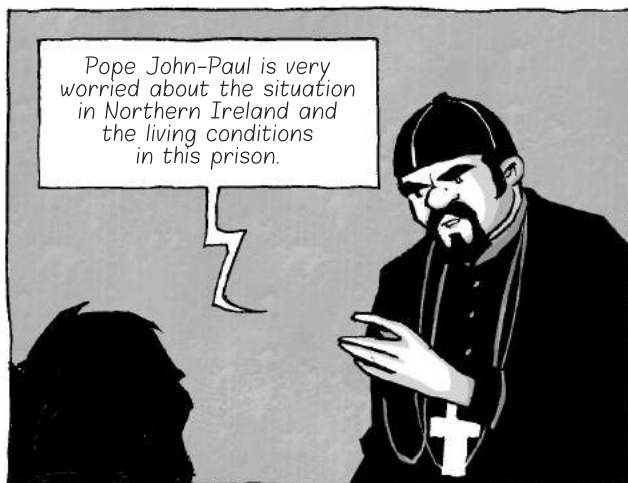


**Our revenge will be the laughter of our children.**

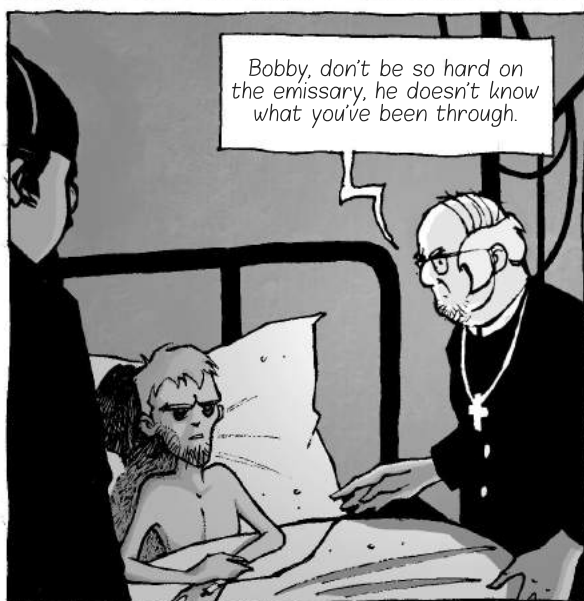


Bobby Sands



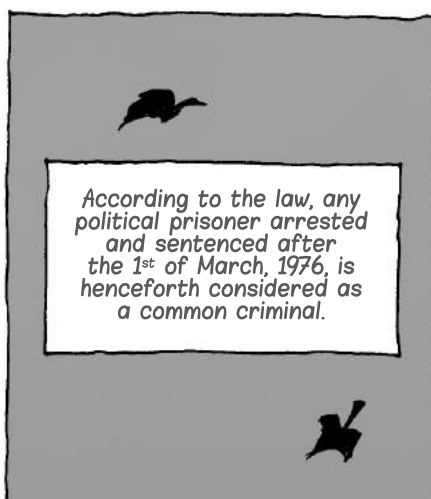


*This combat is real. But I'd like to understand something : we've been fighting for a long time and you're getting involved just now. Is it only because you consider our protest a suicide, which goes against our religious principles, or is it my new status that incites you to show any interest in our struggle?*





*According to the law, any political prisoner arrested and sentenced after the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 1976, is henceforth considered as a common criminal.*



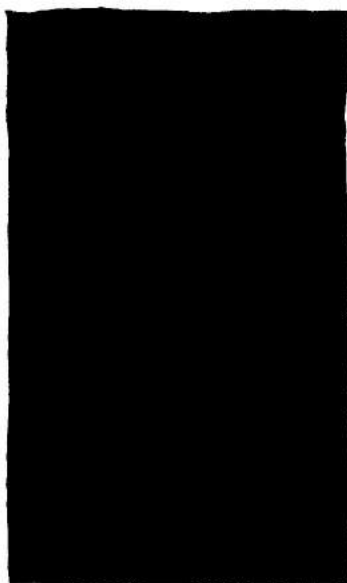
*Bobby Sands, for illegal possession of a weapon, you are sentenced to 14 years of prison.*



*You will serve your sentence at Her Majesty's Maze Prison in the H-Blocks.*



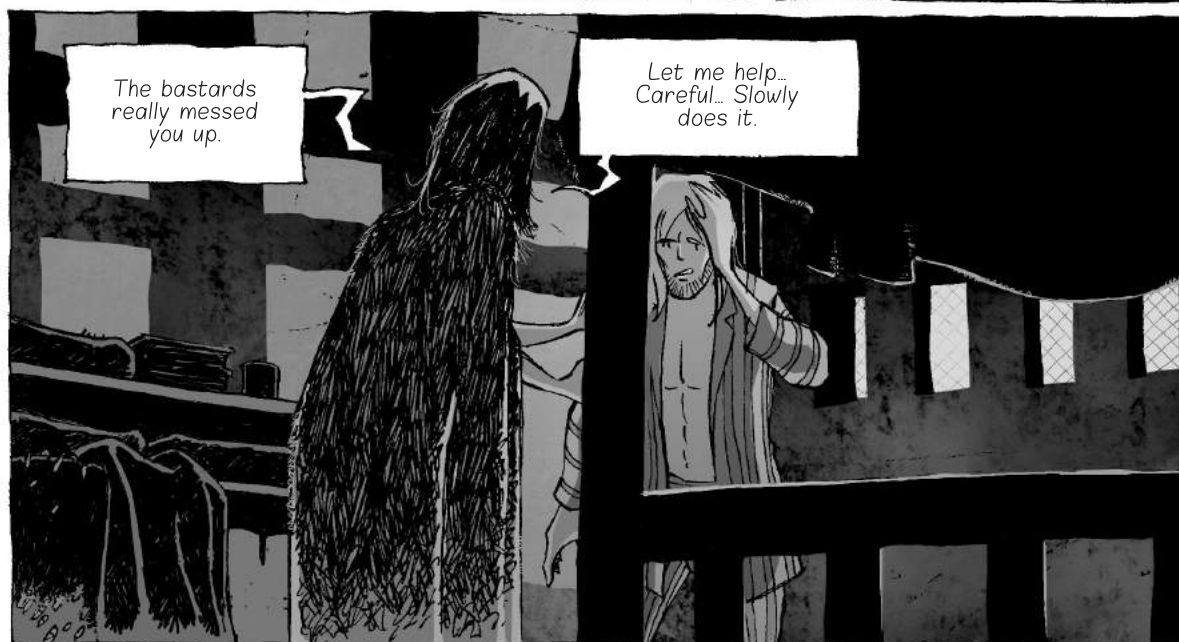




Ar... ye... 'right?



Are you alright?



The bastards  
really messed  
you up.

Let me help...  
Careful... Slowly  
does it.



These here are the  
H-Blocks. I'm Sam  
Millar. And you?



Bobby Sands.



Well, there's a story about  
you and your trial. They say  
that with other defendants,  
you stood in front of  
the judge naked.

