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SINÉAD - 1966-2023

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Congratulations to Ireland's Ladies Team on their achievements in the Homeless World Cup Finals in Sacramento, California 8-15 July .

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- Capuchin Day Centre
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- Merchants Quay Ireland
01 524 0923
- PMVT - Berkley Street
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087 434 1668
- Alice Leahy Trust
01 545 3799

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- Finglas County Council
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01 890 5090
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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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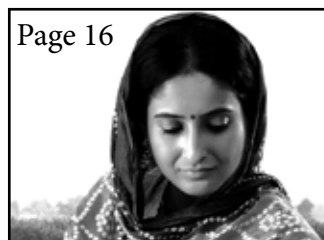
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Letter to my Younger Self - Patrick Kane

Each issue we ask an interesting person to write a letter to their 16-year-old self. This issue, Patrick Kane, a Sepsis Trust Ambassador, who suffered from sepsis as a baby resulting in the loss of his right leg below the knee and all his fingers on his left hand and some on his right hand takes on the challenge. In 2010, Patrick became the youngest person in the world to have been fitted with a bionic arm. Patrick is now a motivational speaker and has done TED Talks in the past. In 2012 he was an Olympic torch bearer.

I can be extremely grateful that there is no correct way to grow up. Any plans that might have been made for me when I was born in March 1997 as a baby with the biologically typical set of limbs had to be completely rewritten just nine months later. After a long night of crying and a high temperature, and a misdiagnosis by a local GP, my paranoid and perceptive mother ordered a taxi to take me to the unbooked clinic at St. Mary's Hospital in London. Upon arrival I was immediately moved into intensive care, where I would spend the following weeks and months fighting for my life against sepsis, from a meningococcal infection. On my first night at the hospital, my family gathered around me to say their goodbyes.

The road to recovery was long and complicated, but I returned home just before my first birthday. Though I was missing my right leg below the knee, all the fingers on my left hand and the second and third digits on my right hand, my life simply carried on as my new normal. I was fortunate to be surrounded by people who never



treated me differently and never allowed me to feel sorry for myself. I learned to walk on a prosthetic leg and learned to crash my way around my environment as any toddler would.

Sure, there were obstacles. But they were largely put in place by other people. There was the young girl who didn't want to play with my 5-year-old sister because her brother was "disgusting", and there were always questions from new playmates who wanted to know "what happened?". But each of these obstacles were also opportunities to educate people, and having answers for them only helped my confidence to grow with me. I was always taught that "if there is an elephant in the room, you should introduce it". And whether this was by bringing in a sack of legs for my school 'Show-and-Tell' lesson, or by having the freedom to make my leg leopard print, it always meant I was acutely aware of my

unique differences.

But this journey of discovery wasn't always so empowering. In 2010 when I became the youngest person in the world to be fitted with a bionic arm, I was

excited about finally being able to cut up my own food and tie my own shoelaces. I wish I better understood the responsibility that came with this new functionality.

My confidence swayed towards ego as I began to distance myself from the word 'disabled', because I no longer believed that it applied to me. Growing up I thought that 'disabled' was a bad word, and I wish I better understood the world around me then, and the importance of not distancing myself from a community that

I would permanently be part of. I wish I knew the real power I could find in redefining that label, rather than impersonating strength and trying to adopt a new one.

Reminders of exactly why I needed to help redefine that label were often bluntly delivered. I remember the dating programme I was asked to be on called "Too Ugly For Love?", and how the producer told me I would be "perfect" to go on it, despite me saying my disability had never affected my dating life. I was only 18-years-old, and I wish my younger self understood exactly why they said that. I should never have thought it was personal, but rather realised just how much had to be done to redefine what I meant.

I always thought that disability was rare, and that there was nobody like me in the world. While the second statement is true for everyone, I think my outlook would have been profoundly different if I understood that 15% of the planet is disabled, and that meant there were over a billion of us. It would also have been empowering to know exactly why that number was so high, which is because disability only exists when your environment has not been designed to align with the needs of your body. I think this would have helped me see the shared value in fighting for everyone with differing needs, not just improving my own daily life.

