


# Dr. Katriona O'Sullivan

**A childhood of poverty, hunger, squalor & addiction**  
**A remarkable story of triumph over adversity**

'Phenomenal' Louise O'Neill

*Katriona O'Sullivan*



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Lynn Ruane

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Patricia Scanlan

*Poor*

Grit, courage, and the life-changing value of self-belief



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**The Irish abroad -Jimeoin**

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Congratulations and best wishes to Irelands Ladies team who compete in the Homeless World Cup Finals in Sacramento, California 8-15 July

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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 and essentially giving people the confidence and tools to become the best possible version of themselves.

We will also be adjusting the content to reflect the times we live in.

We thank you for your support to date and ask that you continue to help us help those on the margins of society. This has always been our aim and shall continue to be our driving force.

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# Letter to my Younger Self - Blake Morrison

**E**ach issue we ask an interesting person to write a letter to their 16-year-old self. This issue, 72-year-old Prof. Blake Morrison FRSL, a poet and author has a word or two for his younger self.

At grammar school in Yorkshire I used to sit near the back of the class, wanting to do OK academically but not so well as to be called a swot. I kept my head down, reluctant to be noticed. At 12 I'd been teased for being fat. At 16 I'd slimmed down but was horribly un-confident. My dread was being asked a question by the teacher; I was bound to stammer and blush.

Going into the sixth form changed that. The classes of 30-odd became small, six or seven at most. And thanks to the enthusiasm of our English teacher, an elderly Irishman called Paddy Rogers who'd a passion for modern literature (Hardy, Eliot, DH Lawrence, Auden), I started getting into books. A hippie-ish boy called Chris, who'd been held down a year, also played his part, pushing me to read Kerouac and Mailer, and taking me to a reading by the Barrow Poets.

Poetry in rural Yorkshire was unheard of then. But I was scribbling poems on the quiet – miserable stuff about girlfriends dumping me and the obtuseness of the older generation. I'd no thoughts of becoming a poet. I wrote out of loneliness and a need for self-expression. And by the time I went on to university, I'd stopped. Now I'd like to tell my teenage self to keep at it – to hang on to the belief that poetry matters, not (as I did) lose track

of it for several years.

It didn't help my parents weren't great readers and that we'd very few books in the house. They were doctors, GPs in a nearby milltown, and Dad's dream was that I'd study medicine, marry a local girl, move next door and take over the family practice. I couldn't help but disappoint him. And the literary career I later had was the perfect escape route – though he had his revenge when my first real success as a writer was a book all about him.

My mother was less bossy. She'd come from Kerry and, after studying in Dublin and working in a range of British hospitals, settled in Yorkshire with Dad. She'd broader horizons than he had – knew what it was like to leave home and make a new life for yourself in a foreign country. I tried that for a year in Canada, then moved to London, which to Dad was a foreign country. She didn't mind. I had her blessing.

I regret that she was so reticent about Ireland. In all my childhood, we had only one holiday there. Lots of kids with Irish parents spend summers 'back home'. But my mother had left and didn't want that for my sister and me. It was only after she died that I met most of my cousins. She was the nineteenth of twenty children, or the twelfth of the thirteen that survived infancy (something else I only found out after she died), so there were quite a few.



...thanks to the enthusiasm of our English teacher, an elderly Irishman called Paddy Rogers who'd a passion for modern literature, I started getting into books.



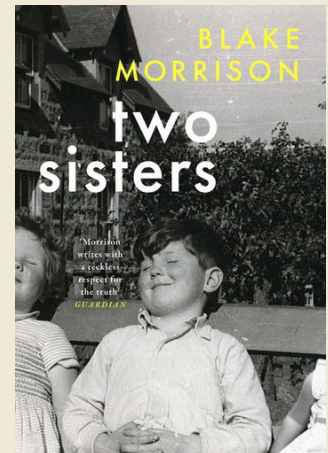
Though I didn't visit Ireland except that once, it felt romantic to have the connection: Ireland meant Joyce, Beckett, Yeats Sean O'Casey – and later (I got to meet them in my twenties) Seamus Heaney and Paul Muldoon. The other side of the family, middle-class and Mancunian, seemed dull in comparison. The consolation was where we lived, at the edge of the Yorkshire Dales. My teenage self didn't make the most of that. In another life, I'd have hiked, gone potholing, taken up fell-running – or learned how to shear sheep.

I regret that she was so reticent about Ireland.

a career. But my sixteen-year-old self had no sense of vocation. He was shy, tongue-tied, torn between his Dad's aspirations for him and his new-found literary interests. I wish he'd had more confidence. But perhaps it did no harm to be mixed-up. The alternative would have been arrogance and self-entitlement. And who'd want to be a boy like that.

My passion was football instead. I used to watch Burnley (the nearest team to where we lived) and to play for a local side. We won the league and cup one year, and six of us went for trials at Preston North End. I was offered schoolboy forms but doubted I'd the skill or commitment to make it. A doctors' son as a professional footballer? Nah. I was into girls by then anyway. And poetry. And a wish to go to university.

A doctors' son as a writer? That sounded more plausible. And by my late twenties, I'd made a start on what became



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# Dr. Katriona O'Sullivan: From Homelessness & Addiction to PhD

**Dr. Katriona O'Sullivan grew up, the middle child of five siblings in abject poverty and squalor with heroin-addicted parents. At 15 she fell pregnant, found herself homeless and struggled with addiction.**

Looking at author and academic Dr. Katriona O'Sullivan its difficult imagining this 45-year-old woman, an esteemed lecturer, speaker and author as a child living in a poor area of Coventry with heroin-addicted parents, starving for food, warmth, love and knowledge, and that's what makes her memoir 'Poor' one of the most riveting, thought-provoking and important books you'll read this year - not only for the triumph over adversity page-turner that it is, but more importantly to highlight the indispensability of investment in those our government and society too often casts aside.



toothbrushes or towels in the house.”

Despite being called the most vile, degrading names, Katriona, who had no access to clean clothing, wet the bed and got herself up and out for school in the mornings “loved school” thanks to a tender-hearted teacher named Miss Arkinson [who happened to be Irish] who discreetly took her into the bathroom with an assistant one day and gave her a packet of clean underwear, a towel and flannel and taught her how to wash herself. Thinking back on that memory,

she recalls,

Katriona spent her early childhood in the Hillfields area of Coventry in the West Midlands of England. The middle of five kids born to Tony and Tilly, Katriona never felt safe at home as her parents' mates would be strewn across the property drugged out of their minds. Despite having no parental supervision and nothing to eat besides her free school meal, Katriona was a voracious reader, desperate to learn and eager to be accepted but the children at school taunted her for being smelly,

“We weren't taught how to wash, we didn't have

“I was really ashamed in that moment because I knew that they knew that I was this smelly girl - because I was well aware of that - but I also felt so seen and cared for.”

**Poor is one of the most important books you'll read this year...**

Miss Arkinson then left her a fresh flannel and towel behind her desk each morning and she would wash before the other girls arrived at school.

Katriona excelled at primary school, not least because she was fed, had warmth and was shown affection. At 12 she started secondary school and fell into a routine of



petty crime; fighting, experimenting with drugs and then was arrested for stealing. At just 15 she fell pregnant and despite knowing she deserved more in life, felt,

“...any bit of hope was gone, any dreams.”

Notwithstanding the desire to stay at school and complete her GCSEs, she felt she couldn't as the teachers “who expected me to fail would see I had.”

When she broke the news of her pregnancy to her parents they asked her to leave and she started squatting in a derelict flat where teens hung

out, drinking and drug taking. Social services would later discover she was living there and moved her to a mother-and-baby hostel where she gave birth to her little boy. She resided there for 18 months and was then allocated a flat in Birmingham.

Over the next year or two Katriona, alone with a baby and battling the memories and trauma from her own childhood found herself repeating her parents' mistakes - boozing, taking drugs and in a desperate quest for love and acceptance having sex. One day, looking at her son she had an epiphany,

“I am her, I'm my mam, and this beautiful boy deserves better.”

Katriona's mum and dad (who was now sober) were moving back to Ireland after Tony skipped bail following his latest arrest and with her permission, they took her son with them. Six months later she joined them, signed on and got cash-in-hand a job cleaning toilets at Connolly Station in Dublin. Despite a perpetual smidgen of hope that things would get better, life was looking bleak.

One afternoon Katriona was walking along the street

when she spotted her old friend Karen, a single mum who had also grown up in extreme hardship, “I asked her how she was and she said she was studying law at Trinity through an Access Programme. ... I was envious.”



O'Sullivan swiftly marched over to Trinity and knocked on the door despite

“the only people I knew who went in there robbed bikes”

and asked how to apply. Following an intense interview in front of a panel who scrutinised her answers, a letter soon arrived offering her a place and nine years later she

emerged Katriona O'Sullivan PhD.

**... the only people I knew who went in there [Trinity College] robbed bikes....**

Of course it was not that straight forward; lacking confidence, like so many poor kids who don't fit the 'university pattern', the 23-year-old almost dropped out before her first semester exams in her access course; thankfully, with true grit and determination, she would go on to graduate with a First Class Degree. Another huge obstacle that nearly hindered her attendance was childcare costs and a friend “told me about the Vinnies” [St. Vincent de Paul] and they covered her childcare costs.

Upon graduation Katriona began lecturing and she speaks in her memoir of a “poshie” student who recognised her as her former dinner lady to which Dr. O'Sullivan replied,

“Ah, come on. Did you not know dinner ladies have brains?”

There was also an incident where Katriona was wearing a hoodie, scruffy jeans and messy bun and was moving some chairs in a lecture theatre when a student [believing she was the cleaner] informed her she'd have to leave as a class was about to start,

“I know, I’m teaching it,” Katriona classically retorted! Dr. O’Sullivan’s book, far from your typical humble-brag is anything but. She is keen to stress she does not want her success used to whip others as,

“I’m an anomaly”.

Katriona makes it clear that many things combined to make her victory over the odds possible: teachers going beyond the call of duty, (“putting a spring in my heart”) funds from St. Vincent’s, the university taking a chance with an experimental Access Programme, hardship funds,

“What I’ve done is miraculous, and rare, because we don’t have investment. If I was in that situation now, I wouldn’t be here.”

How many other potential Dr. O’Sullivans are out there? There’s a line in Backwoods Barbie by Dolly Parton that states,

“Don’t judge me by the cover, ‘cause I’m a real good book”,

I think that sums Dr. O’Sullivan up very well. It’s a real elitist mindset to believe that only upper-middle-class families can produce an academic.

Katriona says her dad was the,

“smartest person I’ve ever met, and I know, because I meet smart people all the time.”

