

NORTH AMERIKAY



# North Amerikay

a limited series

by

ELIZABETH DWYER

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WGA #1929336

Chicago  
1915 - 1921

# NORTH AMERIKAY

Written by Elizabeth Dwyer

Pilot for a 9-Episode Limited Series / Historical Drama / Script Stage

**Logline:** After a harrowing loss, a young Irish Catholic woman adjusts to life in 1915 Chicago. Her family's grief, the call of women's suffrage, and her closest friend's unwed pregnancy are the least of Bernadette Daley's worries when a compelling Black man moves into her home and her heart.

**Chicago, 1915 - 1921:** A wave of Irish immigrants converges with the Great Migration, when formerly enslaved Black people and their families fled the violence and brutality of 'neo-slavery' in the south. These were the two most prominent communities filling and building the city of Chicago. Racial tensions ran high, leading to the race riots of 1919. Conversely, historical records show there were neighborhoods that offered a tenuous safe haven, where interracial relationships were supported and harbored. During this pivotal time, the Irish were compelled to make a choice: embrace the destructive prejudice of White supremacy, thereby sparing themselves as victims of it, or stand in solidarity with their Black neighbors and continue to count themselves among the persecuted.

**Part One: 1915 |** Haunted by images of life back in Glenarm, Ireland, Bernadette Daley (17) obsessively attends confession at her new parish, regardless of any actual sins. Her visions - both waking and in her dreams - feature rolling green hills and a smiling, red-haired, 11-year-old girl. Bernadette's reality offers only the grays and browns of burgeoning industrialism, sprouting up around McDermott House, where she now lives with her family.

Bernadette's parents, Mary and Seamus Daley, uprooted their lives to help Mary's widowed sister-in-law, Mary Brigid, run the boardinghouse her late husband left behind. A pall hangs over the Daley family, as the youngest child Maud was tragically killed in a fire, and those who survived her grapple with their anguish. Bernadette's older brother Barra (18) feels only a heightened fervor to drive the British out of Ireland; the now-youngest sibling James (15) retreats into himself and his fantasy books. Mary joins her only living daughter in fervent prayer and churchgoing, while Seamus now callously shuns the God he once faithfully served. Mary Brigid is scandalized when Mary hires a new cook, Anton Leroux (19), and his sister Ruby Honore (14), Black siblings recently arrived in the city after a lengthy, exhausting journey from New Orleans. The connection between Bernadette and Anton is immediate, palpable, and categorically forbidden. In Anton's presence, Bernadette feels a rare respite from her painful memories of Maud.

Desperate for a purpose to fill the void left by Maud's death, Seamus gets in too deep with the labor movement, putting himself in harm's way. Barra has an affair with Lucy McAllister (16), Bernadette's dear friend and the McDermott House maid, and they accidentally conceive a child. Through Lucy, Bernadette discovers her passion for women's suffrage and her distaste for the rampant racial division of the movement. When Mary presents Bernadette with an "appropriate" (white, Catholic) suitor, she's determined to like him for her mother's sake, but it's her feelings for Anton that grow stronger. Lucy is forced to retreat to a Magdalene home for the duration of her pregnancy, after which she will give up the child for adoption. With the help of their Aunt Mary Brigid, Barra and James plan a return to Ireland to join the growing uprising against the British. As James forges a friendship with Ruby, he confesses that he's reluctant to leave Chicago. Plagued by visions of her sister, Bernadette steals away one night to finally offer a genuine sin at confession, where she reveals that she was responsible for Maud's death.

**Writer's Note:** My name is Elizabeth Maud, and this story was inspired by my great-grandmother, Maud Elizabeth. In early twentieth century Chicago, Irish Catholic women did not leave their husbands. A wife's duty was to family and church, and so whatever her hardships, she endured. Unless she was Maud Elizabeth MacAllister, known to me as Gram. A fiercely devout woman, Gram nonetheless flouted the edicts of religion when her daughter Rita was only three years old. Defying convention and her faith, mother and child fled Gram's marital home, retreating to her family's boardinghouse. As Maud Elizabeth's namesake, her story has always captivated me. In light of her fervent Catholicism, I believe that only if she felt her daughter's life was at stake would she be driven to such a drastic, uncharacteristic choice. And so I began to turn Maud into Bernadette, and to do my best to honor her by telling her story - a story of loss, bravery, and audacious love.