I think that these influences would have helped me feel more at ease with my choices, and not feel pressure to fit in with other people's perceptions of my disability. That I didn't need to try to become a Paralympian or "beat" my disability. It would have been liberating to know when I was far younger that while my ambitions are aspirations in life are twinned with my disability, they are never

purely "because of" or "despite" it, and it is ok to have times where I want to be defined by all the other things that make me who I am.



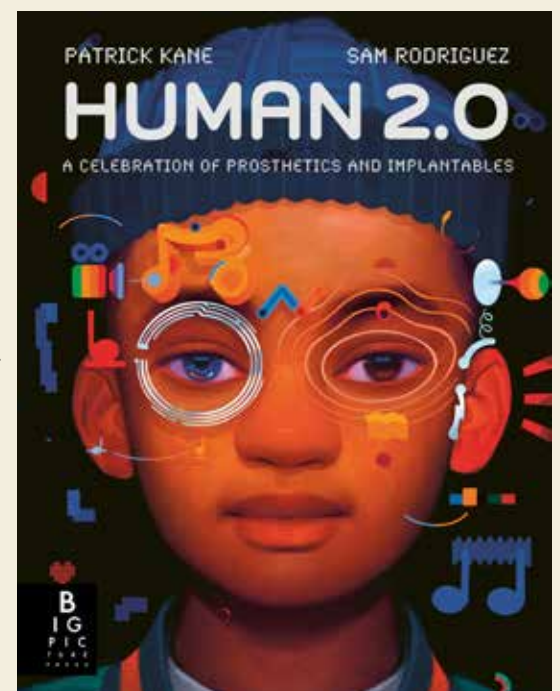
Which brings younger me to the topic of inspiration. There is a burden in being labelled with that word for every action that you do, and it is important to know that it can be used rightly or wrongly for a young disabled person. At its best, it is how you have conquered genuine

adversity and should be a badge that you comfortably wear with pride. At its worst, it is a lazy word that people use to describe how good you make them feel, purely by existing. As I grew up it would have been freeing to understand the difference to know how and when to react to it. It will serve you well to know this for your writing and speaking, and to help say yes to the correct opportunities.

I remember the dating programme I was asked to be on called "Too Ugly For Love?", and how the producer told me I would be "perfect" to go on it...

I have been so lucky to have always had amazing friends and family surrounding me, telling me what they thought and then still allowing me to decide for myself. If I could end by telling myself one more thing, it would be to take their advice just a little more often, and that there is no shame in relying on others for anything. As it turns out, they might just know exactly what they're talking about.

Human 2.0 by Patrick Kane and illustrated by Sam Rodriguez, came out 30th March 2023, published by Big Picture Press



Chloe Kenna: *A Ball Can Change a Life*

From Alcohol Dependency & Homelessness to Representing Ireland & Graduating University Chloe Kenna tells her story.

Chloe Kenna has not had life easy; after her dad died she suddenly found herself spiralling deep into alcohol dependency which resulted in homelessness. She recently represented Ireland at the Homeless World Cup in Sacramento California, graduated with her Business Studies Degree and has obtained employment as a Financial Analyst in Limerick. Kenna is a true testament to ‘A Ball Can Change a Life.’

Chloe is an articulate, soft-spoken 26-year-old from Durrow, Co. Laois and incredibly proud of her home village,

“Have you ever heard of our Scarecrow Festival? It’s in Durrow. We have one every summer and the locals make scarecrows ... we even got nominated for Best Festival of 2012 and 2013 in the Irish Times Ticket Awards.”

You’re obviously very proud of your community,



“[Laughs] ... Can you tell? Actually, we have another claim to fame too. Bernard O’Shea [comedian, writer & radio host] is from Durrow too.”

As we chat it becomes abundantly clear that Chloe is incredibly proud of several things: her family, her community, her soccer and her resilience.

Chloe Kenna was born in 1997, the sixth of eight kids born to parents who always did what they could for their children,

“Obviously we’re a big family, five boys and three girls, so it was always a very very busy environment.”

