

Ian Bailey: Victim or Villain?

Also:

How Israel failed to learn from the Northern Ireland peace process

Actress Sondra Locke: Blackballed Even in Death

Plus lots more

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Going Forward: A New Challenge

The Covid-19 pandemic has taken its toll on us, like it has on many other magazines, organisations and businesses globally.

Unfortunately we are faced with a landscape that has irreversibly changed since the Big Issue first hit the streets in 1995. To meet this challenge Ireland's Big Issue must also change.

We have reluctantly decided, albeit with a heavy heart, to host the magazine digitally only for the foreseeable future.

From now on, Ireland's Big Issue will focus our support on the Irish Homeless Street Leagues. This volunteer-driven, non-profit has been using the power of sport to transform the lives of men and women who've found themselves affected by social exclusion all across Ireland - north and south. By continuing to support the magazine online you'll be helping to develop resilient individuals and stronger communities, connecting people and promoting equality and diversity, inspiring and motivating those affected by social issues.

We will also be adjusting the content to reflect the times we live in whilst endeavoring to provide an informative and enjoyable read.

We thank you for your support to date and ask that you continue to help us. As there is no charge for Ireland's Big Issue we do need your support to continue highlighting the issues that impact our lives and bring you a truthful, balanced view of what is happening in our world.

For as little as a cup of coffee (€3) you can subscribe.



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Letter to my Younger Self - Naina Kumar

Each issue we ask an interesting person to write a letter to their 16-year-old self. This issue, Naina Kumar (31), a lawyer by day and romance novelist by night takes on the challenge.

At sixteen, I was reading novels under my desk in class and writing poetry whenever I could, but I somehow convinced myself that these were just things I did for fun. I told myself that writing was not something I wanted to pursue seriously. That it wasn't real or important enough. Not like becoming a doctor (like my parents wanted me to be) or a lawyer (not quite as good as becoming a doctor in my parents' eyes, but something they would have settled for). At sixteen, I was researching universities, thinking about my future career, and narrowing down the list of places I wanted to apply to. I searched once for schools that had strong creative writing programs, but remember quickly shutting down that idea. I couldn't imagine writing full-time as a profession. At that time, I didn't even realise it was possible.

If I could go back in time, I wouldn't tell my sixteen-year-old self that she needed to do anything differently. I wouldn't tell her that she had to go to school to study writing, or that she shouldn't end up becoming a lawyer. But I would tell my sixteen-year-old self to take the things she loves seriously. I would

tell her that she is allowed to take them seriously. That her love for reading and writing isn't less important than her other interests. That she could pursue it as a career, if she wanted to, but that what really matters is that it brings her joy, and that alone makes it important enough.



And I'd tell her that life is long and that we get to constantly reinvent ourselves. That the decisions we make aren't set in stone, and that the stakes are not as high as she thinks they are. That she's young, and she doesn't need to be so worried about the future. That she doesn't need to feel all of this pressure to get everything right, to do everything perfectly. That it's okay if she ends up making a mistake, or if she goes down one path for a while before realising it's not the right one for her. She can always turn around, try something different, try something new.

I'd tell her that life is long and that we get to constantly reinvent ourselves.

I'd tell her that her introversion isn't something to be ashamed of. That it isn't something she needs to defeat. That her quiet manner, the way she retreats in public, the space and boundaries she draws for herself, that all of those things are gifts. That it's just the way her brain works, and she doesn't need to twist and contort herself into something else. She doesn't need to try to be someone else. I'd tell her that the way she quietly

observes others and the world around her will inform her craft, and that the hours she spends hiding away with a book are never a waste. That all of those moments will shape her, not just as a writer, but as a person.

I'd tell her that some of her social anxiety will get better with time.

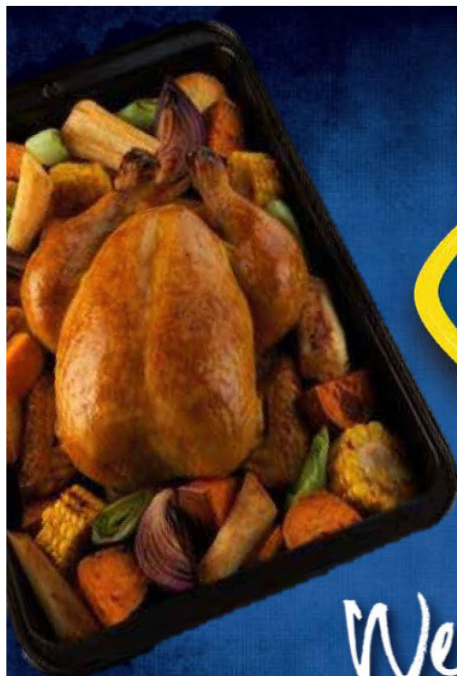
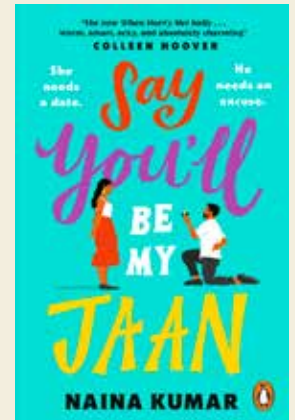
That her confidence will grow as she leans into the things she loves, as she grows and learns how to share those things with others.

I'd tell her there are so many stories she hasn't read yet, so many worlds she has yet to fall in love with, so many characters she has yet to meet. I'd tell her that there's so much to look forward to. That so far, every year of our life has been better than the one before it. And that there are so many wonderful things still to come. So many more stories to read, so many more stories to write. And I'd tell her that it's okay if this all sounds like a lot. That it's okay if she doesn't figure it all out for a while, because she will eventually.

One day, maybe after she goes to law school and spends a few years working as an attorney, she'll rediscover her love for writing. At twenty-nine she might try, for the first time, to write a novel. And at thirty-one she might just get to celebrate the release of that book out into the world.

**some of
her social anxiety will get better
with time.**

Say You'll Be My Jaan by Naina Kumar, published by Penguin is available now from all good bookshops & online from 18th January 2024, priced £8.99



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Ian Bailey - *Victim or Villain*

Editor Sean Kavanagh spent many hours talking to Mr. Bailey in 2021 and persuaded him to tell us in his own words his story.

Since the horrific murder of Sophie Toscan du Plantier in 1996 much has been written about Ian Bailey, although questioned by the Gardaí at the time, he was never charged in Ireland with this crime.

The Director of Public Prosecutions, in a 44-page analysis, tore apart the Gardaí case against him and criticised Gardaí misbehaviour in the investigation. The DPP report also suggested that Gardaí deliberately created a climate of fear in the area by spreading scare stories to locals and media, creating an atmosphere in which witnesses became more suggestible.

Mr. Bailey was accused of seeking and loving publicity, but it could also be argued that he was taking every

opportunity to highlight his innocence and defend

himself; he did not run away.

What did we know about Mr. Bailey beyond what was written in the media and chatrooms? I thought long and hard before offering him the opportunity to speak in his own words about his life and the events of 23rd December 1996 that put him in the spotlight and shaped the course of his life since. Mr. Bailey agreed to our request, he could have given his story to any number of media outlets and received a handsome payment. He made it clear he

was not interested in any payment and chose Ireland's Big Issue magazine because he felt he would get a fair hearing. Mr. Bailey also agreed to answer any questions we put to him on conclusion of his story, which he did in

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Ian Bailey

In my own words

New Digital Edition

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insp International Network of Street Papers

Back on the Streets

a forthright manner without hesitation.

Obviously because the series of articles ran over 4 issues and thousands of words it is not practicable to reproduce it here, he did however in that series address many, if not all the issues pertaining to the case.

I will endeavour to give some context to his story.

It begins

“In late 1996 I returned to full-time self employment as a freelance reporter. By the end of the year my career as a journalist was flourishing. I had regular work coming in from daily and Sunday papers when on Monday 23rd December at 1.40pm the phone rang. It was Eddie Cassidy of the Cork Examiner; he informed me of an incident, the discovery of the body of a woman in suspicious circumstances in Toormore and asked me to go there. As an experienced freelance journalist, it’s the sort of information that gets your adrenaline running. I asked Jules, my partner to get her camera and accompany me to the scene. Little did I know then that taking that call and following my professional journalist’s instinct would alter the course of my life irrevocably.”

For whatever reason - lack of suspects, his familiarity with the crime (naturally, he was reporting on it), a past incident of domestic violence, his perceived arrogance and some light scratches on his arm (easily explained) all seemed to contribute to a tunnel vision approach by the Gardaí that put Ian Bailey firmly in their sights.

The only problem was the lack of tangible evidence. Gardaí noted a cut on his forehead and scratches on

his arms. There was no DNA however linking him to the gruesome murder scene. His alibi held firm and perjury was committed by a witness who said she had been coerced by the Gardaí into placing Bailey near the murder scene on the night.