**Contests:** *Development Grant Recipient – Stowe Story Labs; Finalist (Top 8) – ISA Fast Track Fellowship; Finalist – WeScreenplay Diverse Voices; Second Rounder – Austin Film Festival*

**Comps:** THE KNICK | DOWNTON ABBEY | PEAKY BLINDERS

[elizabeth.maud@gmail.com](mailto:elizabeth.maud@gmail.com) | +1 505.400.8121

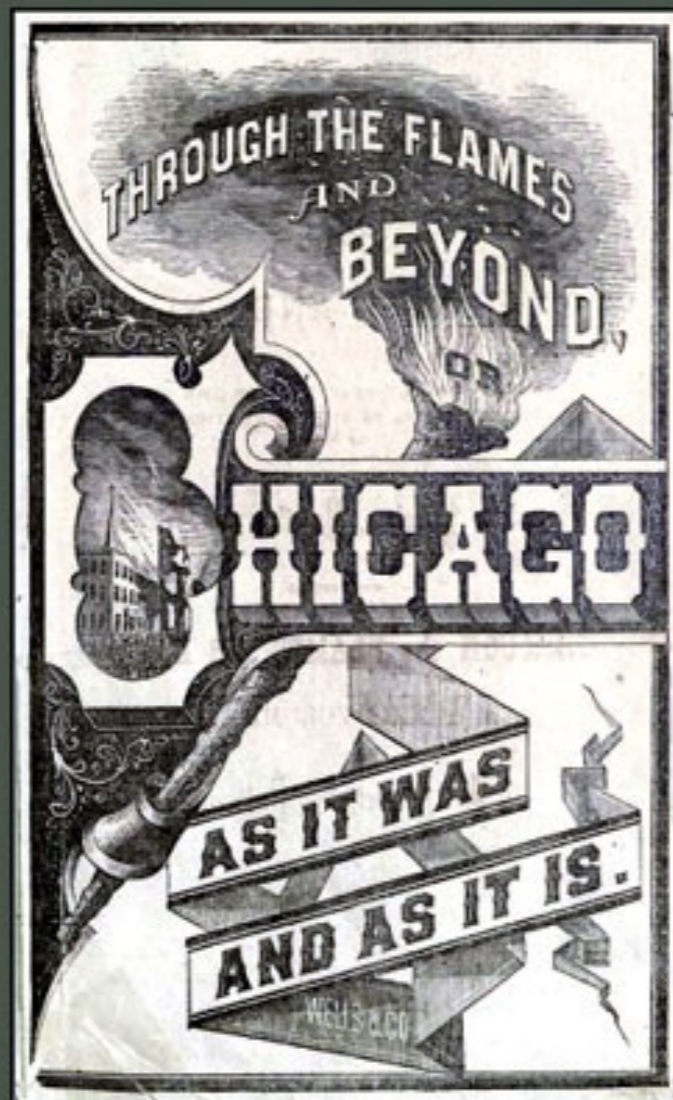


The McAllisters, Chicago, 1910s  
Maud Elizabeth, bottom left



Maud Elizabeth McAllister  
Grade 8 graduation





THE LOST CITY!  
 —OR—  
 DRAMA OF THE FIRE-FIEND'  
 —OR—  
 CHICAGO,  
 AS IT WAS, AND AS IT IS!  
 AND ITS  
*Glorious Future!*

A VIVID AND TRUTHFUL PICTURE OF ALL OF INTEREST CONNECTED WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF CHICAGO AND THE TERRIBLE FIRES OF THE GREAT NORTH-WEST.

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BY FRANK LUZERNE,  
 A RESIDENT OF CHICAGO FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, AND AN EYE WITNESS OF THE TERRIBLE CONFLAGRATION.

All intelligent persons that witnessed the burning of Chicago are prepared to testify that nothing is more indescribable than a great conflagration. Nothing is more bewildering, exciting, electrifying, astounding and weirdly stupendous. It is a spectacle that forces into activity all the emotions of the heart, but benumbs judgement and disconcerts action. Its waves and barbed tongues, rolling and darting hither and thither, spangled with phosphoric tints, and gleaming against the sky like a surging sea of flame, lashing the shores of the world, and seeking to overwhelm them; or, again, roaring, dancing, and frolicking through block after block of elegant structures, warehouses, residences and factories, sweeping everything in its torrid pathway with the rapidity of thought,

"As though the lightnings there had spent their shafts,  
 And left the fragments glittering on the field;"

are sights that petrify the intellect and strangle reflection.





**POBLACHT NA H EIREANN.**  
**THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT**  
**OF THE**  
**IRISH REPUBLIC**  
**TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.**

**IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN:** In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty: six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God. Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government,

THOMAS J. CLARKE,

SEAN Mac DIARMADA, THOMAS MacDONAGH,

P. H. PEARSE, EAMONN CEANNT,

JAMES CONNOLLY. JOSEPH PLUNKETT

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Photograph by Burke & Atwell. Courtesy of The Survey

Immigrant Girls Coming to Work in the Early Morning at  
the Union Stockyards



Photograph by Townsend. Courtesy of The Survey

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**IRISH**

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**NOT**

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**APPLY**



C.J. Taylor

THE MORTAR OF ASSIMILATION — AND THE ONE ELEMENT THAT WON'T MIX.