Attending the local primary followed by secondary school at Ballinakill Mixed School, she consistently had two

interests - sport and maths,

“I’ve always loved soccer and played with boys from as far back as I can recall as no girls in our area played. I joined a local football team at the age of six and was in it until I was thirteen, when, thankfully, a girls’ team was set up.

“At school I never had any interest in things like English or written work but had a real love and talent for figures ... there was always something about maths and the logic and problem solving in it that I loved and that led to me getting interested in accountancy and business in later years of secondary school.”

Her Life Crumbles

When Chloe was 22 and studying at college, her life crumbled before her eyes. Having always “enjoyed the drink”, her dad, whom she was incredibly close with unexpectedly passed away leaving her questioning everything in life - and in a bid to “numb my pain and quieten my thoughts” she turned to the bottle,

“Suddenly it hit me, he was gone, he wasn’t coming back and I just didn’t know how to process it. It hit me so hard that I couldn’t function. As the days and weeks passed by I kept using the drink to mask my problems and even then, I knew I shouldn’t be doing it but I couldn’t stop. I’m very logically minded and I knew in my head that I needed to think everything through with a clear mind and I remember knowing that I was delaying the inevitable - processing and working through the grief yet I couldn’t stop drinking.”

It had become your crutch.

“Exactly, you get to the stage where you think you need it just to basically function. I’m just glad I never ventured into drug taking, that’s something I’m very grateful for, but to be honest, the drink was hard enough and I can’t imagine battling both.”



And it can’t have helped that Covid hit around this time.

“That added to the problem for sure because you add in boredom to the mix and you’ve a real battle on your hands. I always had a routine of drinking recreationally

as well so that was very difficult as I loved it and I loved enjoying it with friends. We were at college and everything seemed so good and in a heartbeat my life was changed and what I enjoyed on a night out had come to rule my life. Grieving, lonely, lockdown and battling booze was a hard feat.”

It can’t have been easy for your mum.

“I was a real danger to myself and it was taking its toll on her. She never knew what state I’d be in or when she’d see me. I’d go out and roll in when it pleased me and I’d have lots of blank spots in my memory where I’d obviously passed out. Looking back it breaks my heart. I can’t imagine what that was like for my mother - every fear must have gone through her mind.”

And blacking out - anything could have happened to you.

“That actually terrifies me to think of Sam. I’m very lucky that I wasn’t taken advantage of, that I wasn’t filmed for entertainment on social media ... there’s so

“I was a real danger to myself”

many things that could have happened me.”

And you found yourself homeless.

“I was making life awful for my mam I’m ashamed of myself looking back. I broke her heart ... she was doing

everything to help me and keep me safe and I just constantly rebelled and rolled in, in the most awful states when the notion took me, at all hours of the morning

Eventually she just

told me to get out And looking back I don’t blame her, I really don’t She was devastated and trying to keep life normal for the rest of the family and battling to stay strong and I was bent on wrecking my life. My younger sister was only a teenager and would get really upset seeing me in that state and my mam was trying to maintain a proper home life for her too and [long silence].....Even thinking about it now.... I can’t imagine being in my mam’s position..... I’m truly sorry I ever put her through that.”

Must have been scary having nowhere to live.

“I couch surfed wherever I could until I’d overstayed my welcome ... that lasted a good few months... it was hard.”

Did being homeless lead to you seeking help?

“I’d like to say yes but no.... I think it was a couple of things. I remember waking up one day and thinking, ‘Chloe, if your dad is looking down at you, do you think he’d be proud that you’re abusing alcohol and doing this to yourself ... do you think he’d be pleased with your behaviour and what you’re putting everyone through?’

That thought played over in my mind for while and I finally admitted to myself that the drinking was out of control. I felt I needed to admit this to family and friends ... and you know what siblings are like [laughs], I got the hard love, ‘Grow the f**k up Chloe and stop this’.”



They say admitting there’s a problem is the first step in getting help.

“For me, admitting it helped me move forward because I was exposing this secret that was holding me captive. I also hated the anxiety the next day I’d spend the day ill at the toilet seat fearful of what might have

happened in parts of the day or evening I couldn’t recall. I wanted my life back. I was sick of living like this.”