Sophie Toscan du Plantier

Bailey explained the so-called evidence.

“In the days leading up to that phone call I was busy preparing for the seasonal festivities. I dispatched three feathered beasts. In the process of doing so I received a light scratch to my head from one of the talons. I wore an old pair of rugby shorts for the

job on the basis that it’s almost impossible to kill and bleed turkeys without a bit of blood getting displaced. The shorts were to be subsequently soaked in water and bleach in a bucket in the bathroom.”

.. my career as a journalist was flourishing. I had regular work coming in from daily and Sunday papers when on Monday the 23rd Dec 1.40 pm the phone rang.

Some 24-years-later when a three-part Netflix documentary was aired around the world it was alleged he soaked his coat in the bucket to destroy evidence, but he was videoed wearing the coat the next day (following the murder), also the witness, in a subsequent statement said she never saw a coat, just something dark in a bucket).

“After that I went down to the Studio House with Saffy (Jules daughter) intent on topping a Sitka Spruce which would become a Christmas tree in the cottage. I climbed the thirty-foot tree bare armed with an old bowsaw and set about cutting the top five feet off. Saffy was with me throughout. The saw blade had known better days and I struggled a bit but after managing to get a cut I dragged

the top down through the lower branches, in the process of which I got a few light scratch marks on my arms. At that moment I had no idea how controversial the scratches would become.”

incorrect and his wife Geraldine said in her statement that if James did say Monday he made a mistake - that it was the following day Tuesday that this conversation took place.

That was something not mentioned on Netflix.

What do you have to say about accusations levelled at you in the Netflix series?

“Although I did not watch the Netflix production I was made aware of certain passages, which most shockingly contained a number of downright lies. The ones that stood out referred to my long black coat which I had worn at the Christmas Day swim in Schull and two totally false statements, the first made by the retired Chief Superintendent, the Kerry-born Dermot Jerimiah Dwyer.

Dwyer wasn't telling the truth when he said I had burned the coat in a fire on St. Stephen's Day at the Studio House. His false statement was exposed by the fact that when I had obtained a schedule of items taken from The Prairy on the first arrest in February 1997, the first item listed was my long black coat.

In the Netflix docudrama James Camier, who died in 1998 stated to the Gardaí that he met Jules Thomas on Monday, December 23rd 1996, between 11am and 11.30am and she told him you were reporting on the murder, which contradicts what you & Jules said in evidence – that you only learned of the murder at 1.40pm. What would you say to that?

That happened on the Tuesday, his statement was



With his then long-term partner, the Welsh-born artist, Jules Thomas

The Netflix documentary was a self-serving, demonising propaganda piece, partly produce by the family and was a spoiler documentary to Jim Sheridan's objective 5-part series.”

Evidence apparently showed no other DNA apart from Sophie's -

something very unusual in a violent crime. What are your thoughts on that?

“Well actually I think that is technically untrue, as I believe a sample of male DNA was found on her shoe.”

... they did succeed in getting me framed in France where statements which, had long been withdrawn or rejected, were read into evidence.

Was it enough to get a profile?

“Well it didn't match mine, it clearly wasn't my DNA.”

Do you think guards were involved in a fit-up?

“They were involved in trying to frame me for a crime I had nothing to do with, they failed to frame me in Ireland as the so-called evidence was five times rejected by the DPP but they did succeed in getting me framed in France where statements which, had long been withdrawn or rejected, were read into evidence.

How do you feel about Marie Farrell who recanted her statement, which was pivotal to placing you near the scene of the murder?

“Well the Garda convinced her I was the murderer, they told her I was a very dangerous and strange man

who performed poetry readings with dancing naked lesbians at Barleycove Beach under a full moon. They manufactured her statement to suit a false narrative.”

Ian, why have you (allegedly) confessed to the murder several times?

“No no no. On that point I think the best reference is in the DPPs 2001 critique, where Robert Sheehan refers to my alleged informal admissions, where he said clearly it was an example of Bailey’s dark humour and sense of irony, they were not confessions.”



Ian's health deteriorated

What do you think might have happened the night that resulted in Sophie's death?

“No idea at all, but looking through the forensics the contents of her stomach reveal some muesli; she could well of had breakfast before being disturbed.”

It was fruit and nuts apparently. A common evening snack with wine, especially for a French person.

“I also saw in the crime scene photos of a knife stuck halfway through a loaf of bread. That could indicate she was in the middle of making something, also in the statement the first guards on the scene indicated that the blood on her body wasn't congealed.”

Indicting that her death may have been later that suspected?

Sophie said she was going to Ireland to meet with a writer about a poetry project, given that you are a poet and live not too far away you can see why people believe it was you.

“I don't know anything about that. I was never introduced to her, never met her, didn't know who she was or had any conversation with her.”

Her neighbour said that you met her.

“In a statement in 1997 he said he was 90% sure I had met her at some point; that was untrue. At the time he was facing a charge for growing a large amount of a certain plant which was illegal.”

Are you intimating that he could have been compromised and thus made that statement to the gardai?

“He could very well of been, it happened with Marie Farrell.”

... a
mystery blue car which was seen speeding away from the direction of the crime scene at around 7.30 am on the morning of her murder

“I think it could indicate that it was around 7am; that ties with a sighting of a mystery blue car which was seen speeding away from the direction of the crime scene at around 7.30 am on the morning of her murder.”

Who do you think may have played a part in her death?

“Don't know; her estranged husband - I was told by French journalists at the time - was in financial difficulties and a costly divorce was on the horizon. He didn't come to Ireland with the rest of the family to identify the body, which many thought was strange. I was also informed by a detective garda that a substantial insurance settlement was coming his way. The guards were not allowed to properly interview him at the time.”

Ian, you refer to Sophie as “the victim” a lot, which language analysts determine is a way of distancing oneself from a crime if they are

guilty; what do you say to that?

“I have no comment to make on that, clearly she was a victim and clearly there are other victims, like the family and I would say Jules, our families and myself.”

What would you say to Sophie’s family, the public and the Gardaí?

“I’m totally sympathetic to Sophie’s family, but I had nothing to do with the cause of their suffering. I think it’s just the saddest, saddest tragedy.

“I know there are people here in Ireland who know I have nothing to do with it and wish they had the courage to come out and acknowledge that I was the innocent party who was cast in a false narrative.”

What would you say to the Gardaí?

“Just to have the courage to admit the truth and acknowledge it wasn’t me.”

Ian Bailey died on January 20th, a shadow of the man who arrived in Ireland in 1992.

Did he murder Sophie Toscan du Plantier? There is no evidence to say he did. What we do know is that the Gardaí failed to do a proper and professional investigation. They are now conducting a cold case review. Hopefully this will be thorough and professional and expose the person responsible for Sophie’s murder. The truth is out there.

Could the answer lie in France?

Jim Sheridan who made the Sky documentary series ‘Murder at the Cottage’ believes so.

Investigating leads in Paris, the award-winning director believes he has identified the person who was seen

following Sophie in Schull, West Cork, on the day before her death.

Sophie’s husband, Daniel Toscan du Plantier, who died in 2001 is understood to have known the man.

Jim Sheridan believes the answer to the murder lies in

France, “I never thought he (Bailey) did it”

A new episode of Sheridan’s Sky documentary, ‘Murder at the Cottage,’ is expected to feature the French connection and will include a death-bed

interview with Bailey filmed in Bantry Hospital.

(It may be up to a year before it is screened but the original series, ‘Murder at the Cottage’ is currently on NOW TV.)



“I was the innocent party who was cast in a false narrative.”



Eternal Love:

Exploring the Stories of Famous Lovers in History

Ahead of St. Valentine’s Day, Sineád Dunlop explores the narratives of some of the world’s most famous lovers, celebrating the enduring power of love across different cultures and epochs.

Love, in all its forms, has been a perennial source of inspiration, heartache, and fascination throughout human history. Some of the most enduring tales of romance involve famous lovers whose stories have transcended time and continue to captivate our hearts. From legendary figures, historical couples and current lovers, these love stories offer glimpses into the depths of human emotion, passion, and resilience.



Leonardo DiCaprio & Claire Danes portray Romeo & Juliet

the couple’s untimely deaths ultimately lead to the reconciliation of their warring clans. The enduring popularity of “Romeo and Juliet” underscores the

timeless allure of forbidden love and the tragic consequences that can arise from familial and societal discord.

Michael Collins & Kitty Kiernan

We all adore a good love story - especially around Valentine’s Day (is this why there’s so many romcoms in the cinema in February?) Let’s look at some of our favourites, which include some home-grown lovers.

Michael Collins was a key figure in our country’s struggle for independence in the early 20th century. He was romantically involved with Kitty Kiernan, and their letters to each other have been preserved.

Unfortunately, their love story was cut short when Collins was assassinated in 1922 during the Irish Civil War.