O’Sullivan is a lone wolf in a world that will never understand her: she has an Irish-West Midland blend accent, she’s loud, she swears a lot, she wears ‘chav’ hoops and fake tan (sometimes on her hands) and doesn’t look the part.

She’s a trail-blazer. Nothing will ever take that hungry child out of her, nobody can erase the little girl who

thought ‘F you’ when she was negatively labelled and you know what - that inner child was also instrumental in getting her where she is today; that’s very clear.



Dr. O’Sullivan is clear we desperately need policy decisions and investment in people living in poverty,

“We’re missing talent, vibrancy and creativity. Because I’ve been empowered, I have been able to change my life, my children’s lives. I’m not costing any more to the state. I’m not doing all of the things that happen when you live in

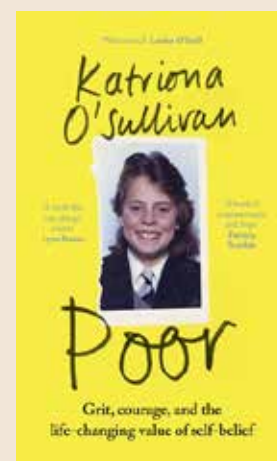
poverty. The people who are making decisions are clearly very educated and yet they don’t seem to have the long-term lens on what investing in reducing poverty can do.”

“What I’ve done is miraculous, and rare, because we don’t have investment. If I was in that situation now, I wouldn’t be here.”

Every policy maker in our country (and indeed every country) needs to read this book and see what is possible when we give people a chance. And to teachers and those in positions of authority in children’s lives - be a Miss Arkinson or Mr Pickering, don’t add to the problems a child could be facing daily just to survive.

## Highly recommended:

**‘Poor: Grit, courage, and the life-changing value of self-belief’ by Dr. Katriona O’Sullivan [Sandycove Press] is out now on paperback, Kindle and Audiobook.**





Congratulations & best wishes to Ireland's Ladies team who compete in the Homeless World Cup Finals in Sacramento, California 8-15 July

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# NEW CARS VULNERABLE TO CAR THIEVES

**C**ar thieves are using increasingly sophisticated methods to ply their trade and most new vehicles are vulnerable, Omair Uthmani reports.

Car theft is on the rise, according to AA Insurance Services. Worryingly, thieves are increasingly using high-tech tools to target weaknesses in the same sensors and computerised systems that were designed to help make our journeys safer and more comfortable.

In fact, as the market research company Technavio, noted in 2017, the significant growth of the automotive electronics sector was driven specifically by the need for added driver convenience and concerns about car theft. So, it's a sobering thought that these same sensors, computers and data aggregation systems are what criminals now use to steal cars.

The convenience offered by the keyless entry system (KES), is one such example. KES enables drivers to passively lock, unlock, start and stop the engine by simply carrying the key fob along with its integrated signal transmitter. The basic function of the system is for the car to detect the signal from the fob.

If the signal is strong enough, generally when the fob is within one metre of the car, it will unlock and allow

the engine to start, usually using a push-button system. Attacks on the KES typically use a method of amplifying



and relaying the signal from the fob to the car. This “tricks” the car’s system into thinking that the fob is within one metre, and the system disarms.

Owners can attempt to prevent relay attacks of this type by storing their fobs in “Faraday pouches” when not in use. These pouches have conductive fibres in their lining that disrupt radio signals and are not very expensive.

**Some thieves have targeted the keyless entry system, but there are now more sophisticated ways to steal cars.**

## Control modules

It's also worth noting that the computers in our cars' multiple Electronic Control Modules (ECMs) manage everything from the engine, transmission and powertrain – all the components that push the car forward – to the brakes and suspension. All of these ECMs are programmed with large volumes of computer code, which, unfortunately, can contain vulnerabilities. In order to try and mitigate against such vulnerabilities, international safety standards like the SAE J3061 and ISO/SAE 21434 aim to guide manufacturers with regard to secure code development and testing. Regrettably, with such a large number of



interconnected and complex systems, as well as the production deadlines and shareholders' expectations that car companies have to deal with, vulnerabilities could still escape detection.

Some thieves have targeted the keyless entry system, but there are now more sophisticated ways to steal cars.

Car thieves have still managed to gain access to cars' electronic control units (ECUs), and even the on-board diagnostics ports, in order to bypass security. These ports are small computer interfaces located on most cars that provide technicians with quick access to a car's diagnostic system. This makes servicing faster, as the technician can simply plug into this standardised socket that allows access to all the car's sensor data in one location.

This, in turn, makes fault detection easier as any fault codes can be easily identified and other performance issues detected before they become serious. It also proves an attractive target for car thieves.

## Deceptive damage

Recent reports have shown how car thieves can access ECUs. And even experts aren't immune. Ian Tabor, cyber security consultant for the engineering services company EDAG Group, recently experienced what at first appeared to be an instance of pointless vandalism to his Toyota RAV4. However, when the car disappeared, it became clear that the damage had actually been part of a sophisticated car theft operation.

In this instance, car thieves removed the front bumper of Tabor's car to access the headlight assembly. This was done to access the ECU, which controls the lights. This in turn allowed access to the widely used Controller Area Network (CAN bus). The CAN bus is the main interface

designed to allow ECUs to communicate with each other.

In Tabor's case, accessing the CAN bus allowed the thieves to inject their own messages into the car's electronics systems. These fake messages were targeted



towards the car's security systems and crafted to make it appear as if a valid key was present. The result was that the car doors unlocked and allowed the engine to be started and the car to be driven away – all without the key fob. Unlike the relay attack mentioned earlier, this

new kind of attack cannot be thwarted by using an inexpensive Faraday pouch because the fob is not needed at all. The signal that the fob would have sent is now generated by the thieves.

**The result was that the car doors unlocked and allowed the engine to be started and the car to be driven away – all without the key fob.**

To further add to the problem, Tabor's investigations revealed that the equipment used by the thieves only cost about US\$10 (£8). Worse still, the components used can be bought pre-assembled and programmed, so that all a would-be thief needs to do is simply plug into a car's wiring.

These recent reports showed that the devices were disguised as an old Nokia 3310 phone and a JBL-branded Bluetooth speaker. This means that, at first glance, even if a car thief is stopped and searched, no obvious or conspicuous devices would be found.

As experts have noted, a permanent fix against this type of attack requires car makers or industry bodies to become involved. This would take time. In the meantime, cars vulnerable to this type of attack have no defence. And most new cars are vulnerable.

## First published on the Conversation

**Author Omair Uthmani**  
**Lecturer in Networking and Security, Glasgow Caledonian University**

# The Irish Abroad - Jimeoin

**T**his issue Sam McMurdock has a chat with stand-up comedian, writer and actor Jimeoin (57) from Portstewart, Co. Derry who left his small seaside resort at 18 to work on building sites in London for four years before emigrating to Melbourne, Australia in search of better weather and a “glamorous” job.

**You grew up in Portstewart; what are your favourite memories from the town?**

“I go there a lot so I relive my memories. I used to play golf on the public golf course, and that was a lot of fun because we’d never play the first hole because we’d snuck on, and the whole thing was great craic and really exciting to us because we knew we shouldn’t be there.”

**Young Jimeoin was a tad mischievous?**

“You don’t want to know my other pastime if you think that’s naughty [laughs]... I used to head up to the dump to set it on fire.... That was good craic.”

**You were actually born in the UK**

“Yes, we moved to Northern Ireland from Leamington Spa in 1967 when I was one .... incidentally, the year The Troubles broke out .... take from that what you will; my mum used to blame me for it. Y’know what I don’t understand? Why my parents went back to Northern Ireland the year The Troubles hit

... did they not realise everybody else was leaving?”

**You’ve preserved your strong Causeway Coast accent; did the people in Melbourne understand you when you arrived?**

“No, they never understood a word I said, in fact, I remember the first time I knew I was understood was when I first started doing stand-up comedy; they

understood me because, in the art of stand-up, people really need to listen, to zone in on what you’re saying, and I think in many ways the accent tricked people into listening.”

**It’s a distinct accent.**

“I’m glad I have it, in fact, I don’t have a lot of respect for people who lose their accent when they move. I know that to lose your accent you really make a conscious effort to get rid of it. I don’t try to hold on to mine, it’s just how it is, it never left.”



Photo Credit: Jill Furmanovsky

**“I worked for at least four years on building sites in London and then I’d had enough.”**



**At what age did you decide to become a comedian?**

“I worked for at least four years on building sites in London and then I’d had enough ... I was sick of London and wanted to go somewhere different. I remember thinking, ‘If I have to do this kind of work, surely I could do it somewhere warmer’. I’d just gone through the whole of winter and I remember on the site there was a celebration for Australia Day, it was 26th January and that evening I saw a thing on TV about Australia and I remember thinking it looked warm and maybe I could work on building sites out there, but then I thought to myself ‘I don’t want to work on building sites’ and then I thought, ‘I really don’t want to work’ [laughs]. Labouring is very hard. I wanted something glamorous; it might sound a bit naive but I wanted to be an actor. I was thinking of potential jobs. I hated school but loved drama

and always enjoyed being in plays and stuff so wondered if that might be an option, then I just as quickly wondered if I could be in a band, I’d see ads on the back of newspapers, ‘Singer Wanted’ but I wasn’t a very good singer and then I met this guy who found me really funny and he’d always say, ‘You should be a stand-up comic’ and I’d no idea what that even meant but if it meant I wouldn’t have to work as a labourer, I’d give it a try.”

**Had you never watched any comedians on TV?**

“Not really. I knew who Billy Connolly was and I knew Dave Allen but I didn’t know there was a job called a stand-up comedian where you could get up on stage, tell stories and give your points of view, little tales with a funny ending. I remember the first time I ever did it, a girl put my name down in this club and I thought I was

getting up to tell a few jokes so we’d get in free. I got on stage, started telling these jokes and people just laughed .... not at my jokes, but because I was telling jokes instead of doing stand-up ..... but still, it got me started.”



I don’t have a lot of respect for people who lose their accent when they move. I know that to lose your accent you really make a conscious effort to get rid of it.

**What do you miss most about Northern Ireland?**

“I’m at home twice a year and I’ve never been one of those people who never wants home. I’m lucky; flights are relatively inexpensive compared with the 1970s. When people left the north in the 1920s to 1970s they left with no return - that was them, they were there for good. We are lucky these days that we can live thousands of miles away and still see our family and friends frequently.”