Not many people can say they’ve represented their country, and I can...

You didn’t seek professional help?

“No I had a huge family and great friends who helped me and held me accountable every step of the way but to be honest, many times I thought I’d need professional help.”

You credit soccer for helping you get your life back on track.

“Yes, I have always loved soccer and felt I should be doing things I genuinely love and am passionate about. I moved to Limerick and joined Moyross Street League and one day Laura Hughes at the League told me about a football trial in Tallaght; she said her friend Adrian Power represented Ireland a few years back and I should go up and see how I get on, so me and a few other girls from the team went along to see what [Graham Tucker Street league coach) thought of us and he invited us back as he thought we were good. We did the 8 Nations Tournament in Dundee last year and we won, so we were really proud of that. Tucker then invited us back to get on the Homeless World Cup Team and luckily I made the team - and what a group of girls....we are family,

we have a bond and friendship that will last a lifetime ... I always know I can pick up my phone if I'm having a problem or just need a friendly, encouraging text and any one of those girls will be there for me. I'm incredibly thankful for that. Everyone involved with the Street League and Homeless World Cup are so dedicated and I'm so proud to be a part of it. There's also no judgement - and that's something that's really important to me No one thinks any less of you for having been through problems in your life They accept you where you're at and there's something very special about that."



change in me and she sees how playing soccer and getting back to my first love has revived me."

Chloe completed her degree in Business Studies at the University of Limerick and works as a Financial Analyst - a job she believes she was "cut out for." These days she's replaced the alcohol with another new passion - cooking "I'm especially passionate about Italian food I'd love to go there someday and pick up some new skills and taste some nice dishes."

As we finish our chat and Chloe lists the best Netflix series she's recently binge-watched she tells me she talks about the Letter to my Younger Self feature in the magazine which she enjoys so I ask what advice she'd give her 16-year-old self and she replies,

"I'd tell my 16-year-old self and every 16-year-old out there - life will get hard but always learn to adapt and be more flexible and no matter how hard things seem, there is a way out if you don't give up."

You did well at the Homeless World Cup.

"That was probably the best experience of my life ever. Not many people can say they've represented their country, and I can, plus I got Captain, so I'm really proud of that. Let's just say the morale got a great boost [laughs]. Mam was delighted. She sees the complete

Congratulations to Ireland's Ladies Team on their achievements in the Homeless World Cup Finals in Sacramento, California 8-15 July .



Senator Mary
Fitzpatrick
Spokesperson on Housing, Local Government & Heritage.

Congratulations to Irelands Ladies on their great achievement at the Homeless World Cup

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Ireland's Ladies Street League team representing Ireland at the Six Nations Tournament in Scotland. See more next edition.



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Congratulations to Ireland's Ladies team on their achievements in the Homeless World Cup in Sacramento, California, 2023.



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Congratulations to Ireland's Ladies Team on their achievements in the Homeless World Cup Finals in Sacramento, California 8-15 July .



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Trump Indictment

Ronald S. Sullivan Jr. Professor of Law, Harvard University reveals how prosecutors will try to prove Trump knowingly lied and intended to break the law.

What was Donald Trump thinking when he set about trying to maintain the presidency after losing it to Joe Biden?

That’s the key question a jury will need to consider in Trump’s federal trial on charges announced Aug. 1, 2023, stemming from Trump’s attempts to overthrow the results of the 2020 presidential election.

The latest indictment charges Trump with conspiring to defraud the United States; to obstruct an official government proceeding; and to deprive U.S. citizens of a civil right – namely, to have their vote count.

In a fourth count, Trump is charged with obstructing, or attempting to obstruct, an official proceeding of Congress.

As a criminal law scholar, it’s my belief that the key to a conviction or acquittal on these counts will be what jurors believe to be Trump’s state of mind at the time

of these alleged events.



Photo by Library of Congress on Unsplash

Criminal intent

U.S. criminal law requires that the accused not just engage in an act, but to engage in that act with a guilty mindset. In other words, it is not enough to do something; the accused has to intend to do the thing to merit this charge.