Romeo and Juliet

Perhaps the most iconic love story of all time, William Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet” remains a testament to the intensity and tragedy of young love. Set in Verona, Italy, in the 16th century, the tale follows the ill-fated romance between Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet, members of feuding families. Their love defies societal norms, and

“Romeo and Juliet” remains a testament to the intensity and tragedy of young love.

Cleopatra and Mark Antony

In ancient Egypt, the love affair between Queen Cleopatra and Roman General Mark Antony is a tale

of power, passion, and political intrigue. United by a shared ambition to create a Mediterranean empire, their love story unfolded against the backdrop of a changing political landscape. Despite their formidable alliance, their union faced opposition from Rome, leading to the famous Battle of Actium in 31 BCE. Tragically, Antony and Cleopatra took their own lives rather than face defeat and capture. Their love story has inspired countless works of literature, art, and film, cementing their places as one of history's most iconic couples.

Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal

The Taj Mahal, one of the most magnificent architectural wonders in the world, stands as a testament to the enduring love between Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan and his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal. Married in 1612, Mumtaz was Shah Jahan's favourite wife, accompanying him on his military campaigns and bearing him 14 children. Tragically, Mumtaz died during childbirth in 1631. Devastated by grief, Shah Jahan commissioned the construction of the Taj Mahal as a mausoleum for his beloved wife. The white marble monument, completed in

1653, remains a symbol of undying love and has become a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Napoleon and Josephine

The love story between Napoleon Bonaparte and Josephine de Beauharnais is a tale of passion, ambition, and political upheaval. Despite the challenges posed by their disparate backgrounds—Napoleon, a military general, and Josephine, a

widow with connections to the French aristocracy—their love endured. Napoleon's rise to power as Emperor of the French did little to diminish the intensity of their relationship.

However, political pressures and Josephine's inability to produce a male heir led to their separation and eventual divorce in 1809. Despite their parting, Napoleon's love for Josephine remained evident in his

letters, and her name was reportedly his last word on his deathbed in 1821.

Pierce Brosnan and Keely Shaye Smith

Pierce Brosnan, the Navan born actor best known for playing James Bond, has been married to American journalist



Pierce Brosnan and Keely Shaye Smith

“When Keely looks at me, I go weak. I love her vitality, her passion. She has this strength that I wouldn't be able to live without.”



Napoleon and Josephine

and author Keely Shaye Smith since 2001. Their long-lasting relationship and public appearances together have made them a well-known and admired couple. In modern parlance, Pierce and Keely have nailed #relationshipgoals with Brosnan (always the smoothie) stating a few years back [in Closer magazine] “When Keely looks at me, I go weak. I love her vitality, her passion. She has this strength that I wouldn’t be able to live without.” Last year on Keely’s 60th birthday he presented his “brown eyed girl” with sixty red roses and has exclaimed how he loves “growing old with you in a spiritual way... watching you change In whatever form that takes....Our love is from the heart.”



Devastated by grief, Shah Jahan commissioned the construction of the Taj Mahal as a mausoleum for his beloved wife.

exchanges. Elizabeth, an invalid living under the strict control of her father, found solace in her correspondence with fellow poet Robert. The two poets fell deeply in love, and despite the objections of Elizabeth’s father, they eloped in 1846. Their marriage was marked by creativity, mutual admiration, and a shared devotion to each

other’s work. Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s famous sonnet sequence, “Sonnets from the Portuguese,” captures the depth of their love and has since become a classic expression of romantic devotion.

The stories of famous lovers

in history serve as timeless reminders of the profound impact of love on the human experience. Whether tragic or triumphant, these narratives resonate across cultures and centuries, reflecting the universal nature of love’s joys and sorrows. From the poignant tragedies of Romeo and Juliet to the enduring legacy of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal, these tales continue to inspire art,

Lancelot and Guinevere

The Arthurian legend is replete with tales of chivalry, betrayal, and, of course, forbidden love. The love triangle involving King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, and Sir Lancelot is one of the most enduring and tragic stories in medieval literature. Lancelot, the noble and valiant knight of the Round Table, falls deeply in love with Queen Guinevere. Their clandestine affair leads to a series of events that ultimately contribute to the downfall of Camelot. The tale explores the complexities of love, honour, and loyalty, leaving an indelible mark on the literary and cultural landscape.

As we delve into these historical love stories, we gain a deeper appreciation for the human capacity to love, sacrifice, and seek connection

literature, and popular culture, inviting us to reflect on the complexities and enduring power of love in all its forms. As we delve into these historical love stories, we gain a deeper appreciation for the human capacity to love, sacrifice, and seek connection—a testament to the timeless and universal nature of the human heart.

human heart.

Wishing everyone a Happy Valentine’s Day! Whatever you are up to, be sure to enjoy. I love the quote by Dr. Seuss,

“You know you’re in love when you can’t fall asleep because reality is finally better than your dreams.”

I wish that for all of you!

Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning

In the 19th century, the love story between poets Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning unfolded through a series of passionate letters and poetic



How Israel Failed to Learn from the Northern Ireland Peace Process

They have to do what the negotiating teams, of which I was a part, did in Northern Ireland. Colin John Irwin (Research Fellow, Department of Politics, University of Liverpool).

There is no peace in the Middle East because there is no effective peace process. This isn't because the Palestinians

and Israelis do not

know how to make peace.

They do. The Good Friday agreement which brought peace to Northern Ireland a quarter of a century ago, provided

a clear guide. They have to do what the negotiating teams, of which I was a part, did in Northern Ireland.

The problem is Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and his ally, the United States of America, who have failed to apply the lessons of Northern Ireland to Middle East peacemaking.

To fully understand the tragedy this represents, it's necessary to go back in time to the negotiations that achieved the Good Friday agreement in 1997. At the time I was working, together with two other Northern Ireland-based academics, Fred Boal and Tom Hadden, developing a range of public

polls to gauge opinion about how to achieve peace.



As the principal investigator on the Peace Building and Public Policy in Northern Ireland project – independent of government and funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation – my role was to develop relations with all the parties to the Northern

Ireland peace process and act as an informal negotiator and manager of public opinion and public diplomacy.

The public was kept informed through reports and articles in the local newspaper, the Belfast Telegraph. It was key to the process that people of all shades of political opinion were not only involved, but were fully informed at all times.

The problem is Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and his ally, the United States of America

Critically, all the parties to the conflict in Northern Ireland were democratically elected to participate in the peace negotiations there, including the Irish Republican Army represented by Sinn Féin, and the Ulster Volunteer Force and Ulster Freedom Fighters represented by their political leaderships, the

Progressive Unionist Party and Ulster Democratic Party respectively.

In all, I had to work with eight political parties negotiating and agreeing questions for public opinion polls designed to resolve issues in the formal negotiations that had yet to be settled.

How ‘peace polls’ work

These “peace polls” were unlike “partisan polls” designed to underline the public’s support for a particular policy favoured by one party or another (most commonly a government). Instead, the polls – which I developed with a partner from each of the eight political parties elected to the formal negotiations

– aimed to fairly and objectively measure the public’s support, from both sides, for every possible policy option across the political spectrum. The objective was to determine the precise points of common ground, where they existed, or effective compromise where it was needed for peacemaking.

Public opinion polls are an American invention and, fortunately for me, Bill Clinton’s special envoy to Northern Ireland and the “talks” chairman, Senator George Mitchell, took the polls very seriously and gave me every possible support.

When the British offered to run the polling project for the parties, the parties rebelled and insisted on working with me with funding from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. So I always made a point of hand delivering the reports to Mitchell and the parties the day before they



were published. And each time the polling reports were published, deals got done until we reached an agreement that we knew could pass a referendum, which was eventually held on May 22 1998.

The legitimacy of the Good Friday agreement was ensured by the full democratic participation of all the parties to the agreement and the people of Northern Ireland. Through public opinion polls the people gained a seat at the negotiating table, and through a referendum the deal was made. Tragically, the peoples of Israel and Palestine have been prevented from learning and applying these same peace lessons to the resolution of their conflict.

When it all went wrong

...the one key interlocutor who refused to meet with me in December 2008 was Netanyahu

In January 2009, the newly elected US president, Barack Obama, appointed Mitchell as his special envoy for Middle East peace, in the hope he could bring the success of the Good Friday agreement peace process to Israel and Palestine. Expecting Obama to appoint Mitchell to this post following his successful election in 2008, I was invited to run a peace poll in Israel and Palestine.

I was flown to Washington in June 2009 along with my Israeli and Palestinian polling team. Presentations were arranged for us in the US House of Representatives and Senate, and various thinktanks to brief all the politicians and experts with an interest in Middle East peace.

I had been in touch with Mitchell and met him in his office at the State Department. At that time I had also

been running peace polls in Sri Lanka with support from the Norwegians. They were a generous and reliable funder and had indicated they would be willing to support my work in Israel and Palestine if Mitchell wanted them to.