**You’ve carved out a very successful career in Australia and beyond; what do you believe is the secret to your success?**

“I’ve got a good comedic mind, I’ve got a funny head, I’ve got a funny head to look at [laughs], I’ve got eyebrows that I should insure like Daisy Duke’s legs from the Dukes of Hazzard. For me It’s important to treat stand-up as the art it is, create material no one else has touched upon and find topics that other comics don’t use. Many comics talk about the same issues but to be a success you need to find topics that are yours and only yours.”

**You are a married man with four children [age 21, 18, 16 and 11]; is touring more difficult when you’ve responsibilities at home?**

“There’s lots of careers where men don’t see their kids as much as I do. There’s things I’ve missed, that in hindsight I can understand why the wife gets mad at me; I remember her saying, ‘You should’ve been at that’ after my daughter’s 21st birthday party for instance but

I used to have the kids tour with me before they went to school.”

### **You’ve starred in and co-written a couple of movies. Did you enjoy working in film?**

“Film.... [sighs].... film is like writing a joke and then running it past hundreds of people over and over again, it costing thousands to tell the joke and then by the time you tell the joke, losing all faith in it. Stand-up on the other hand, you don’t need to tell anyone your ideas, you just get up and do it and there’s no committee involved. One positive about film - it is so much more achievable these days. It used to be so elitist; only people in Hollywood could make a movie but now anybody can take a crack at it and that’s what I did. The first film [The Craic], I loved - they left me alone and I got on with it but the second film [The Extra] was bigger, with a bigger budget and I vowed I’d never do it again .... I enjoyed nothing, in fact it was the most unenjoyable thing I’d ever experienced in my life.”

### **Tell us about your upcoming Irish shows.**

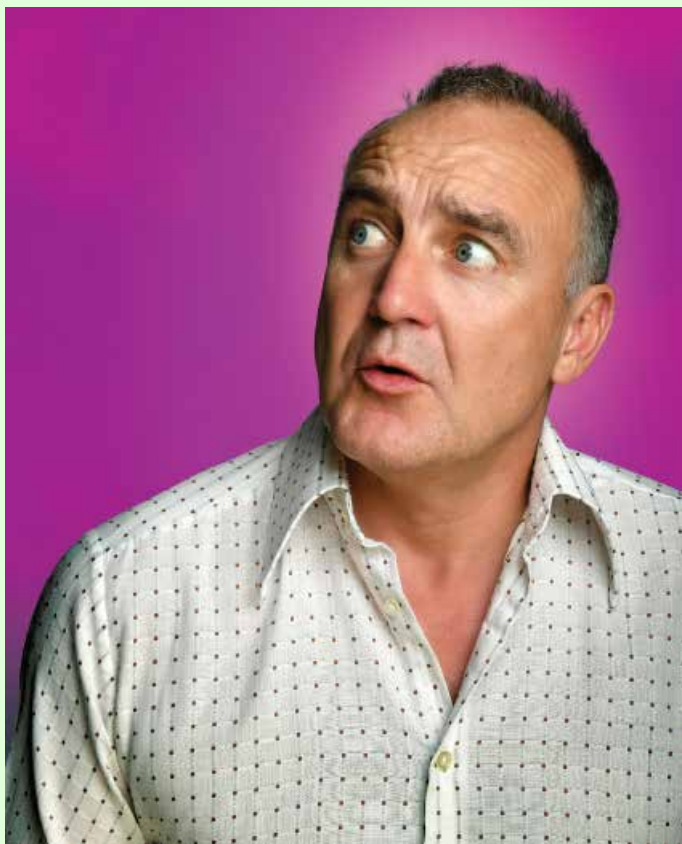
“I’ve shows in Vicar Street, Dublin, Derry and Belfast. The thing is, I always arrange to meet up with too many people when I’m over and then I’m exhausted after each show and then you meet about a million people after each show as well and I’m totally wiped out. This time I have a plan, I’ve decided to be sensible and pace myself, but I bet you the same thing will happen, I can’t help myself, I don’t know why I do it, but I make arrangements to meet people constantly with time I don’t have. I need time to unwind but do I ever factor that in? No.”

### **It must be good playing to the home crowd.**

“I really love Belfast shows. It is so different to what it was - it’s a different city entirely and a real pleasure to visit.”

### **Why not come home permanently?**

“I like the heat of Australia [laughs]. I really love the climate but I do love swimming in the sea when I’m in Northern Ireland, even in winter, I love it. It’s excellent for mental health. There’s loads of scientific data that shows so many health benefits .... It’s a great wake-up that’s for sure.”



### **Is there anything you’d like to achieve that you haven’t?**

“I’d like a healthy, moderate approach to alcohol. I’ve been tearing the a\*se out of it and I’m at that age where I should have a bit more sense, but then I’m out, there’s drink, I’m working there’s drink and it’s a bit hard to avoid.... Sometimes it’s hard being a human-being non-stop and finding ourselves in these difficult to manage situations.”

### **What advice would you give your 16-year-old self.**

I’d give advice to 57-year-old Jimeoin from 16-year-old Jimeoin instead and tell 57-year-old Jimeoin to f\*\*\*ing lighten up and remember why he’s doing this job; for a bit of craic. I loved 16-year-old me, I wish I could have kept those qualities throughout my life. Why do we let them go? I think your magazine’s Letter to my Younger Self should be the other way around, it should be a letter to their older self. The past is over, it’d be better giving advice to your future self; I think we can learn a lot from our younger selves but sadly we lose many great qualities we had as teenagers.”

“I think we can learn a lot from our younger selves but sadly we lose many great qualities we had as teenagers.”

### **Fancy seeing Jimeoin in a town near you?**

**Thur 12 Oct - Dublin Vicar St**  
**Fri 13 Oct - Derry Millennium Forum**  
**Sat 15 Oct - Derry Millennium Forum**  
**Sun 15 Oct - Dublin Vicar St**  
**Fri 10 Nov Belfast Waterfront Hall**  
**Sat 11 Nov Belfast Waterfront Hall**  
**Sun 12 Nov Belfast Waterfront Hall**







# The Nakba (Catastrophe)

**The Nakba: 75 years after losing their home, the Palestinians are still experiencing the ‘catastrophe’ Dina Matar reports.**

When Palestinians commemorated the Nakba (the catastrophe) on May 15, they are not only remembering a violent historical event that took place 75 years ago which led to the uprooting of over 750,000 Palestinians from their homeland. Nor just the destruction of more than 400 villages and towns and the killing of thousands others. They are also marking the fact that the Nakba did not end in 1948, but continues in different forms to this day.

What Palestinians call “ongoing Nakba” still generates suffering, destruction of homes and loss of Palestinian lives. They experience it in the continuing Israeli annexation of their land and attacks launched regularly against their homes in Gaza. And they see it in the regular violations of their human rights, both inside Israel and in the “occupied territories” and Gaza Strip.

For Palestinians worldwide, the Nakba is remembered as a traumatic rupture that represents their humiliating defeat, the destruction of Palestinian society and severance of links with their homeland. The 1948 Palestine war, which led to the creation of the Israeli state, left Palestinian society leaderless, disorganised and scattered. Today, more than 60% of the estimated 14.3 million Palestinians are displaced. The rest are in the occupied territories, the Gaza Strip and Israel, where they have been subject to discrimination

and outbreaks of communal violence.

The violence has only been exacerbated by the return to power at the end of 2022 of Benjamin Netanyahu in an alliance with extremist religious-nationalist Israeli

factions and ultra-nationalist politicians. The most notorious of these is Itamar Ben-Gvir of the far-right Otzma Yehudit party.

## Violent escalation

The 75th anniversary of the Nakba comes at a critical and dangerous juncture that has seen a relentless escalation in Israeli violent interventions against Palestinians in the

occupied territories and Gaza, which began with the unity intifada (or uprising) in 2021.

In 2021, 313 Palestinians including 71 minors were reportedly killed

in the Gaza Strip and West Bank (including East Jerusalem) by Israeli security forces. A record high of 204 Palestinians were reportedly killed in

2022, making it the deadliest year for

Palestinians in the West Bank since 2005.

So far in 2023, 96 Palestinians have been killed during the first four months of 2023. And so it continues.

The unity uprising called for a Palestinian popular mobilisation in the struggle against Israel’s settler-



Photo by Ahmed Abu Hameeda on Unsplash

**Palestinian history, when it is told, tends to be done as part of Israeli history and has rested on several fictions – including the idea that the land was empty**



colonial rule and practices akin to apartheid. These have been documented and recognised as such by several international human rights organisations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Along with widespread arrests of Palestinians since its launch, Israel has also taken punitive measures against Palestinian civil society. It has designated as terrorist organisations six leading Palestinian organisations at the forefront of efforts to hold Israel to account – including through legal challenges being pursued at the International Criminal Court.

### A hidden people

This year marks the first time that the UN has announced that it would commemorate Nakba Day, which also marks the creation of the state of Israel. While the UN move might be seen as a diplomatic coup for Palestinians, it nevertheless serves to underline two interrelated problems. The first is that Palestinian history, when it is told, tends to be done as part of Israeli history. The second is that the Palestinians themselves – as ordinary human beings – remain a largely unknown quantity in the west.

In March, the BBC aired a two-part television series *The Holy Land and Us* in the UK. The series explored Israel's founding by splitting its story into two parallel narratives, separately featuring British Palestinians and British Jews pursuing their families' connections to the events surrounding Israel's creation in 1948. It presented the Palestinian and Zionist narratives as two sides of the same story and the same conflict, repeating the same tropes that suggest it is an equal fight. The series was referred to as brave reporting because of its use of personal Palestinian testimonies that recalled, in particular, the Deir Yassin massacre by a Zionist militia of more than 100 Palestinians, many of them women and children, in early 1948, weeks before Israeli statehood was declared.



Photo by Latrach Med Jamil on Unsplash

Despite such historical retellings, few people in the west know about Deir Yassin, the Nakba or the events around Israel's creation, which Israeli historian Ilan Pappé has referred to as ethnic cleansing. Revisiting the formation of Israel, Pappé has documented that between 1947 and 1949, more than 400 Palestinian villages were deliberately destroyed, civilians were massacred and around a million men, women, and children were expelled from their homes at gunpoint. The lack of western knowledge about the Nakba is partly because the longstanding narrative surrounding 1948 and the creation of Israel has rested on several fictions – including the idea that the land was empty. It is also partly because of Israel's ability to propagate its version of reality in the mainstream media, particularly as historians are forced to tell the story of the powerless by those who victimised them, as historian Rashid Khalidi argued in his 2007 book *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*.

**The violence has only been exacerbated by the return to power of Benjamin Netanyahu in an alliance with extremist religious-nationalist Israeli factions**

In a globalised world linked via diverse media, this has meant that the imagination of Palestine and its people has as much to do with power relationships and strategic alliances as with the degree of visibility and access ascribed to the two parties in the mainstream media.