In some statutes, criminal negligence is enough to convict someone of a crime. This means that the person grossly violated some duty of care, even though it may have been unintentional.

At the other end of the spectrum, some statutes require specific intent as the requisite state of mind for someone to be convicted. Specific intent means that the accused intended to cause the particular result that

ensued.

the government must prove that Trump knowingly lied and intended to break the law.

With respect to the allegations lodged against Trump, the government must prove that Trump knowingly lied and intended to break the law.

The last count – obstruction of a proceeding of Congress – requires the government to prove corrupt intent, which means the actor intended to do something, and his motivation to do it was unlawful.

In short, the government must prove that Trump intended to obstruct the certification of the Electoral College vote for the purpose of overturning what he knew to be a lawful election.



Trump's actions

The same principle holds with the Trump election case as well as the other federal indictment in which Trump is accused of taking classified documents to his Mar-a-Lago home in Florida in violation of federal law. In late July 2023, for instance, Special Counsel Jack Smith added new charges to the original indictment and alleged that Trump directed two of his employees to delete

security camera footage of storage boxes containing classified documents being moved before federal investigators arrived.

That behaviour may be used as evidence of Trump's consciousness of guilt and proof of his intent to commit a crime.

In another example, Trump had a conversation in July 2021 at his summer home in Bedminster, N.J., in which he talked about a military document concerning Iran.

In that conversation, which was recorded, Trump said: "As president, I could have declassified it. Now I can't, you know, but this is still secret."

As the country contemplates these indictments, it's important to remember that federal prosecutors will dissect everything Trump did, said or heard to argue that his behaviour indicates that he intended to commit the crimes for which he is charged.

Consciousness of guilt

The next logical question is how does one determine intent?

It's impossible to look into someone's mind to figure out their intent. As a result, the law deploys several tools that allow jurors to infer the intent of an accused, largely from his actions.

Consciousness of guilt is the leading tool.

Let's say a person is accused of homicide, a charge which requires a specific intent to kill. The defense is that the death was the result of an accident.

The government is allowed to present evidence that shows the accused hid the body, disposed of the gun and tried to create a false alibi. None of these actions are consistent with an accident. Instead, the accused's actions demonstrate a consciousness of guilt, which allows the jury to infer intent.

Another example may be an accountant who comes into the office at midnight and logs on to a co-worker's account to change the ledger of a client. Those actions

Trump directed two of his employees to delete security camera footage of storage boxes containing classified documents being moved

First Published in The Conversation

Author Ronald S. Sullivan Jr. Professor of Law, Harvard University

REMEMBERING SINEAD

Rosie Pigot looks back on the life and career of Sinéad O'Connor

The world mourns the loss of an iconic star as Sinéad O'Connor, the visionary protest singer, passed away on July 26, 2023. Her departure leaves a void in the music industry and in the hearts of countless fans who were touched by her exceptional talent and unwavering commitment to making a difference.

Throughout her career, Sinéad captivated audiences with her extraordinary voice and unique style. Her most memorable breakthrough moment came in 1989 when she delivered a distinctive performance of "Mandinka" at the Grammy Awards, she donned a baby grow/suete hanging on her back, belonging to her first son Jake. This act of defiance symbolised her determination to overcome societal expectations and industry pressures, having refused to terminate her pregnancy to prioritise her music career.