Mitchell welcomed the Norwegian offer, arrangements were made to take it up, but it all fell through – my gut feel was that the State Department wanted to have control of the research to meet their own agenda. So I did not get the funding and Mitchell eventually resigned his post without achieving peace in May 2011.

Of course, it can be argued that even if I had brought the lessons of the Northern

Ireland peace process to Israel and Palestine I would have failed. But I had made all necessary preparations and contacts with all the parties to the conflict to make it work. I knew what I was doing – as did Mitchell when he accepted his appointment from Obama.

Over a period of two months of interviews to develop the questionnaire in November and December 2008 I had private meetings with all the relevant stakeholders including the then Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, and president, Shimon Peres, on the Israeli side. My pollster Mina Zemach was a good friend of Peres and had been his pollster when he led the Labour party.

On the Palestinian side, the non-governmental organisation organising the project, OneVoice, had close connections with Fatah, the political party founded by Yassir Arafat and others in the 1950s, which was at that stage dominant within the Palestinian Authority. So I arranged to meet with Hamas via an introduction from Ghassan Khatib, an independent Palestinian politician and director of the Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre.

Speaking with Hamas was like speaking with Sinn Féin. They had an extreme negotiating position but that is all it was: a negotiating position. Like Sinn Féin they had a legitimate grievance and said they would be happy to cooperate with the peace polls. Of course the impact of the Hamas attack of October 7 and Israel's assault on Gaza has profoundly reshaped public opinion on all sides.

Colin Irwin



Violence on both sides of the Troubles that continued even as the talks were progressing meant that at times many thought we would never achieve a peace agreement in Northern Ireland. But such tragedies can either doom negotiations or inspire renewed effort. People have a choice. We carried on.

Significantly, the one key

interlocutor who refused to meet with me in December 2008 was Netanyahu. He only consented to send his chief of staff. Zemach said this was because he would refuse to compromise on sharing Jerusalem as part of any peace agreement. And when he became Israel's prime minister in March 2009 he also refused to include Hamas in any peace negotiations.

Israel and Palestine are not alone in their cycles of violence and grief.

My experience told me that excluding Sinn Féin and the other paramilitary organisations from peace negotiations in Northern Ireland had only brought failure, while their inclusion had enabled the peace settlement.

Other parties essential to the success of the Northern Ireland peace process had been the centre Alliance Party and Women's Coalition.

The politically equivalent party in Israel was Meretz, a left-wing socialist party and strong supporter of the Peace Now movement. When I met with them, like Alliance, they told me they would be pleased to be part

of a fully inclusive peace process but they were excluded from negotiations as they were not part of Netanyahu's coalition government.

The establishment in Washington did not have a problem with my contacts with Hamas. In 2009, I had also been working on a project in Sudan with the US Institute of Peace. Although Hamas was a proscribed terrorist organisation, the Institute for Peace lawyers said it was OK for me to meet and talk with them providing I did not give them any assistance. They advised me "not to even buy them a coffee". I took this advice. Hamas provided the coffee.



But without inclusive negotiations that also drew on the public's desire for an end to the bloodshed, peace was not achieved.

In 2013, when I was in New York for meetings at the UN I took the opportunity to visit Mitchell at his law office and asked him why he had resigned. He said it was because he was not getting sufficient support from the State Department. I had planned to reveal this in a book I was writing. But a trusted colleague and friend advised me against it, as it could reflect badly on the former secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, when she was campaigning to be president in the run-up to the 2016 election.

Accordingly, I watered down the quote to saying something about the lack of sufficient support in Washington. It was not untrue, but it was not the whole truth.

Misplaced optimism

In my optimism at the time, I thought perhaps that Clinton – if she became president – would send her husband to the Middle East as her special envoy. Bill Clinton had got very close to making an agreement some years earlier with the "Clinton parameters", but he

ran out of time. And then Hillary Clinton lost the 2016 election to Donald Trump – and so we are where we are.

It is just as likely that my optimism was misplaced and that Clinton and possibly Joe Biden – who has always been a very strong supporter of Israel – did not want to oppose Netanyahu for domestic political reasons.

When the Good Friday agreement was struck 25 years ago, both Mitchell and I thought Israel and Palestine would be our next challenge. But Al Gore, who we had hoped might set his sights on a peace deal, lost to Bush and then 9/11 happened, and the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq took all the political oxygen out of peacemaking.

All over the world the lessons of the Northern Ireland peace process are ignored.

Then, 15 years ago, we thought it would happen when Obama was elected. It should have. Another opportunity may well arrive when the present war is over, the Hamas' attack on October 7 and Israel's response have raised the stakes for peace considerably. Elections in the US, Israel and Palestine may also put the peace process on hold yet again. But this must not prevent people of goodwill from talking peace. And it can work, history tells us as much.

Sadly, Israel and Palestine are not alone in their cycles of violence and grief. All over the world the lessons of the Northern Ireland peace process are ignored. Frozen conflicts remain frozen at best and with increased frequency become unstable and violent. Over centuries, the cost of war has often been measured in "blood and treasure". It's fair to say that since 2009 in the Middle East and elsewhere we've seen "blood" in thousands of lives lost and "treasure" in billions of dollars wasted, again and again.

Colin John Irwin
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*Congratulations & best wishes to all
participants in the Irish Homeless Street Leagues*

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Homeless World 2024



Seoul, South Korea to host Homeless World Cup 2024.

The Homeless World Cup Foundation and The Big Issue South Korea recently announced that the 2024 Homeless World Cup will take place in Seoul, South Korea, the first time the Homeless World Cup has been held in Asia since the tournament was introduced in 2003.

The Seoul 2024 Homeless World Cup, is set to take place across 8-days in South Korea's capital city, marking a significant milestone in the Homeless World Cup's 20-year history and promises to be a once in a lifetime moment for everyone involved. It will be held at Hanyang University in Seoul and matches will be played at the University Stadium on campus from Saturday 21st Sept – Saturday 28th September 2024.

Nearly 70 Homeless World Cup Member Countries will welcome this exciting announcement across the globe.

The Homeless World Cup is a world class-sporting spectacle, which has the power to change the lives of participants and shape attitudes towards the global issue of homelessness, using the universal language of football.

Advanced discussions are also in place for the 2025 and 2026 Homeless World Cups after the tournament made an emphatic return last July at the 2023 Sacramento Homeless World Cup, held in California's state capital - the first time the event had visited the U.S.

For the Irish players participating and representing their country in the Homeless World Cup is a significant goal to strive for and provides a motivating factor in terms of attaining a healthy lifestyle and top physical fitness and most importantly being part of a national team

dynamic. The sense of achievement that brings to a person's sense of self is often the catalyst to empower individuals to move forward and fulfil their true potential.

For the IHSL (Irish Homeless Street Leagues) the logistics of participating in Seoul, presents many challenges, not least the costs, flights, etc. in what is, an already

busy calendar in their 20th anniversary year.

“Every year since founding the Homeless Street Leagues there have been challenges of one sort or another; obviously the World Cup is our biggest outlay financially but it is necessary, the players need to have a goal to aim

for, so we will do what we have always

done - ‘our best’ to make it

happen. With the help of our many friends and supporters who see the positives that team sport has in developing

individuals who have experienced

difficulties, I believe we will be able to get there.”

So says, optimistically as ever, Sean Kavanagh (Homeless Street Leagues founder).

If you would like to support the ISHL please see www.irishhomelessstreetleagues.com



“With the help of our many friends and supporters who see the positives that team sport has in developing individuals who have experienced difficulties, I believe we will be able to get there.”



Best wishes to the Waterford team taking part in the All Ireland Street soccer finals in April

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Sondra Locke: Blackballed - Even in Death

Shaun Anthony looks at the life and career of one of Hollywood's most enigmatic stars - Sondra Locke. From her humble beginnings to relative success, this actress and director could quite possibly have progressed to much greater projects had her romantic relationship not turned sour.

Sondra Locke was born on 28th May 1944, in Shelbyville, Tennessee. Growing up in a small town, she had big dreams of making it in the entertainment industry. From an early age she displayed a natural talent for acting and a burning desire to perform. Locke truly was more than a pretty face and graduated high school as class valedictorian with a grade average of 97.72% - earning her the nickname Duchess of Studiousness.

After completing her education at Middle Tennessee State University, Sondra made her way to Los Angeles to pursue her dreams. She faced numerous rejections but always, according to friends "bounced back with a smile" and remained determined to carve out a place for herself in Hollywood. During this time, thanks to being incredibly academic,

she was able to support herself by taking bookkeeping

work for various companies. Despite obviously being stunning, classmates would later tell of her struggles to get a date as boys did not find her "date material". Sondra's perseverance attending auditions eventually paid off when she landed her first film role in "The Heart Is a Lonely



Hunter" (1968), receiving an Academy Award nomination for her portrayal of Mick Kelly.