And there is no doubt, Israel has been ascribed a degree of visibility and access that has made the Palestinians, and the ongoing violence against them, invisible and hardly mentioned in the western media. For Palestinians, commemoration and remembrance of the Nakba is not about marking a historical event. It's about the need to continue telling their stories. Seventy-five years since the Nakba, it is time the whole world watched and listened.

**Dina Matar**  
**Professor, Political Communication and Arab Media, SOAS, University of London**

**First published on The Conversation**

# Easy Rider: A Difficult Road to a Classic Movie

**S**haun Anthony looks back at the 1969 drama film *Easy Rider*, a movie that captured the national imagination and changed independent film-making forever.

Many movie enthusiasts remember *Easy Rider* for its extravagant use of motorcycles, illegal substances and rock 'n' roll, however, behind the scenes, conflict and blazing arguments destroyed relationships and created a dark backstory for one of the most iconic films of its time.

## The First American Independent Film

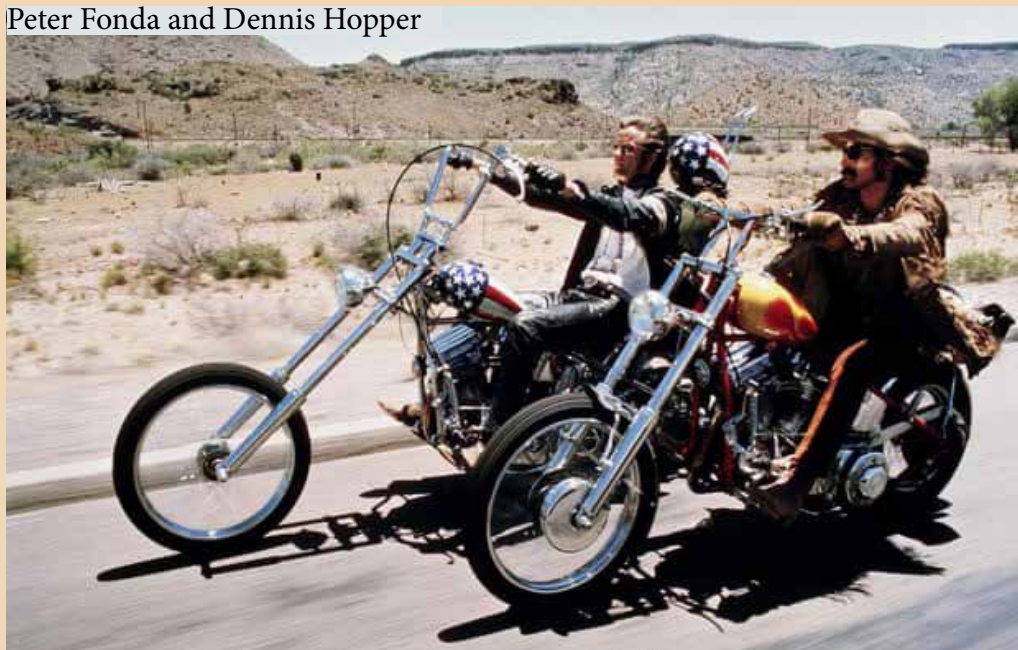
*Easy Rider* is often credited as one of the predecessors to the American counterculture film movement that started in the late sixties and is believed to be the first American independent film, however, what occurred behind the scenes makes its creation a truly astonishing coup.

Making the film obviously called for a lot of travelling, as its leads, two free spirits, Billy, played by Dennis Hopper and Wyatt played by Peter Fonda travelled across the U.S. on motorbikes. Both men were hippies in the truest sense, living life on their own terms.

## Egos at War

In 1967 Fonda and Hopper asked writer Terry Southern

Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper



to help write the film. The final movie acknowledged Southern for the screenplay, but Southern claimed Hopper and Fonda also requested writing credit. Southern conceded, later saying,

“We were great friends at the time, so I went along with it

without much thought. I actually did it out of a sense of camaraderie.”

**Years later Hopper sued Fonda for full writing credit, stating Fonda swindled him out of the film's proceeds.**

As time went on, Dennis and Peter started arguing over who deserved credit for the movie. Hopper even stated,

“Terry Southern never wrote one f\*cking word of *Easy Rider*. I wrote every word of the script. I directed every scene of the film... I made that f\*cking movie, period.”



## A Feud to the Death

Fonda claimed Hopper asked him to sign a document claiming he played no part in penning the script. Years later Hopper sued Fonda for full writing credit, stating Fonda swindled him out of the film's proceeds. The vendetta carried on for years, and they never mended their friendship. In fact, Hopper died in 2010 and Fonda was prohibited from attending his funeral.

### The \$1 Million Lawsuit

Numerous tales have disseminated regarding Jack Nicholson's casting in the role initially meant for Rip Torn; one of these stories being that Torn and Hopper had been out for dinner

with Southern and Fonda when a fight broke out and Torn hastily pulled a knife on Hopper costing him the role. Torn claimed however that Hopper was the one who pulled the knife on him and Torn disarmed him, Hopper's lies had taken a toll on Torn's career, even twenty odd years later when Hopper brought the issue up on a talk show. Torn was fuming that the lie he believed had negatively impacted his career had been unearthed by Hopper again and sued him. Witnesses (including Southern) corroborated Torn's account, and the judge ordered Hopper make restitution to the sum of \$1 million.

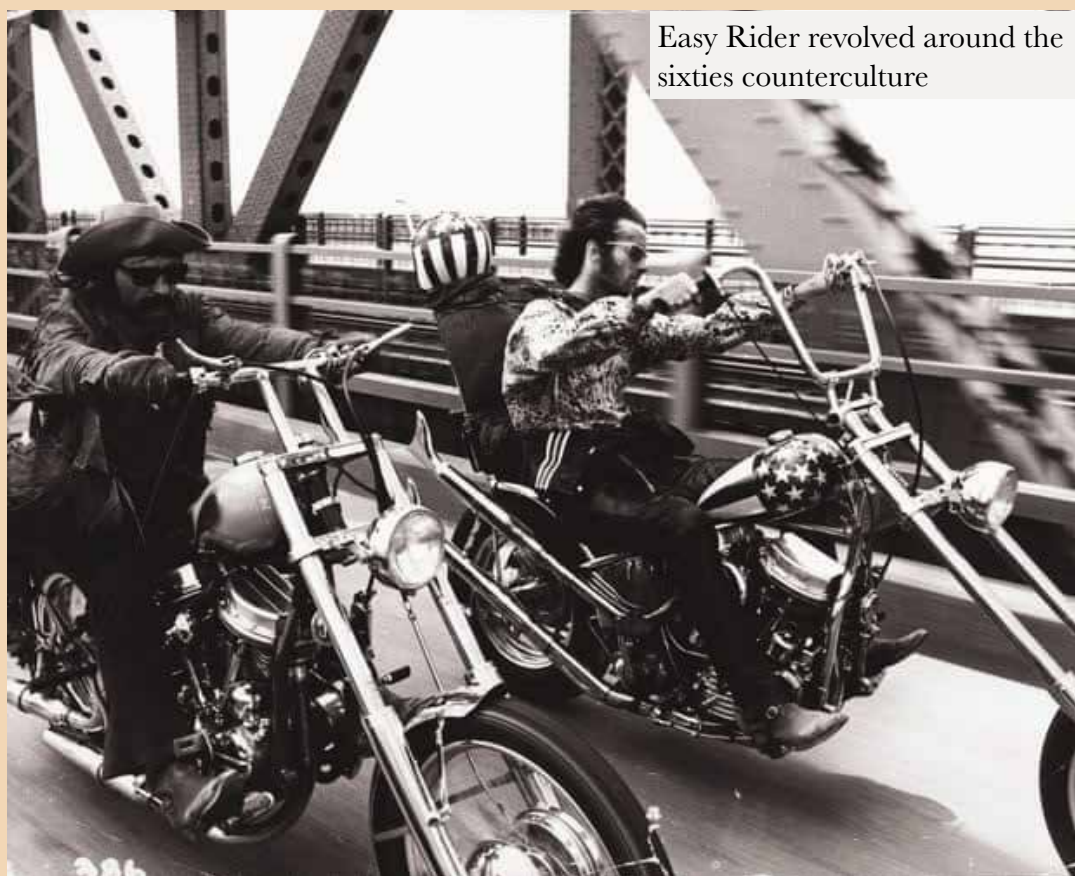
### Under the Influence

Easy Rider revolved around the sixties counterculture so it was no surprise that illegal substances became a fundamental facet of the movie - but even off-screen the cast and crew drunk copious amounts of booze, smoked weed and experimented with dope and acid. Some of the

actors were stoned whilst filming, Jack Nicholson recalls,

"We were all stoned the night we shot the campfire scene... each time I did a take it involved smoking almost an entire joint. After the first take or two, the acting job became reversed. Instead of being straight and having to act stoned at the end, I was now stoned at the beginning

and having to act straight."



Easy Rider revolved around the sixties counterculture

Bert Schneider and Bob Rafelson agreed to produce the film using cash they'd earned from creating The Monkees. They first gave Fonda and Hopper \$40,000 to film some footage at Mardi Gras in New Orleans

before the script was completed. Rafelson and Schneider agreed that, if they liked what they saw, they would fund the rest of the film. Regrettably, Fonda got the date of Mardi Gras wrong leaving the cast and crew only two weeks to prepare. The crew arrived in New Orleans unannounced, with no filming permits, captured their footage, and left.

**We were all stoned the night we shot the campfire scene... each time I did a take it involved smoking almost an entire joint.**

One of the movie's most unforgettable moments involved Hopper and Fonda retiring to a graveyard with two escorts to drop acid. Lacking filming permits,

Hopper, the other actors, and a tiny film crew went into St. Louis Cemetery No. 1. A huge statue on the top of the Italian Benevolent Society tomb inspired Hopper. He directed Fonda to climb up and start talking to it. Hopper said,

"Oh man, you gotta get up to the statue now. I want you to get up there and ask your old lady why she copped out on you."

Fonda's mum committed suicide when her son was

ten. Fonda refused this inspiration, saying he didn't want to substitute his own troubles for those of his character. Hopper insisted, however, claiming no one would understand the line's context. Fonda replied,

"Everybody will know, man! They all know what happened!"

Notwithstanding his misgivings, Fonda eventually acquiesced, and the scene became one of the film's most powerful.

### **The Pivotal Scene was Almost Forgotten**



Jack Nicholson as George and Peter Fonda as Wyatt in Easy Rider.