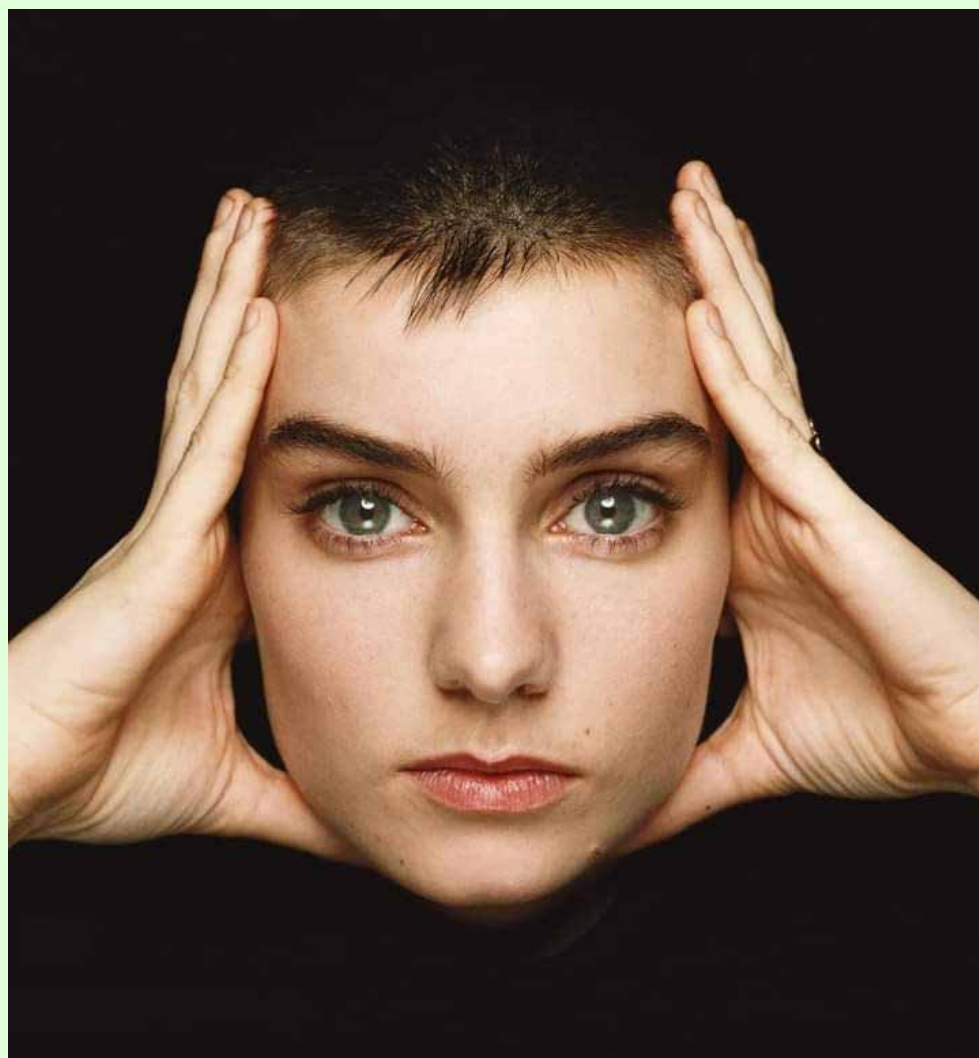
According to the star her early management encouraged her not to carry through with the pregnancy, but to concentrate on promoting her new album. They also suggested she dress more like a

girl. Instead she continued with her pregnancy and shaved her hair off. At the Grammys she had a Public Enemy logo dyed onto the left side of her shaved head.

Public Enemy, a hip hop group had boycotted the Grammys that year because rap music and hip hop were not recognised as a legitimate music category.

Undoubtedly, one of her most memorable music videos was her performance of 'Nothing Compares To U (written by Prince) which resonates deeply with fans worldwide. Her voice and emotional delivery of the song were

stunning. Sinéad made eight albums in her career and although she rose to stardom through her music, she also became famous for her public protests. Her powerful and controversial act of tearing up Pope John Paul II's photo on the US Saturday Night Live in 1992 caused intense worldwide reactions. The incident caused such a stir, with many



This act of defiance symbolised her determination to overcome societal expectations and industry pressures

Catholics and others expressing outrage. Though Sinead later expressed regret, (to a point) she had wanted to shed light on the abuse and injustice suffered mostly by women and children within the Catholic Church. Clerical Child Abuse, The Magdeline Laundries, The Tuam Babies etc. The extent of these horrors would surface later.

The following day Sinead did an interview with Rastafarian Tony Lino on VIDDYMS. She looks vulnerable and unsure, her body hunched over and she appears defensive and hurt. Her actions on the Saturday Night Show would have a huge impact on her. She withdrew from the limelight for several years, even mentioning the possibility of being killed for it. Under the circumstances that would not have been an impossibility.