The court case was akin to the Depp Heard trial - although this obviously happened at a different time in celebrity culture...

Continued Success in Hollywood

Following her success in "The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter" she went on to star in several films throughout the 1970s and 1980s, establishing herself as a decent actress. She showcased her range by taking on diverse

roles in movies such as “Willard” (1971), “The Outlaw Josey Wales” (1976), and “Sudden Impact” (1983). In addition to acting, Sondra also ventured into directing with films like “Ratboy” (1986) and “Impulse” (1990). Her work behind the camera, whilst not groundbreaking showed she had a deep desire to grow in her field.

Relationship with Clint Eastwood

Sondra’s relationship with Clint Eastwood was a significant aspect of her life and career.

The two first met in the mid-1970s while working together on the film “The Outlaw Josey Wales.” Their connection quickly grew into a romantic partnership that would span over a decade and they went on to collaborate on several projects,

including “Every Which Way But Loose” and its sequel, “Any Which Way You Can.” During this time, Locke not only acted alongside Eastwood but also directed her first feature film, the aforementioned “Ratboy,” with his support.

While their professional collaborations were successful, their personal relationship faced many challenges. Locke was already wed when she met Eastwood — to a homosexual sculptor by the name of Gordon Leigh Anderson, with whom she had a platonic relationship. She never divorced him and the marriage was still legal throughout her relationship with Clint, a fact which patently counted against her in their bitter legal conflict. She became a test case in America’s sexual politics debate when she sued Eastwood twice, once for palimony after their relationship acrimoniously ended, and then a second time for fraud, asserting that the project-development deal Clint later set up for her was a ruse, designed to buy off the palimony suit and resulted in no directing jobs.

Between 1990 and 1993, Warner Bros. rejected more

than 30 scripts that Locke pitched to the studio — including those for Junior (1994) and Addicted to Love (1997) — and refused to let her direct any of their in-house projects. When her contract had yielded zero directing assignments three years in, Locke became convinced the deal was a sham. She began to seek corroboration and came across incriminating printouts from Warner Bros (WB) bookkeeping records. Locke contended that the money WB pretended they were paying her came from Eastwood’s pocket and was



laundered through the operating budget of Unforgiven (1992). In June 1995 she sued him again, for fraud and breach of fiduciary duty. According to Locke’s barrister Peggy Garrity, Eastwood committed “the ultimate betrayal” by arranging the “bogus” deal as a way to keep her out of work (although in Eastwood’s

defence Locke was not tied exclusively by the deal and could have worked elsewhere). Garrity added that Eastwood had held out the allegedly counterfeit deal “like a dangled carrot” to persuade

Locke to drop the earlier palimony suit. Locke said that she “was stunned and outraged at the way I had been tricked and cheated a second time.”

According to Locke’s barrister Peggy Garrity, Eastwood committed “the ultimate betrayal” by arranging the “bogus” deal...

The court case was akin to the Depp Heard trial - although this obviously happened at a different time in celebrity culture, when celebrity media consisted mainly of People and The National Enquirer magazines. There wasn’t endless coverage of the case in major newspapers or on the TV news; no lofty op-eds about its meaning. Court proceedings were not televised; her lawsuit came just before the launch of Court TV in 1991. Though Locke battled Eastwood in court for 19 months, developing breast cancer during the ordeal— Celebrity was not yet the lens through which we seem to see just about everything. And yet, the implications of the case were similar, in the sense that Locke lost her career because of it. At one point, she asked Judge Dana

Senit Henry to keep Eastwood away from their Bel-Air home “because I know him to have a terrible temper... and he has frequently been abusive to me.” But Locke’s abuse claims were not even the focus of the media coverage, nor have they stuck to Eastwood. What people seemed to care most about was the money. Locke’s daring to ask for palimony seemed to strike some as untoward and palimony itself—often wrongly depicted in those days as a way for women to fleece hard-working men—was a hot-button issue at a time of peak backlash against the women’s movement. Eastwood has denied all of these claims.

Locke’s fans believed she was the victim of mind games as her case was very similar to that of the critic Pauline Kael who was deceived into (temporarily) quitting her post at the New Yorker by Warren Beatty for a similarly unproductive production deal. There was no doubt Locke was incredibly driven so one could argue that Eastwood knew hampering her work opportunities would hurt her more than anything else he could throw her direction.

After the split, Locke claimed Eastwood forced her to have two babies aborted (because he would only use natural birth control, i.e. cycle tracking). When she obtained birth control pills she alleged he forbade her from taking them. He had then, according to Locke forced her to have tubal ligation (sterilisation) despite getting another woman pregnant twice (Jacelyn Reeves) whilst in a relationship with her. **Eastwood has denied all of these claims** and stated Locke made it very clear she never wanted children and the decision was always hers.



Sondra Locke’s acting and directing career was no doubt helped considerably by her relationship with Eastwood but she had proven herself to be a proficient actress who had a love for filmmaking, so one wonders if she suffered the detrimental effects of taking on a big star when she was viewed merely as his love interest. Her contributions to film may not blow anyone away but she does have to be applauded for never wavering from pursuing her passion for acting despite personal obstacles faced along the way - including legal controversies.

Sondra Locke, whilst not leaving behind a rich body of work has left behind an object lesson in keeping business and pleasure separate. Who knows if that three picture deal had materialised, whether this could have given her the name for herself she so desperately craved. The Locke Eastwood case should illustrate how a romantic relationship souring in Hollywood will almost always be detrimental to the smaller star.

Sadly when Sondra Locke died in 2018 at the age of 74 of cardiac arrest brought on by bone and breast cancer, cruel commenters online called her a “gold digger,” and Jezebel while some criticised The Hollywood Reporter for running an obituary that referred to her in its original headline as an “embittered ex,” and seemed to portray her as “money-grabbing.”

The year before her death, Locke spoke to Sharon Waxman in The Washington Post about her autobiography and said,

“People can say, ‘Eastwood made her famous, he gave her movies.’ He didn’t give me movies. I did a job.”

Would it have been better for Sondra Locke if she had never had a personal relationship with one of Hollywood’s biggest male stars?

Locke claimed Eastwood “doesn’t care if I live or die” before her death and said he never contacted her after her diagnosis. She bequeathed her gay husband an estimated fortune of \$20 million.

Sadly Locke’s death received no TV coverage except for a 15-second spot on ABC World News Tonight. Eastwood refused to issue a statement upon her death, as did her exes and family. Co-stars such as Richard Dreyfuss, Cicely Tyson, Louie Anderson, Sally Kellerman, Stacy Keach and Ted Neeley – all active on social media – were equally silent. On the 91st Academy Awards telecast, broadcast nearly four months after Locke died, she was omitted from the In Memoriam segment. Was she boycotted even in death?

Sadly Locke’s death received no TV coverage except for a 15-second spot on ABC World News Tonight.

While no one truly knows what goes on behind closed doors, when a relationship breaks up acrimoniously, the dirt flies. Truth often becomes a casualty, there is little doubt the controversies that surrounded the aftermath of the breakup severely damaged Locke’s career. The fact she received little support in the industry can mean one of two things Eastwood used his massive the power to influence Hollywood or Locke was not a likeable person hence the lack of any personal support.

Would it have been better for Sondra Locke if she had never had a personal relationship with one of Hollywood’s biggest male stars, who knows? That’s the chance one takes when you start dating a major name in the industry. It can either make you or break you.



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S C R E E N

S C E N E

Mea Culpa ***

**Starring: Tyler Perry, Kelly Rowlands.
Run Time: 97 mins
Streaming: Netflix
Available: From 23rd February**

The Tyler Perry cinematic universe is expanding. The latest from the prolific producer, writer and director is Mea Culpa, a new legal drama starring Kelly Rowland (The Curse of Bridge Hollow), who will also co-produce the film.

The film, which also stars Trevante Rhodes (Bruiser, Bird Box), Sean Sagar (The Gentlemen), Nick Sagar (The Princess Switch) and RonReaco Lee (Nappily Ever After), centres around a criminal defense attorney who, in the hope of becoming partner, takes on the case of an artist who may or may not have murdered his girlfriend. Mea Culpa marks Perry's fifth project for Netflix; he's currently working on Six Triple Eight, the true story about World War II's only all-Black, all-women battalion starring Kerry Washington.

The New Look **

**Starring: Juliette Binoche, Ben Mendelsohn
Run Time: 9 x 60 mins
Streaming: Apple TV+
Available: From 14th February**

This emotionally thrilling series reveals the shocking story of how fashion icon Christian Dior and his contemporaries, including Coco Chanel, Pierre Balmain and Cristóbal Balenciaga, navigated the horrors of World War II and launched modern fashion.

Not for everyone but a new season is currently in production so clearly test audiences have enjoyed it.