A fortnight after the crew finished filming, they realised they'd forgotten to shoot the all-important ending scene in which Hopper and Fonda's characters talk about the meaning of their trip. After reassembling the crew and finding a filming spot, Fonda and Hopper fought over the best exchange to sum up their movie's meaning.

Fonda stated,

"Hopper and I were arguing in this motor home. He wanted me to say all this stuff about how we blew our inheritance, we messed up our heritage... We were elevating the level of our conversation."

Fonda asserted he simply mutter the line,

"We blew it,"

Instead of delivering a long homily about what they did wrong. Hopper agreed to film one take of Fonda's concept, and he instantly recognised its merits. When people later asked what the line really meant, Fonda said he liked to tell them,

"Look out the window. If you don't think we've blown it, you've got to take a closer look."

Billy and Wyatt were Originally Supposed to Live

Screenwriter Southern stated some years after filming

ended that Hopper and Fonda originally planned to make the ending a happy one,

"The initial idea had to do with a couple of young guys who are fed up with the system, want to make one big score, and split.....use the money to buy a boat in Key West and sail into the sunset was the general notion, and that was slated to be the film's final poetic sequence."

As the film fleshed out, however, Southern figured that, in order to

denounce bigotry and hate, Billy and Wyatt would have to die. When Wyatt tells Billy towards closing of the movie that they "blew it," he also admits their riches and hedonistic manner of living left them no where else to go besides the grave. Though Hopper at the outset fought against getting rid of the film's heroes, the others persuaded him.

Southern recalled,

"I think for a minute he was still hoping they would somehow beat the system and sail into the sunset with a lot of loot and freedom. But of course, he was hip enough to realise, a minute later, that their ends were more or less mandatory."

### **Hopper found himself blacklisted from all Hollywood studios**

### **Hopper's Struggle to Control his Temper.**

Back in 1955 Hopper had met with a few studios hoping to put him under contract. At a meeting with Columbia Pictures, he lost his temper when he was asked to take acting classes; he was immediately banned from the building. After signing with Warner Bros. and starting a fight with one of their directors, Hopper found himself blacklisted from all Hollywood studios and was forced to only work in non-mainstream films, and Easy Rider became an important project to demonstrate his skills in both acting and directing.

Even in a non-mainstream film, however, his rage



continued to cause problems throughout production. Booze, drugs and paranoia further fuelled his capers and, at one point, he stood in a carpark shouting,

“This is my f\*cking movie and nobody’s going to take my f\*cking movie away from me!”

### There Were Even Arguments Over the Motorcycles

The men who built the motorcycles used in the film claimed they didn’t receive credit for their work. For years, Fonda claimed the bikes were his work. No one disputed his claims but years later, two bike builders emerged as the men behind the film’s choppers: builder Ben Hardy and designer Clifford Vaughns. Hopper credited Vaughns for the bikes in a 2009 commentary for the Easy Rider DVD.

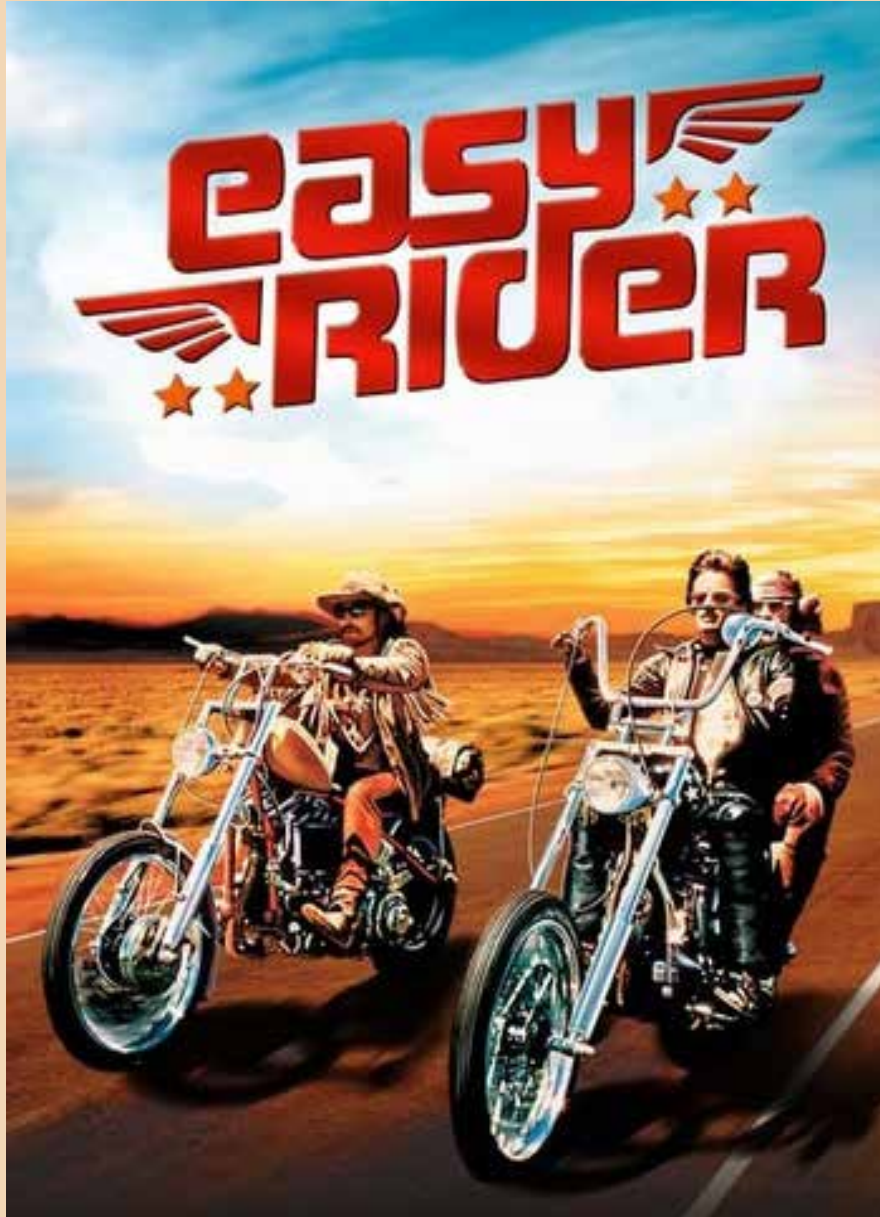
### The Film’s Soundtrack

Though many artists agreed to lend their music to the film, Bob Dylan refused to allow them to use “It’s Alright, Ma” (Fonda wanted it to play in the finale). Instead, Dylan helped to write the original Ballad of Easy Rider, however, when Dylan discovered he was listed as a co-writer of the film’s theme, he demanded his name be removed from the closing credits, although it’s rumoured he made this decision because he hated the movie.

### The Budget

Since the budget was just \$360k, the crew was forced to get creative and instead of using camera cars the cinematographer László Kovács bought a Chevy Impala convertible and sold it after filming. Kovács drove around with the top down and the camera mounted on a piece of plywood secured with sandbags. Little could he

imagine that the film would take in a staggering \$60m at the box office alone.



### Art Imitated Life

Hopper’s middle finger to the studios echoed the very sentiments of the film - a rebel on the fringes of society, caring little for the opinions of authority figures - in many ways his life resembled the very art he worked so painstakingly to create.

### Significance

The film’s success, and the new era of Hollywood that it helped usher in, gave Hopper the chance to direct again with complete artistic control. The result was 1971’s The Last Movie, which was a failure, effectively ending Hopper’s career as a director

**Hopper’s middle finger to the studios echoed the very sentiments of the film**

for well over a decade. It also gave Fonda the chance to direct with The Hired Hand. The film also helped kick-start the New Hollywood era during the late 1960s and 1970s. The major studios realised that money could be made from low-budget films made by avant-garde directors. Although Jack Nicholson appears only as a supporting actor and in the last half of the film, the standout performance signalled his arrival as a movie star.

In 1998, Easy Rider was added to the United States National Film Registry, having been deemed “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant. Not bad for an independent film with a paltry budget and countless major road bumps along the way.

# Rosemary Kennedy: *The Kennedy's Dark Secret*

**Over 80 years ago, JFK's sister Rosemary had 'mild mental retardation' and was left disabled by a disastrous experimental procedure called a lobotomy, ordered by her father. Liz Scales looks at the tragic details of this powerful family's darkest secret.**

Rosemary (Rosie) Kennedy was the first daughter of Joseph and Rose, born just a year after her brother John, who was elected President of the United States in 1960. Rosie was described as having 'mild mental retardation' (today we'd call this an intellectual disability) and was prone to convulsions, tantrums and violent behaviour.

### **Bungled Delivery**

When Rosie's mother Rose went into labour, the nurse caring for her was reluctant to deliver a baby without a doctor. Though the nurse had the necessary training, when the doctor's arrival was delayed (due to an outbreak of the Spanish Influenza epidemic) she ordered Rose to hold her legs together tightly in the hope of delaying the baby's birth. When that was unsuccessful, she resorted to holding the baby's head and forcing it back into the birth canal for two agonising hours! It resulted in Rosie suffering a loss of oxygen to the brain

As Rosie began to grow, her parents noticed she was not reaching the normal milestones babies and children reach by a certain month and year, for example, at two-years-old, she had a hard time sitting up, crawling and had a lot of problems learning to walk. Rose never confided in her friends and pretended her daughter was developing typically. No one knew until many years later that Rosie had a disability. It's unthinkable today that anyone, least of all, a mother could be embarrassed by their daughter's disability, but it does seem that both parents were embarrassed and inconvenienced by their daughter's 'retardation.' It was different times and the family did put a lot of pride upon outward appearances.



JOSEPH WITH HIS ROSIE, AS THEY WATCH HER BROTHERS, ROBERT AND EDWARD, OFFICIALLY OPEN THE LONDON CHILDREN'S ZOO

**... she resorted to holding the baby's head and forcing it back into the birth canal**

Sadly, institutionalisation was a common response to intellectual disability back then, but the Kennedys kept her at home.

Rosie lived with her family during most of her childhood, which of course included some very public years during



the 1930s, when her dad was U.S. Ambassador to the U.K.

### **Sent to Reside at the Convent**

At 15 she was sent to live at the Sacred Heart Convent in Rhode Island due to the fact she was many years behind her grade level at school (she was still struggling to read, write and count). Joseph and Rose paid the school a significant sum each month to have teachers assigned to work with their daughter. Two nuns and a special teacher, Miss Newton, worked with her all day in a separate classroom. The Kennedys gave the school a new tennis court for their efforts. During this period, her mother arranged for her older brother John to accompany her to a tea-dance. According to Rose, "Thanks to him, she appeared not different at all during the dance."