There's no doubt that this situation was not good for her sense of well being. If you have thousands of people all over the world saying that you're crazy, well, you'll most certainly feel that. Mostly no one knew why she would do such a thing, John Paul the II' was a popular pope.

Sinead O'Connor's journey was one of resilience and authenticity. She was not just a pop star but a protest singer who fearlessly spoke out on issues like women's rights and mental health. Her battle with Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder stemming from childhood abuse, was part of her struggle, but they also demonstrated her courage to openly discuss these topics and advocate for mental health awareness.

In an interview with Ruby Wax, Sinead said she thought the word 'Crazy' should be banned altogether. It's just one of a variety of labels that are degrading. Nowadays, we're catching up. Mental Health issues affect all people across the board. If we used names such as this nowadays it wouldn't be acceptable.

Her spiritual journey was intriguing. Ordained as a priest by Bishop Michael Cox of the Latin Tridentine Church, an unacknowledged branch of Catholicism in 1999. Sinead surprised us in her clerical attire giving sermons

in both Latin and English. She studied Bible Scripture extensively and a number of different religious doctrines. Later she embraced Islam in 2018, changing her name to Shuhada' Sadaqat. Her exploration of different religions culminated in her declaration that Islam was the

"natural conclusion" of her theological quest. She describes how it felt like home.

Since the singer's death, some stories have come to light that demonstrates her altruistic nature. She donated to many charities, Focus Point being one. A story went online recently by Philip Woolcock. His twenty year old daughter Louise had terminal cancer in 1991. Sinead somehow heard of it, contacted and invited

her to London to spend time with her. They had a ball together, dining out, drinking wine, enjoying each others company to the full. Louise had a wonderful time.

When she returned home Sinead stayed in touch, sending her flowers and gifts right up until her friend died in 1992. Philip says 'Today my thoughts are with two remarkable women who, I have no doubt, will be somewhere still laughing, dancing and singing'

**While
The singer was not
without her flaws, her rebellious
nature, kindness and authenticity
endeared her to fans and made
her an inspiration to many.**

In her life Sinead leaves behind a profound legacy woven with unwavering strength, compassion and open vulnerability. Her life is a tapestry of triumphs and setbacks, each thread contributing to the rich mosaic of her existence. Her voice could penetrate deep into the essence of your being. She has been described as a living, breathing musical instrument, a testament to her artistry.

Sinead's authenticity, kindness and compassion endeared her to fans and made her an inspiration to many. She refused to conform to societal norms, challenging the status quo and leaving a lasting impact on the music industry and beyond. Michael D Higgins, Ireland's president said of her at her funeral 'She had a profound effect on people' Without a doubt.

We will miss Sinead and her many talents and facets: Mother, Poet, Protest Singer, Musician, Theologian, Activist.



Sexual Violence in India

Indian women’s struggle against sexual violence has had little support from the men in power reports **Severyna McGill, Senior lecturer in Law & Human rights.**

Two recent instances of vicious sexual violence against ethnic minority women in the Indian state of Manipur involving gang rape and murder have highlighted the problems of impunity and weak laws dealing with violence against women in India.

Video footage emerged on July 20 depicting an incident on May 4 where two Kuki women were stripped naked and forced to parade in front of

a group of men from the dominant Meitei tribe. The footage went viral on social media prompting a strong response from the prime minister, Narendra Modi.