Don't Trust The B*** In Apartment 23 ***

Starring: Krysten Ritter, James Van Der Beek

Streaming: Disney+

Run Time: 26 x 22 mins

Available to stream: Currently

The series follows June Colburn as she moves from Indiana to New York City to pursue her dream job—until she finds out that it no longer exists. She ends up moving in with a bon vivant party girl named Chloe. Chloe keeps her apartment by inviting roommates to move in, asking for rent up front, and then behaving outrageously until they leave. June proves more difficult to dislodge than expected, and when June reverses Chloe's latest attempt to eject her in an unexpected fashion, they end up forming an unlikely friendship.

Fun and funny enough to brighten up these darker days!



One Life ****

Starring: Anthony Hopkins, Helena Bonham Carter

Streaming: At the cinema

Run Time: 110 mins.

Available to watch: Currently

One Life tells the true story of Sir Nicholas 'Nicky' Winton, a young London broker who, in the months leading up to World War II, rescued 669 predominantly Jewish children from the Nazis. Nicky visited Prague in December 1938 and found families who had fled the rise of the Nazis in Germany and Austria, living in desperate conditions with little or no shelter and food, and under threat of Nazi invasion. He immediately realised it was a race against time. How many children could he and the team rescue before the borders closed?

Fifty years later, it's 1988 and Nicky lives haunted by the fate of the children he wasn't able to bring to safety in England; always blaming himself for not doing more. It's not until a live BBC television show, 'That's Life', surprises him by introducing him to some surviving children – now adults – that he finally begins to come to terms with the guilt and grief he had carried for five decades.



Alaska Flight 1282

Why did Alaska Airlines Flight 1282 have a sealed-off emergency exit in the first place? The answer comes down to money, says Amy Fraher

The aviation industry is still in shock from a near disaster on Jan. 5, 2024, in which a 60-pound “door plug” blew out from a nearly new Boeing 737 MAX 9 in flight at 16,000 feet, leaving a gaping hole in the fuselage.

In response, the Federal Aviation Administration grounded all 737 MAX 9 planes with such plugs, and aviation authorities in other countries have followed suit.



commonly used to seal unused exits on commercial airliners. The question we need to ask is: Why wouldn't an airline use all of an aircraft's emergency exits?

Wouldn't that make passengers safer? It's all about money.

Safety isn't free

Airlines have lots of expenses. Some, such as jet fuel, are easier to calculate. Others, such as emergency exits, are more opaque to travellers.

The industry is watching closely.

A lot of news coverage has emphasised the impressive safety record of the global airline industry, particularly since an Alaska Airlines crew managed to land the plane with no fatalities. I commend the outstanding performance of airline employees, air traffic controllers and emergency responders who achieved this impressive feat.

However, as a former United Airlines pilot now lecturing in Yale University's School of Management, I believe the wrong questions are being asked about what happened on Alaska Airlines Flight 1282. As the National Transportation Safety Board and numerous news outlets have explained, door plugs are

Believe it or not, every functioning emergency exit comes at a price for an airline. Each requires routine maintenance and frequent inspections – for example, to make sure that emergency evacuation slides work properly – and flight attendants must staff emergency exits during takeoff and landing for safety reasons.

I believe the wrong questions are being asked about what happened on Alaska Airlines Flight 1282

In other words, every working exit comes with associated costs in salaries, health benefits, pension plans, training and related expenses. Sealing off an emergency exit cuts costs.

But is every one of those emergency exits crucial? From the U.S. government's perspective, not necessarily.

Why you get more emergency exits in Indonesia

In the U.S., airlines must comply with federal aviation regulations, which dictate aircraft maintenance procedures and in-flight personnel assignments – and minimum standards for emergency exits.

The issue is that Boeing sells the same airplane to different airlines with different needs.

Boeing notes that its 737 MAX 9 can carry up to 220 passengers, which, under U.S.

regulations, requires it be built with a specific number of emergency exits. This dense seating configuration is common among lower-cost global airlines such as Jakarta-based Lion Air.

However, given Americans' desire for legroom, most U.S. carriers are equipped with considerably fewer than 220 seats – and when there are fewer than 190 seats, the rules allow fewer emergency exits to be in service. The Alaska Airlines Max 9 had just 178 seats.

Under these conditions, the federal rules allow air carriers to disable these exits and plug the openings. That's precisely what happened with Alaska Airlines Flight 1282 – and how “door plug” suddenly entered the American vernacular.

Although this sort of workaround is authorized, it's unclear to me that this is in the best interest of air safety. Wouldn't it be better for the FAA to require that all exits are available for use in an emergency, regardless of aircraft seating capacity, even if it required some additional expense for airlines?

A worrying safety record

The 737 MAX is a plane of many firsts – not all of them positive.

The MAX is the latest addition to Boeing's 737 family of aircraft. The 737 family has far eclipsed all rivals as

the most popular commercial airliner ever built, with over 10,000 sold worldwide since its introduction in 1967.

Some carriers, such as Southwest Airlines in the United States and Ryanair in Ireland, fly only 737s; it's a critical element of their low-cost business strategy. By flying just one type of aircraft, these airlines significantly improve scheduling flexibility while cutting maintenance and training costs.

That's all to say that demand for the latest 737 was high. In 2017, when the FAA certified the 737 MAX safe for flight,

Boeing had already received more than 3,600 new orders from 83 customers.

But very shortly afterward, two crashes that together killed 346 people grounded the 737 MAX for nearly two years – another first as the longest airline grounding in aviation history. Destined to profit US\$12

million on the sale of each \$121 million MAX, there was significant incentive for Boeing to press on with MAX development even though it had already proved to be a dangerously problematic aircraft design.

When airplane parts and passengers' cellphones are raining from the sky, it could be a sign that the industry needs to think harder about unintended costs

In 2020, the FAA recertified the MAX as “safe for flight”; by 2023, Boeing had logged more than 7,000 total orders for the MAX, far eclipsing the sale of any other type of airliner. This fact alone ought to raise safety concerns. It may soon prove impossible to avoid flying on a 737 MAX, particularly in the U.S. domestic market. United, American, Southwest and Alaska airlines all currently fly the MAX.

When airplane parts and passengers' cellphones are raining from the sky, it could be a sign that the industry needs to think harder about unintended costs – and consequences.

**Author: Amy Fraher
Lecturer in Management, Yale University
First published in The Conversation.**



DANIEL O'CONNELL: 'THE LIBERATOR' WHO OCCASIONED A TURNING POINT IN IRISH HISTORY

Sineád Dunlop explores the life and legacy of Daniel O'Connell and explores the profound impact of his efforts on religious and political equality in Ireland.

Daniel O'Connell was born into a wealthy Roman Catholic farming family near Cahersiveen in Co. Kerry in 1775. His parents were Morgan O'Connell and Catherine O'Mullane who under the Penal Laws, had been able to retain land only through the medium of Protestant trustees and the forbearance of their Protestant neighbours, Daniel grew up during a time of great religious and political strife. He had well known family members including the poet Eibhlín Dubh Ní Chonaill, who was an aunt and Daniel Charles, Count O'Connell, an Irish Brigade officer in the service of the King of France (and twelve years as a prisoner of Napoleon), an uncle.



went to reside with him at Derrynane Abbey. Maurice a landowner, smuggler and justice of the peace made O'Connell his heir presumptive.

At this time, Catholics in Ireland didn't have access to a proper education because of Penal Laws and so Maurice sent Daniel to a local hedge school where he swiftly proved himself to be extremely academic and a thinker. As a young man, albeit one wealthier than many, he witnessed first hand the discrimination and oppression

and oppression faced by Catholics in a society dominated by the Protestant minority. His deep-rooted sense of justice led him to ponder the notion of pursuing a career in law so he could be an agent for change.

Catholics in Ireland didn't have access to a proper education because of Penal Laws...

At a young age, he was adopted by his Uncle Maurice ("hunting Cap" O'Connell), who was a very well-to-do bachelor and so Daniel

At the age of 15 Maurice sent him to France to attend the English Jesuit college of Saint-Omer. The French Revolution broke out in France whilst he was a student and he witnessed

many acts of violence. Mobs would castigate him as a “young priest” and a “little aristocrat” and so he fled his college, crossing the English Channel with the brothers John and Henry Sheares who displayed a handkerchief soaked, they claimed, in the blood of Louis XVI, the late executed king. The experience is said to have left O’Connell with a lifelong aversion to mob rule and violence.

Settled in England, Daniel decided he would study law. He completed his pupillage at The Honourable Society of Lincoln’s Inn which is one of the four Inns of Court in London. He became well-versed in the intricacies of

the law and developed a reputation for his exceptional oratory skills - prowess that would prove him to be a force to be reckoned with later.

He returned to Dublin in 1798 to complete his training as a lawyer, still holding an unwavering belief in the power of peaceful resistance and the belief he could orchestrate change in this manner.