### **Rosie Craves Adventure and Independence**

After a few years Rosie began sneaking out of the convent at night. Joseph noticed his daughter was receiving a lot of male attention, she was very attractive with a voluptuous figure and when the convent contacted him to say his daughter was sneaking out at night he was incensed, convinced a potential unwanted pregnancy could damage his sons' political futures. Joseph ensured that his daughter was monitored very closely and she was furious, frequently throwing tantrums that would progress to violence towards those around her.

Although Rosie struggled reading, she did enjoy Winnie-the-Pooh books and eventually learned to write, in fact, journals penned by her in the late 1930s (published in

the 1980s) showed she had quite a lot of social outings like trips to the opera, dress fittings, tea dances and was presented as a debutante in 1938 to King George IV and Queen Elizabeth at Buckingham Palace during

her father's service as the United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom. Rosie practised the complicated royal curtsy for hours. At the event, she tripped but the crowd made no sign and the King and the Queen smiled as if nothing had happened. She even accompanied her family to the coronation of Pope Pius XII in Rome the following year and visited the White House.

During an interview with American monthly magazine, *Woman's Day*, Rosie's parents told the interviewer that she was "studying to be a kindergarten teacher," while *Parents* magazine was informed that

while she had "an interest in social welfare work, she harbours a secret longing to go on the stage." When daily newspaper *The Boston Globe* requested an interview with Rosemary, her father's assistant prepared a response which Rosemary copied out laboriously:

**In 1941,  
when she was 23, her dad  
was told that an experimental  
procedure  
called a lobotomy**

"I have always had serious tastes and understand life is not given us just for enjoyment. For some time past, I have been studying the well known psychological method of Dr. Maria Montessori and I got my degree in teaching last year."

### **Ableist Mindset Parents**

The concocted stories of a 'normal' young woman out in the world doing well must have been devastating for young Rosie to read. It surely left her believing she was not enough or had to be like her other siblings to be accepted and, certainly in 2023 this behaviour would



EUNICE AND ROSEMARY WAVE FROM ABOARD THE MANHATTAN

be called out as blatant ableism (discrimination and social prejudice against people with physical or mental disabilities.)

### **Life Deals Rosie Another Cruel Blow**

In 1941, when she was 23, her dad was told that an experimental procedure called a lobotomy (then considered a legitimate surgical approach to mental illness but rarely recommended for people with mental ‘retardation’) would help to control her behaviour. It didn’t. The operation on the frontal lobes of Rosie’s brain caused unspeakable damage. Her mental capacity diminished to that of a two-year-old. She stopped talking, started mumbling, stared at walls nonstop and was incontinent. Strangely, Joseph kept this psychosurgery a secret and Rose knew nothing of it until the procedure was done. In a bid to get the best minds working with his daughter, Joseph sent her to a private psychiatric hospital in New York where she resided for seven years.

It was later believed Rosie was not mentally ‘retarded’ but had a form of depression but Joe referred to his mentally ill daughter as being ‘mentally retarded’ to his inner circle in order to protect John’s reputation for a presidential run. James W. Watts who had carried out the procedure with Walter Freeman at George Washington University School of Medicine would later state that he never believed Rosie had ‘mental retardation’. A review of all of the papers written by the two doctors confirmed Watts’ declaration.

After Rosie’s lobotomy she was immediately institutionalised, firstly at Craig House and then in Wisconsin where she lived for the rest of her life on the grounds of the St. Coletta School (her father had a private house built for her) about a mile outside St. Coletta’s main campus which was designed for adults who needed lifelong care. Two Catholic nuns, Sister Margaret Ann and Sister Leona, provided her care in what would become known as ‘Kennedy Cottage.’

### **Separation from the Family**

No matter how you look at it. Rosie was purposefully separated from her family. After her lobotomy, Rose didn’t visit her daughter for 20 years. Joseph didn’t visit her at all. According to ‘Rosemary: The Hidden Kennedy Daughter’ by Kate Clifford Larson, Rosie’s lobotomy was hidden from the family for 20 years; none of her siblings knew of her whereabouts.

While her older brother John was campaigning for re-

election for the Senate in 1958, the Kennedys explained away her absence, claiming she was reclusive. The family didn’t publicly explain her absence until 1961, after John had been elected president and never revealed she was institutionalised because of a failed lobotomy, instead stating she was “mentally retarded”.

It’s very sad that Joseph felt both the need to have a lobotomy performed on his daughter and then to add insult to injury, never visited her again considering Rosie adored him referring to him as “Darling Daddy” in a 1940 letter where she went on to say, “I love you so very much.” It was also said that Rosie was always “eager to please” her father. Who knows, perhaps Joe felt he had let his daughter down after the failed procedure and was unable to face her. It was also different times. The family had political dreams. There wasn’t the awareness and acceptance we have today around neurodivergent people.

### **The Family Secret is Shared ..... Kind of**

Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Rosemary’s younger sister shared the family secret with the world in 1962, when she wrote about her sister in The Saturday Evening Post - however, she never mentioned the lobotomy and its horrible repercussions. Rosie’s experience encouraged

Eunice to found The Special Olympics

and she did go on to become a powerful spokesperson for people with disabilities. Shriver undertook campaigns against

public prejudice and called on her

fellow citizens to consider the abilities of children and adults with mental ‘retardation’, rather than only their disabilities, and incorporate them into every aspect of community life, from education and work to recreation.

### **Rosie Reintroduced to Family**

Following her dad’s death in 1969, the family gradually reintroduced Rosie to family life and she was occasionally taken to visit relatives in Florida and to her childhood home in Cape Cod. By this stage Rosie had learned to walk again, albeit with a limp, but she never gained the ability to speak clearly again and struggled with other issues like Erb’s Palsy.

### **Death**

Rosie died of natural causes on 7 January 2005 with sisters Jean, Eunice and Patricia and brother Ted by her bedside, she was 86.

**Her  
mental capacity diminished  
to that of a two-year-old.**



# A LITTLE BIT OF IRISH

Phrase:	Translations:	Pronunciation:
Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam	May he rest in peace	Air esh day go row a ann-im
Tá mé Tuirseach	I am tired	Thaw tir/shock
Cé as tú?	Where are you from?	K/oss/tu
Cá bhfuil an teach pobail?	Where is the pub?	Caw will on chock pubil
Tá tart mór orm?	I am very thirsty?	Taw tart moor urm?
Go maire tú an lá!	Many happy returns!	Go marra two on law
Na dean sin!	Don't do that!	Naw dane shin

## Word Power

**O**ver 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. Vicariously	vahy-kair-ee-uhs-lee	1. Through the experience of another person.
2. Ebullient	ih-buhl-yuhnt	2. Overflowing with enthusiasm.
3. Anachronistic	uh-nak-ruh-nis-tik	3. misplaced chronologically
4. Alacrity	uh-lak-ri-tee	4. Eagerness
5. Blandishment	blan-dish-muhnt	5. Intentional flattery for persuasion
6. Obdurate	ob-doo-rit	6. Being stubborn and refusing to change one's opinion
7. Quiescence	kwee-es-uhns	7. Quietness or stillness.
8. Anomalous	uh-nom-uh-luhs	8. Inconsistent with the common order.
9. Buttress	buh-tris	9. A prop built to support a structure.
10. Diatribe	dahy-uh-trahyb	10. A bitter, sharply abusive denunciation, attack, or criticism
11. Prevaricate	pri-var-i-keyt	11. To speak falsely or misleadingly; deliberately misstate or create an incorrect impression; lie.
12. Laconic	luh-kon-ik	12. Concise, expressing much in few words.

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

**S C R E E N**

**S C E N E**

### Crime \*\*\*\*

**Starring: Dougray Scott, Joanna Vanderham**  
**Run Time: 6 x 60 mins**  
**Streaming on: ITV X**  
**Available: From 1st July**

### The Out-Laws \*\*\*

**Starring: Pierce Brosnan, Adam DeVine**  
**Run Time: 95 mins**  
**Streaming:Netflix**  
**Available: From 7th July**

The abduction of a young girl, Britney Hamil, from an Edinburgh street pushes Lennox, a detective inspector to his breaking point. He is driven by the secret, long hidden within him, of an abuse that touched his very soul. Lennox is not content with solving crimes, he sees the world in black and white, his mission to root out evil wherever he senses it. But passion such as this comes at a cost and we watch as one by one his relationships grow distant and steadily are replaced by those old false friends, a descent into the bottle and the powder beckons. However, Crime is a tale of redemption and Lennox manages to hold himself together. In the face of the overwhelming opposition of all around him, Lennox proves his case that Britney was murdered by a notorious serial killer responsible for previous crimes pinned on an innocent man. And so, begins a chase for justice, perhaps to the death. Finally, the policeman and the killer come face to face, but it's the man known as Mr. Confectioner who has the upper hand. Sensing the detective's turmoil, Confectioner turns the tables and Lennox is driven to look deep inside himself, a spiral from which he may not emerge.



The Out-Laws is an American crime comedy film directed by Tyler Spindel. Owen Browning (Adam Devine) is a straight-laced bank manager about to marry the love of his life, Parker (Nina Dobrev). When his bank is held up by the infamous Ghost Bandits during his wedding week, he believes his future in-laws (Pierce Brosnan, Ellen Barkin) who just arrived in town, are the infamous Out-Laws.

Decent enough and Brosnan shines but the format may feel a little dated and cheesy for some.





### I'm A Virgo \*\*\*

**Starring:** Brett Gray, Rachel Thurow  
**Streaming:** Prime Video  
**Run Time:** 115 mins  
**Available to stream:** Currently

From the creator of 2018 film *Sorry to Bother You* comes this Prime Video Original absurdist comedy series about a 13-foot-tall, 19-year-old black man named Cootie (Jharrel Jerome). *I'm a Virgo* follows Cootie as he is accidentally discovered by a group of teenage political activists after being raised by his Aunt Lafrancine (Carmen Ejogo) and Uncle Martisse (Mike Epps) in Oakland, California, where he has been sheltered from the outside world. Now that he has been seen, Cootie is swiftly thrust into the beauty and contradictions of the real world and forced to navigate friendships, love, and all sorts of awkward situations. Immerse yourself in an enthralling and entertaining series, the likes of which you've never seen before, by watching *I'm A Virgo*. Very funny.



### The Idol \*\*

**Starring:** Lily-Rose Depp, Suzanna Son  
**Streaming:** Sky Atlantic  
**Run Time:** 4 x 60 mins  
**Available to watch:** Currently

Lily-Rose Depp (daughter of Johnny and Vanessa Paradis) headlines this new drama series which is set in the background of Hollywood's music industry. She stars as Jocelyn, a young pop starlet, who resolves to reclaim her title as the "sexiest pop star in America" after her last tour is cancelled because of her nervous breakdown. This provocative drama follows her rise to fame and her relationship with the self-help guru who reignites her passions.