Upon arrival, O’Connell noticed the people of the island greatly influenced by what occurred in France and the rebellion there, however, Daniel’s student days in France convinced him that violence was not the answer to our problems.

After the 1798 Rebellion, the British Government passed the Act of Union in 1801. The Act of Union abolished our parliament.

Ireland no longer had a government of its own (like NI today!) but had a shared parliament between ourselves and Britain in Westminster. This act became law on 1st January 1801. For over a century Catholics in Ireland couldn’t become Members of Parliament because of the Penal Laws - but O’Connell had an idea; he would try to win the right for Catholics to sit in parliament by peaceful means (Catholic Emancipation). When he achieved this he planned to reinstate the

Irish Parliament by overturning the Act of Union (Repeal of the Union).

So, in 1823, Daniel set up the Catholic Association with the help of a few others. The Association quickly garnered widespread support among the Catholic population, serving as a platform to voice their grievances and demand equal rights.

Huge numbers of citizens in Ireland joined the Association and paid a Penny a month to assist the campaign for Catholic Emancipation. O’Connell led a series of peaceful protests and campaigns, captivating audiences with his passionate speeches and meticulous planning.



Daniel ‘The Liberator’ O’Connell statue on O’Connell Street, Dublin

Daniel’s student days in France had convinced him that violence was not the answer to our problems.

Five years later, O'Connell stood for election in the Clare by-election where he won by large majority. When he couldn't take his seat in the British Parliament because he was Catholic, people across the land were furious - so agitated that the British Government feared another rebellion and so, the following year (1829) Catholic Emancipation was granted.

This meant that Catholics could now sit in parliament and after this, Daniel became known as The Liberator because he had 'liberated' his people from the Penal Laws.

O'Connell now turned his attention to the Repeal of the Union. In 1840, at the age of 65 he set up the Repeal

Association. He organised huge rallies, where thousands of people would gather outside to listen to his words of wisdom the rallies became known as 'Monster Meetings'. As an incredibly articulate speaker, word of mouth was great and eventually one million people attended his meeting in Tara, Co. Meath!

One of O'Connell's meetings, which was supposed to happen in Clontarf on the 8th of October, was declared illegal by the government and banned; afraid there would be violence if the meeting went ahead, he cancelled it which disappointed many people and Daniel's popularity began to decline.

In 1845 the Famine started and people were starving to death. O'Connell was 70 and in very poor health, he had a softening of the brain (Encephalomalacia). His last speech in parliament asked the Members of Parliament to do something to help his people. He travelled to Genoa in 1847, but died en route. O'Connell's last words were,

"My body to Ireland, my heart to Rome, my soul to heaven."

Memorial

After the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922, Sackville

Street was renamed in his honour. His statue (by John Henry Foley) stands at one end of the street, the figure of Charles Stewart Parnell at the other. O'Connell Streets also exist in Athlone, Clonmel, Dungarvan, Ennis, Kilkee, Limerick,

Sligo, and Waterford in memory of The Liberator.

Never Forgotten

O'Connell's commitment to justice and equality serves as a great inspiration to individuals fighting for their rights, not only in Ireland, but worldwide. The life and political career of Daniel O'Connell were instrumental in the fight for Catholic Emancipation and the pursuit of Irish independence. Through his strategic efforts and tireless advocacy, O'Connell played a pivotal role in achieving equal rights for Catholics and dismantling institutional discrimination. His journey reminds us of the importance of relentless determination, strong leadership, and unwavering commitment to our principles. His legacy continues to shape Irish identity, as he is remembered as one of the most influential political figures in our history.



O'Connell's commitment to justice and equality serves as a great inspiration to individuals fighting for their rights, not only in Ireland, but worldwide.

A LITTLE BIT OF IRISH

Phrase:	Translations:	Pronunciation:
Scriobh chugam go luath	write to me soon	skreevh coo-gum guh lu-ah
An bhfuil tu posta?	Are you married?	on wil two poe-sta
An bhfuil clann agat	Do you have a family?	on wil clon ah-gut
Gra Go Deo	Love forever	graw guh djoe
Go dte tu an cead	You live to be 100	guh day two on kade
Stad!	Stop!	stadd

Word Power

Over the next few issues we'll be attempting to increase your word power. Have a look at the words below and afterwards see if you know their meaning.

Word	Pronunciation	Answers
1. Knapsack	nap-sak	1. A canvas, nylon, or leather bag for clothes, food, and other supplies, carried on the back.
2. Obduracy	ob-doo-ruh-see	2. Stubborn; unyielding.
3. Raucous	raucous	3. Harsh; strident; grating
4. Logorrhea	law-guh-ree-uh	4. Pathologically incoherent, repetitious speech.
5. Largess	lar gess	5. Generous bestowal of gifts
6. Forbearance	fawr-bair-uhns	6. Refraining from something.
7. Spurious	spyoor-ee-uhs	7. Not genuine, authentic, or true; not from the claimed, pretended, or proper source; counterfeit.
8. Protean	proh-tee-uhn	8. Readily assuming different forms or characters; extremely variable.
9. Fatuous	fach-oo-uhs	9. Foolish or inane
10. Obdurate	ob-doo-rit	10. Unmoved by persuasion, pity, or tender feelings.
11. Vicissitude	vi-sis-i-tood	11. A change or variation occurring in the course of something.
12. Inveterate	in-vet-er-it	12. Settled or confirmed in a habit, practice, feeling, or the like.

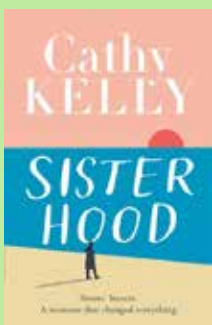
How did YOU score?
 10 or more - Perfection!
 6-9 Brilliant.
 3-5 Well done.
 0-2 Must do better.

Patricia Scanlan's Book Club



Patricia Scanlan was born in Dublin, where she still lives. She is a #1 bestselling author and has sold millions of books worldwide. Her books are translated in many languages. Patricia is the series editor and a contributing author to the award winning Open Door Literacy series. In this monthly feature, Patricia brings you her favourite reads of the moment.

Sisterhood – Cathy Kelly – Harper Collins



As the waves crash on to a wild Atlantic beach, Lou is at a crossroads. For the first time ever, just giving up seems like an option. In just one night, at her own 50th birthday, her world has imploded. Her mother has kept a secret hidden all her life. And it changes everything. Before Lou can take another step, she needs to get to the bottom of the shocking truth that alters who she really is. Along with her sister, Toni, who is facing her own crisis, the two women set out on a life-changing journey – one that will take them through Ireland’s wildest coastline and to Sicily’s sun-baked rocky shores. It will also take Lou deep into her relationships with her mother, her sister and her daughter to figure out how to stop pleasing everyone else – and carve out who she really wants to be.

An explosive secret and a journey that changes everything - the gripping and emotional new novel from the international #1 bestseller. Filled with nuggets of wisdom, compassion and humour, Cathy

Kelly proves, yet again, that she knows everything there is to know about women.

Whatever Happened to Birdy Troy? – Rachael English – Hachette Books Ireland.

She was the next big thing...until she disappeared... In the early 1980s, The Diamonds - Ireland’s trailblazing all-woman rock band - were on the brink of international success. Their debut single ‘Too Much Not Enough’ was soaring in the British charts. Then, as suddenly as they’d arrived, they vanished. It was the last anyone would hear of songwriter, guitarist and legend-in-the-making Birdy Troy. Stacey Nash, host of the popular podcast ‘Whatever Happened To ...?’, becomes fascinated with the band that broke up before she was born. How could four young women with so much promise just disappear? As problems mount in her own life, Stacey is drawn deeper into unravelling the mystery. But, after forty years, and with the band’s members reluctant to cooperate, is it too late for the truth to emerge?

Whatever Happened to Birdy Troy? is a rollercoaster journey through the rise and fall of four unforgettable friends and bandmates, in a music scene where darkness lurks beneath a veneer of glamour. The author’s skilful depiction of coercive control, abuse, and misogyny, and superbly evoked 80s setting make for a riveting read.



Last Chance in Paris – Lynda Marron – Eiru

When her husband suggests a romantic break, Claire feels obliged to say yes but immediately regrets it. After the tragedy they’ve been through, how can one weekend in Paris save their marriage? Claire and Ronan aren’t the only people on a make-or-break visit to the City of Love. There is a big-shot movie producer from Hollywood, full of regret for a life ill-lived; a student from Boston, torn between love and duty; a Ukrainian refugee struggling to protect her little sister; and an old woman from Dijon, hoping to be braver than she has ever had to be before. When their lives briefly

intertwine, something extraordinary happens... This fresh, heartwarming debut from a new Irish author comes highly acclaimed from Martin Sheen, Sheila O’Flanagan and Roisin Meaney.

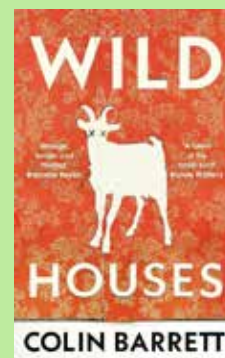
Wild Houses – Colin Barrett – Jonathan Cape

As Ballina prepares for its biggest weekend of the year, the simmering feud between small-time drug-dealer, Cillian English, and County Mayo’s enforcers, Gabe and Sketch Ferdia, spills over into violence and an ugly ultimatum.

When the reclusive Dev answers his door on Friday night he finds Doll - Cillian’s teenage brother - in the clutches of Gabe and Sketch. Jostled by his nefarious cousins and goaded by his dead mother’s dog, Dev is drawn headlong into the Ferdias’ revenge fantasy.

Meanwhile, seventeen-year-old Nicky can’t shake the feeling something bad has happened to her boyfriend Doll. Hungover, reeling from a fractious Friday night and plagued by ghosts of her own, Nicky sets out on a feverish mission to save Doll, even as she questions her future in Ballina.

One of the Observer’s Debut Novels of 2024, Wild Houses comes with high praise from Roddy Doyle, Sally Rooney, Kevin Barry, and Anne Enright among many.



Breakdown – Cathy Sweeney – W&N



Mothers are not supposed to go on road trips. One winter morning on an ordinary day in contemporary Dublin, an ordinary middle-class woman wakes up in her ordinary suburban home. Her husband is next to her in bed, her teenage children sleeping nearby. Without thinking much about it, she walks out the front door and never comes back.

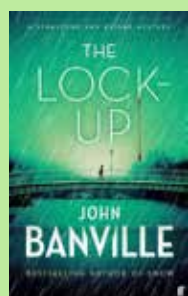
She travels by car train, and ferry. Along the way, she finds herself in service stations and shopping centres, hotel bars and hairdressers - and in the beds of strange men. Forty-eight hours later, alone in a cottage in Wales, the woman faces up to what she has been ignoring inside herself, her family, modern society: signs of breakdown. From one of Ireland’s most provocative and admired writers, this is a story of rage and reckoning, joy and transformation. Another impressive debut, from an Irish author, described as a 21st century Kafka, an Irish Ernaux. Her short story collection Modern Times got rave reviews.

The Search Party – Hannah Richell – S&S

Five old friends. One glamping weekend. A storm that will change everything. Max and Annie Kingsley have left the London rat race to set up a glamping site in the wilds of Cornwall. They invite old university friends – TV star Dominic, doctor and new mum Kira, and free-spirited Jim and Suze – and their children for a trial weekend but the reunion quickly veers off-course. First, there’s The Incident around the campfire on the first night. The following afternoon, a storm quickly develops off the rugged North Coast. When one of their group goes missing, all hell breaks loose. And as the winds batter the bell-tents, emotions run high and tension mounts for all the characters. Who is lying in hospital, who has gone missing and who is the body on the beach below the cliffs . . .? Gripping, cleverly structured and brimming with secrets and lies, a masterclass in narrative tension, it will keep you guessing until the last page.



The Lock Up – John Banville – Faber & Faber



1950s Dublin. The body of a young woman is discovered in a lock-up garage, an apparent suicide. But pathologist Dr Quirke and Detective Inspector Strafford soon suspect foul play.

The victim’s sister returns from London to help the two men, but, with relations between them increasingly strained, and their investigation taking them back to events from the final days of the Second World War, can they join the pieces of a hidden puzzle before it’s too late?

Booker prizewinning author, Banville, author of Snow and April in Spain is back, with a new thriller, as Strafford and Quirke return with their most troubling case yet.



Soho building facade in Manhattan New York City, NYC USA

Jokes

Because laughter is the best medicine!



An elderly woman went to her local doctor's office and asked to speak with her doctor. When the doctor asked why she was there, she replied, "I'd like to have some birth control pills."

Taken back, the doctor thought for a minute and then said, "Excuse me, Mrs. Glenwood, but you're 80 years old. What would you possibly need birth control pills for?"

The woman replied, "They help me sleep better."

The doctor considered this for a second, and continued... "How in the world do birth control pills help you sleep?"

The woman said, "I put them in my granddaughter's orange juice, and I sleep better at night."

Two elderly couples were enjoying friendly conversation when one of the men asked the other, "Fred, how was the memory clinic you went to last month?"

"Outstanding," Fred replied. "They taught us all the latest psychological techniques - visualization, association - it's made a big difference for me." That's great! What was the name of that clinic?" Fred went blank. He thought and thought but couldn't remember. Then a smile broke across his face and he asked, "What do you call that flower with the long stem and thorns?" "You mean a rose?" "Yes, that's it!" He turned to his wife. "Rose the name of that clinic?"

Mr. Johnson and his secretary are on a train to Paris. They are just about to go to sleep when the secretary, who has the hots for her boss says in a seductive voice, "I'm a little cold, could I borrow your blanket?"

The man says how would you like to be Mrs. Johnson for awhile?

The secretary jumps at the chance and begins to get out of bed.

Then he replies, good, then you can get your own blanket.

While taxiing at London's Gatwick Airport the crew of a US Air flight departing for Ft. Lauderdale made a wrong turn and came nose to nose with a United 727. An irate female ground controller lashed out at the US Air crew, screaming:

'US Air 2771, where the hell are you going? I told you to turn right onto Charlie taxiway! You turned right on Delta! Stop right there. I know it's difficult for you to tell the difference between C and D, but get it right!'

Continuing her rage to the embarrassed crew, she was now shouting hysterically:

'God! Now you've screwed everything up! It'll take forever to sort this out! You stay right there and don't move till I tell you to! You can expect progressive taxi instructions in about half an hour, and I want you to go exactly where I tell you, when I tell you, and how I tell you! You got that, US Air 2771?'

'Yes, ma'am,' the humbled crew responded.

Naturally, the ground control communications frequency fell terribly silent after the verbal bashing of US Air 2771.. Nobody wanted to chance engaging the irate ground controller in her current state of mind. Tension in every cockpit out around Gatwick was definitely running high.

Just then an unknown pilot broke the silence and keyed his microphone, asking: 'Wasn't I married to you once?'

A guy walks into a bar and orders a drink. After a few more he needs to go to the loo. He doesn't want anyone to steal his drink so he puts a sign on it saying, "I spat in this beer, do not drink!". After a few minutes he returns and there is another sign next to his beer saying, "So did I!"

My teachers told me I'd never amount to much because I procrastinate so much. I told them, "Just you wait!"

I got my husband a fridge for his birthday. His face lit up when he opened it.

I can't take my dog to the park because the ducks keep trying to bite him. I guess that's what I get for buying a pure bread dog.

Some people eat snails. They must not like fast food.

Which rock group has four guys who can't sing or play instruments? Mount Rushmore.

The Podcast Review

We source the best selection of podcasts each issue. This time we bring you, Good Bad Billionaire, The Molloy Twins, Start with This and Love, Janessa.

Good Bad Billionaire (Money)

How hip-hop's first billionaire went from grams to Grammys. Journalist Zing Tsjeng and BBC business editor Simon Jack chart Jay-Z's meteoric rise from drug dealing in the projects to sipping champagne in a private jet. Jay-Z turned his aspirational lifestyle into cash, rapping about the champagne that he owned. And the private jet? A gift from his wife, Beyonce. In the podcast that uncovers how the world's wealthiest people made their money and asks if they are good or bad for the planet, Zing and Simon judge the man who shot his brother, who signed Kanye West, whose adultery inspired Beyonce's album Lemonade, and the man who has been called the greatest rapper of all time



imposter syndrome, the format is fun, the content well researched and presented with lots of humour thrown in.

Start with This (Entertainment)

Want a podcast that will entertain you and make you feel smart? Start with this. No really, 'Start with This'. This podcast by Jeffrey Cranor (of 'Welcome to Night Vale', the creepy US podcast about an imaginary town) is an interactive experience – first you listen to an episode, then you go and create something from what you've learned, be it a writing assignment or another bit of homework. 'Start with This' strives to help you boost your creativity, with episodes ranging from 'Present Tense' to 'Non-Lovecraftian Horror'.



Love, Janessa (Human Interest)

As a society, will we ever tire of listening to cases of swindling and deceit? The answer is no, of course, so you can be sure the content will keep coming. And Love, Janessa is one of the most jaw-dropping yet. Each episode reveals more and more of the extent of this catfishing scheme, and the woman whose identity lies at the centre of it. Host Hannah Ajala is excellent.

The Molloy Twins (Self Development)

Adam and Lee Molloy from Clondalkin have a new episode each week - available on YouTube and streaming platforms where they talk about all things self development, from men's mental health to love to



How to:

Search "Google podcasts" in the Play Store app (if you've an Android phone). iPhones comes with Apple podcasts app installed. Open the app and type in the name of the podcast you want or you can just browse categories whilst there.

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