It must be said that this series is probably not the best choice of role for Ms. Depp if she wants to dispel the label 'Nepo Baby' (a term referring to the children of celebs who have succeeded in careers because of their parents and powerful contacts).

Series will be popular with the Gen Zs no doubt.



# Ireland's Swamps as a Climate Saver

**Ireland is reforesting swamps and peatlands to fight climate change, Noah Dunker reports.**

## **Ireland stores tons of CO<sub>2</sub> through 33,000 hectares of new peatlands**

Ireland is reforesting its swamps and bogs in a bid to fight climate change. Although marshlands cover only three percent of the earth, they store 25 percent of the world's CO<sub>2</sub>. So far, around 8100 hectares on the "green island" have been flooded with water. The "watering" is intended to create optimum conditions for new peat land. Experts believe that the "renaturation" project will store enormous amounts of climate-damaging greenhouse gases.



greatest storage potential for CO<sub>2</sub>. When a plant dies, the CO<sub>2</sub> stored in it is released into the water or into the

marsh soil as it decays, rather than into the air. Bogs and marshlands are therefore true climate protectors!

### **Trees store CO<sub>2</sub> and release oxygen**

This process is called photosynthesis. When trees die and rot, they release the remaining CO<sub>2</sub> into the environment, especially into the air. However, if a tree falls into a swamp, the CO<sub>2</sub> is not released into

the air but stored in the water and soil. If the swamp dries up, and thus also the CO<sub>2</sub>-containing mixture, peat is formed. Over thousands of years, a well-known raw material is created from it: coal!

**the "renaturation" project will store enormous amounts of climate-damaging greenhouse gases**

Peatlands are considered to be the ecosystem with the

Until the industrial revolution, almost one fifth of Ireland was covered with peatlands. From the 1850s



until today, people have destroyed large parts of Ireland's nature – that is, besides marshlands, also countless forests. The partly state-owned company “Bord na Móna” wants to revive nature and make Ireland the green lung of Europe to fight climate change. For this reason, they are filling 33,000 hectares of alluvial land with water over the next few years. They also want to reintroduce native species of plants and animals that have been driven or wiped out over the years. Currently, just under a quarter, or 8125 hectares, has been “reforested.”



everywhere on the island and was therefore very cheap.

Peat was also used to heat the houses in Ireland.

Another reason for the large-scale drainage of the Irish peatlands is agriculture. During the Industrial Revolution, Ireland developed not only railroads and cities, but also agriculture on a large scale. For the cultivation of food, large areas of marshland were destroyed.

Even at the beginning of industrialization,

the destruction of the marshes was already underway:

by the end of the 19th century, Ireland was more industrialized

than the whole of Austro-Hungarian Empire or Spain, two countries that were significantly

larger in terms of area and population. The partly state-owned Irish company “Bord na Móna” and others

now wants to declare war on environmental destruction and make the “emerald isle” live up to its name again.

## How Ireland's marshlands were destroyed and rebuilt

**They also want to reintroduce native species of plants and animals that have been driven or wiped out over the years**

The reason for the poor condition of Ireland's peatlands is historical. The tradition of “peat cutting” has been preserved and carried on for generations. The peat, when dried, is a good fuel. For the economy, especially during the industrialization, the peat was in great demand because it could be found



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**Sports & Fitness Ballymun**, Main St Ballymun, D9. (01) 2228240

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**Glin Road Sports Hall**, Coolock, D17. (01) 8478177

**Inchicore Community Sports Hall**, St. Michael's Estate, Off Bulfin Road, Inchicore, D8. (01) 2228562

**Sports & Fitness Irishtown**, Irishtown, D4. (01) 2223801

**Sports & Fitness Markievicz**, Townsend Street, D2. (01) 2226130

**Poppintree Sport & Community Facility**, Balbutcher Lane, Poppintree, D11. (01) 2223985

**St. Catherine's Sports Centre**, Marrowbone Lane, D8. (01) 2227542

**Coolock Swimming Pool**, Northside Shopping Centre, Coolock, D17. (01) 8477743

**East Wall Water Sports Centre**, Alfie Byrne Rd, D3. (01) 2225579

**Municipal Rowing Club**, Longmeadows, Islandbridge, D8. (01) 6779746

<https://www.dublincity.ie/residential/sports-and-leisure>



# It's a Dream Come True Homeless World Cup finals, Sacramento, California, July 8/15

**I**t's a dream come true for Chantel Pearse from Moyross, Limerick as she represents Ireland at the Homeless World Cup 2023.

Due to the Covid pandemic it is 4 years since the last Homeless World Cup took place in Cardiff 2019. The choice of the USA as hosts for this year's tournament was not without problems for the Irish team. The process of securing Visas' proved immensely challenging and problematic so unfortunately we were only able to bring a female team to this year's tournament.



For Goalkeeper Chantel Pearse it is a dream

come true to represent her country. Chantel played at the All Ireland Cup in Dublin in April 2023, organised by Homeless Street Leagues Ireland where she spoke to Homeless World Cup International Partnerships Manager, Zoe Hopkins. Next time she's playing in a tournament, it will be at the Homeless World Cup in Sacramento,

"I'm hoping to get over there and win"

It's fighting talk from 20-year-old goalkeeper Chantel, she had a taste of playing for her country at the Eight Nations Tournament hosted by Street Soccer Scotland in Dundee in September 2022 and now, she's ready for more.

"That was probably the highlight of my years to date. " Chantel's dream started to feel it was within reach when

she joined local side Moyross United in 2022. When Homeless Street Leagues Ireland started in Limerick and her coach from Moyross United was a coordinator, she jumped at the chance of being part of the programme. Scouted by the team, she was invited to trials in Dublin, which secured her place on the Ireland team for the Eight Nations Tournament in Dundee.

Photo: Gary Ashe

But it's not only her love of the beautiful game that has cemented her commitment; it's her love for her teammates.

"[At the Moyross team] everyone is so accepting, no matter what age you are, what your sexual orientation is, who you are, they're going to talk to you. No one is going to be standoffish with you because a lot of people have the same struggles that they're coming from somewhere that is disadvantaged, it doesn't have the facilities that are needed, and the support that young people need."

**All the girls come together and support each other - it's like a big family.**

"All the girls come together and support each other - it's like a big family. It's a great outlet as well."

Support and acceptance aren't things that Chantel has always got in her life.

**Continued on page 33**






**Best Wishes to  
Ireland's ladies  
team in the  
Homeless World  
Cup Finals**



I am always happy to help,  
should you need me.

**Johnny Mythen TD Co.Wexford**

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**Sinn Féin**

## CATHERINE CONNOLLY

*Best wishes to all the Irish Team in the  
Homeless Street Soccer Finals 2023*



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## Continued from page 31

Chantel is reluctant to elaborate too much on her struggles but reveals,

“I struggled a lot with my mental health, life was difficult for me in many ways during my teenage years and in an effort to come to terms with things I resorted to drinking and partying. That was a struggle in itself, it was casual and then it started getting worse.”

“My father is an addict and is in active addiction and left when I was 14. He got me involved in soccer and then left, so I ended up leaving it. That was a hurtful situation, and it does still hurt.”

During that time I quit playing soccer for three years and ended up sofa surfing.

Despite initial struggles, Chantel has nothing but praise for her mum. “[My mum is] very supportive, she advocates for everything I do. She’s the best support to be honest.”

Now she’s back living at home with her mum while studying Social Care at college. She’s halfway through her course and has two more years to go.

“My job – my future – I want to support people the way I didn’t receive my own support. That’s what I want to do – I don’t believe there’s much mental health services at the moment. One or two, but the waiting lists can be a year – that’s no help.”

When asked about the advice she’d give her younger self,

she has a clear message,

“Take support when it’s given to you because there isn’t enough given. Open up and just take it.”



Thinking ahead to Sacramento, Chantel is optimistic about her future there too.

“I have high hopes. It’s a really great opportunity for us going there. It’s something out of this world that you’d never expect to do – I’ve never been

to America. It wouldn’t be something that’s feasible for me.”

“We’d bring back the positivity but also bring back the skills and what we learnt from working with Street League, and the training we do at an international level. Bring that back to a community basis and teach younger girls that there’s an opportunity at whatever age you are to get to that international level. Because that’s what we all want to do at the end of the day. To do the best we can.”

The 18th edition of the Homeless World Cup will take place at University of California, Sacramento from 8th – 15th July 2023. Ireland will be bringing women’s teams to the tournament. Keep up to date with all that’s happening via:

**Facebook:** Irish Street League  
**Twitter:** @IrishStLeague  
**Web:** [www.irishstreetleague.com](http://www.irishstreetleague.com)



# 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.

## Eject! Eject! – John Nichol – Simon & Schuster



When Jo Lancaster, the first British pilot to eject in an emergency, triggered his ejection seat in 1949, it took thirty seconds before he was safely away from the aircraft and under his parachute. Since those first post-Second World War ejections, many tens of thousands of lives have been saved by increasingly sophisticated escape systems. When John Nichol's Tornado was blasted out of the sky during the 1991 Gulf War, a mere 2.5 seconds elapsed between pulling the ejection handle and his parachute opening. Today, the newest seats can automatically initiate ejection if the system decides the pilot faces mortal danger and cannot react quickly enough.

Now, Nichol tells the incredible story of the ejection seat in war and in peace – of the pioneers who risked everything during the early days of development in the 1940s and 50s, of the designers who went head to head with the authorities in order to realise their vision, and of the extraordinary men and women who were given a second chance at life after facing disaster. We see how the technology was adapted when the prospect of crashing in North Vietnam was sometimes preferable to ejecting and risking capture; what happens to the body when it is catapulted from an aircraft under great force; how an ejectee can be rescued from enemy territory. Packed with gripping action and cutting-edge science, *Eject! Eject!* is fuelled by dramatic, deeply moving and previously unheard first-hand accounts by ejectees and their families. Because pulling the yellow-and-black ejection handle is just the start of the story.

## The Happy Couple – Naoise Dolan – W&N

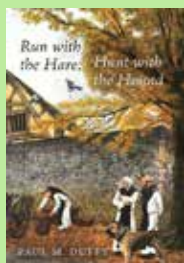
**THE BRIDE AND GROOM:** Celine and Luke are meant to get married and live happily ever after. But Celine's more interested in playing the piano, and Luke's a serial cheater. **THE BRIDESMAID:** Phoebe, Celine's sister, is meant to finish college and get a real job. Instead she pulls pints, lives with six flatmates, and has no long-term aspirations beyond smoking her millionth cigarette. **THE BEST MAN:** Archie, Luke's best friend and ex-boyfriend, is meant to move up the corporate ladder and on from Luke. Yet he stands where he is, admiring the view. **THE GUEST:** Vivian, Luke's other best friend and other ex, was meant to put up with Luke's bullshit when they dated. But she didn't. And now she is contented,





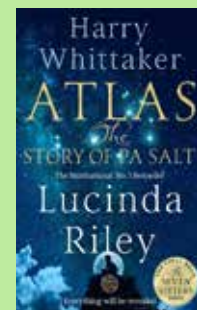
methodically observing her friends like ants. As the wedding approaches and these five lives intersect, each character will find themselves looking for a path to their happily ever after - but does it lie at the end of an aisle? From the author of *Exciting Times*, this is a sparkling ensemble novel about love and marriage, fidelity and betrayal, that is both ferociously clever and supremely enjoyable

### Run with the Hare, Hunt with the Hound – Paul M Duffy – Cennan Books of Cynren Press



On a remote Gaelic farmstead in medieval Ireland, word reaches Alberic of conquering Norman knights arriving from England. Oppressed by the social order that enslaved his Norman father, he yearns for the reckoning he believes the invaders will bring-but his world is about to burn. Captured by the Norman knight Hugo de Lacy and installed at Dublin Castle as a translator, Alberic's confused loyalties are tested at every turn. When de Lacy marches inland, Alberic is set on a collision course with his former masters amidst rumours of a great Gaelic army rising in the west. Can Alberic navigate safely through revenge, lust and betrayal to find his place amidst the birth of a kingdom in a land of war?

### Atlas: The Story of Pa Salt: The epic conclusion to the Seven Sisters series (The Seven Sisters, 8) –Lucinda Reilly – Macmillan



Spanning a lifetime of love and loss, crossing borders and oceans, *Atlas: The Story of Pa Salt*, co-authored by her son Harry Whittaker, draws Lucinda Riley's saga to its stunning, unforgettable conclusion.

1928, Paris. A boy is found, moments from death, and taken in by a kindly family. Gentle, precocious, talented, he flourishes in his new home, and the family show him a life he hadn't dreamed possible. But he refuses to speak a word about who he really is. As he grows into a young man, falling in love and taking classes at the prestigious Conservatoire de Paris, he can almost forget the terrors of his past, or the promise he has vowed to keep. But across Europe an evil is rising, and no-one's safety is certain. In his heart, he knows the time will come when he must flee once more. 2008, the Aegean. The seven sisters are gathered together for the first time, on board the Titan, to say a final goodbye to the enigmatic father they loved so dearly. To the surprise of everyone, it is the missing sister who Pa Salt has chosen to entrust with the clue to their pasts. But for every truth revealed, another question emerges. The sisters must confront the idea that their adored father was someone they barely knew. And even more shockingly: that these long-buried secrets may still have consequences for them today. In this epic conclusion to the Seven Sisters series, everything will be revealed.

### I Will Be Good: A Memoir of a Dublin Childhood and a Life Less Ordinary – Peig McManus – Hachette Books Ireland



Meet Peig McManus, an unforgettable Dublin character whose story will make you laugh and cry. Her memoir of a 1940s' childhood is recounted with candour and wit, as she describes her early years in the last of the city's tenements, under the shadow of the Second World War. Even in the midst of sorrow, as the ravages of poverty and tuberculosis prevailed, there was always singing and laughter. Peig recalls happy family gatherings in their tenement rooms before their way of life was shattered when the slums were cleared, making way for the migration of inner-city families to Dublin's new suburbs. Peig learned early about class distinction, chastity and shame, and fought against social prejudice to become one of Ireland's foremost campaigners for educational reform. But a quiet sorrow lay at the heart of her life, one that could not be hidden forever. Now, in her eighties, Peig shares her story: an inspiring journey through the trials and triumphs of a remarkable Irish woman who refused to do what she was told.

### Dog Man 11: Twenty Thousand Fleas Under the Sea (the latest full colour book in the million-copy selling Dog Man series! –Dav Pilkey – Scholastic



Piggy is back, and his newest plot is his most diabolical yet. Dog Man and the rest of your favourite characters must join together in this heroic and hilarious, ALL NEW adventure. WHAT new villains are on the horizon? WHERE are they all coming from? And WHO will step forward to save the city when scoundrels sabotage our Supa Buddies? Find out in DOG MAN #11 - there's so much more than ever before - it's EPIC!

# Jokes

*Because laughter is the best medicine!*



**Below are fine examples of what happens when marketing translations fail to reach a foreign country in an understandable way:**

Scandinavian vacuum manufacturer Electrolux used the following in an American campaign: Nothing sucks like an Electrolux.

When Parker Pen marketed a ballpoint pen in Mexico, its ads were supposed to say, "It won't leak in your pocket and embarrass you." However, the company mistakenly thought the Spanish word "embarazar" meant embarrass. Instead the ads said that "It won't leak in your pocket and make you pregnant."

When Gerber started selling baby food in Africa, they used the same packaging as in the US, with the beautiful baby on the label. Later they learned that in Africa, companies routinely put pictures on the label of what's inside, since most people can't read English.

---

A guy goes into the bar and sits down and orders a drink. Other than the bartender, there's no one else in the place.

All of a sudden he hears a voice say, 'Nice suit.'

He looks around and doesn't see anyone and the bartender looks busy washing some glasses.

A little while later the same voice says, 'Nice tie.'

The guy looks around again and doesn't see anyone. He finally asks the bartender if he just said something.

'No,' replied the bartender, "it wasn't me. It was probably the peanuts though. They're complimentary."

---

A man came home from work, sat down in his favourite chair, turned on the TV, and said to his wife, "Quick! Bring me a beer before it starts!"

She looked a little puzzled, but brought him a beer.

When he finished it, he said, "Quick! Bring me another beer! It's gonna start!"

This time she looked a little angry, but brought him a beer.

When it was gone, he said, "Quickly! Another beer! It's gonna start any second!"

"That's it!" She blows her top. "You b\*stard! You waltz in here, flop your fat ass down, don't even say hello to me and then expect me to run around like your slave! Don't you realise that I cook and clean and wash and iron all day long?"

The husband sighed. "Oh sh\*t. It's started."

---

A passenger train is creeping along, slowly. Finally it creaks to a halt. A passenger sees a conductor walking by outside.

"What's going on?" she yells out the window.

"Cow on the track!" replies the conductor.

Ten minutes later, the train resumes its slow pace.

Within five minutes, however, it stops again.

The woman sees the same conductor walk again.

She leans out the window and yells, "What happened? Did we catch up with the cow again?"

---

At the police station, Bubba explained to the police officer why his cousins shot him. "Well," Bubba began, "We wuz havin' a good time drinking, when my cousin Ray picked up his shotgun and said, 'Hey, der ya fellows wanna go hunting?'"

"And then what happened?" the officer interrupted.

"From what I remember," Bubba said, "I stood up and said, 'Sure, I'm game.'"



# Best of Luck

to Ireland's Ladies -Street Soccer Ireland team- who compete in the Homeless World Cup Sacramento, California, July 8-15th

Top Sean, Founder IHSL Amy, Chantel, Chloe, Mary Coach, Chris CEO IHSL  
Bottom: Kasey, Chloe M, Lauren, Casey.



“Representing your country in whatever field of endeavour is a massive achievement, this honour is hard earned, sacrifices are made, obstacles overcome, you can be immensely proud to wear the Irish jersey, you’ve earned it and deserved the honour and I’m sure I speak for everyone when I wish you the best of Luck in the Finals. “  
Sean - Editor

IRELAND'S **BIG**  
**ISSUE**



Photos: Gary Ashe

**HOMELESS**  
**WORLD CUP**

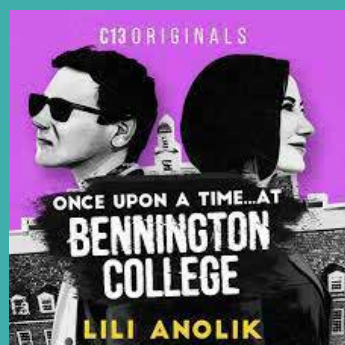
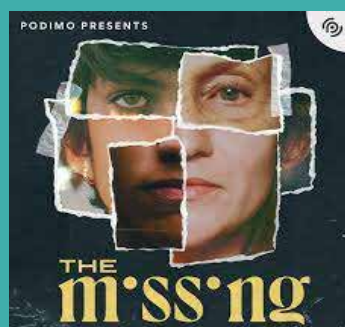
# The Podcast Review

**We source the best selection of podcasts each issue. This time we bring you How Do You Cope? Scamanda, The Missing and Once Upon a Time At ... Bennington College**

## How Do You Cope? (Mental Health)

Elis James and John Robins talk to a range of guests about the challenges and hurdles they've faced in their own lives, whilst asking the question... How Do You Cope?

If you're just discovering this excellent podcast there's a rich array of past episodes featuring guests like Ruby Wax on how she has used mindfulness strategies to cope with her own racing thoughts and Gail Porter on how she coped when she became homeless and lost everything.



## Scamanda (True Crime)

Amanda is a wife. A mother. A blogger. A charming, beautiful, bubbly, young woman who lives life to the fullest. But Amanda is dying, with a secret she doesn't want anyone to know. She starts a blog detailing her cancer journey, and becomes an inspiration, touching and captivating her local community as well as followers all over the world - until one day investigative producer Nancy gets an anonymous tip telling her to look at Amanda's blog, setting Nancy on an unimaginable road to uncover Amanda's secret. Award winning journalist Charlie Webster explores this unbelievable and bizarre, but all-too-real tale, of a woman from San Jose, California whose secret ripped a family apart and left a community in shock.

Scamanda is the true story of a woman whose own words held the key to her secret.

## The Missing (Social)

Could you help locate a missing person? That's exactly what this tense series hosted by Pandora Sykes asks of its listeners. Each episode focuses on a different case, stitching together beguiling clues about their last known whereabouts as well as the emotional testimonies of friends and family, and implores the public to come forward with more information. As theories are explored, dismissed and revisited, it will keep you on the edge of your seat and buoyed by the fact that the final piece of the puzzle might be found at any moment.

## Once Upon a Time At .... Bennington College (Human Interest)

In this gripping series, Vanity Fair writer Lily Anolik traces the history of Bennington College's class of '86, which included Donna Tartt, Jonathan Lethem and Bret Easton Ellis. According to Anolik, the renowned writers were both affectionate and competitive with one another while navigating the "wildest and wickedest school in America", which all three later mythologised in their writing.

### 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.



# Discount Corner

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