Referring to the women as the “daughters of Manipur”, Modi said that what happened can “never be forgiven”. He added that the incident had “shamed India” – and that the guilty would be punished. Manipur’s chief minister, N. Biren Singh, echoing this focus on punishment, said strict action would be taken against the perpetrators including the possibility of capital punishment. Meanwhile, reports of

another complaint lodged with state police concern the alleged abduction, rape and murder of two Kuki-Zomi women. The complaint says that the women were taken

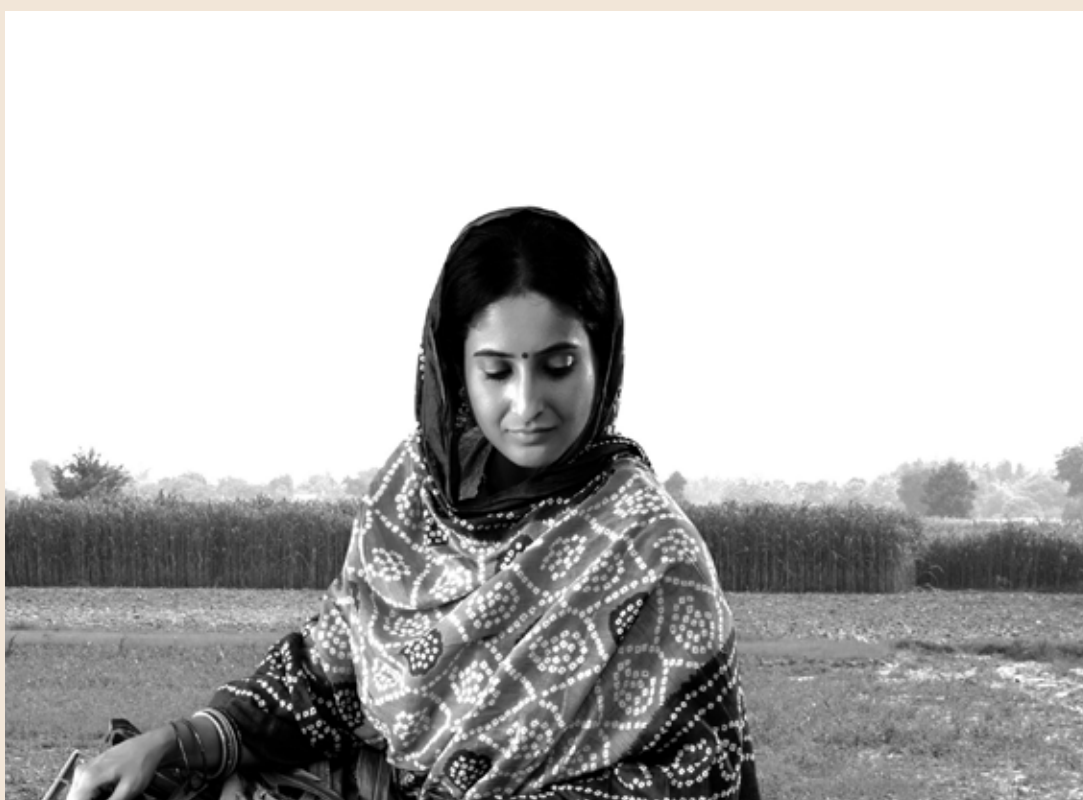
from the car wash where they worked and “brutally murdered” in their rented accommodation on May 5 “after being raped and gruesome(ly) tortured by some unknown persons”, believed to be “about 100-200” in number.

The incidents were part of long-running communal tensions in India’s

northeastern state of Manipur over land ownership between the mostly Hindu Meitei majority ethnic group and the mainly Christian Kuki

hill tribes. There has been escalating violence in recent months between as the state government has forced the eviction of

Kuki villagers from their homes. Kuki villages have been burned down and churches have been demolished. When members of the Kuki and Naga tribes (the two largest minority peoples) protested against their treatment on May 3, it sparked an orgy of violence, since which more than 140 people have died. More than



two Kuki women were stripped naked and forced to parade in front of a group of men from the dominant Meitei tribe

60,000 people have lost their homes in the conflict and are living in relief camps.

Local state machinery seems incapable of ensuring the maintenance of law and order. For two months, opposition parties in parliament have been calling for the central government to intervene, but it wasn't until reports of the video footage of the sexual violence



emerged that there has been any significant government reaction.

community as alleged perpetrators – much of this sexual violence was never adequately investigated. Since the 1990s, with a greater awareness that sexual violence

was being perpetrated, and conscious efforts to distance victims from culturally constructed notions of “honour”, efforts have been made to support women through a judicial process. But these efforts have met with limited success, and impunity for sexual violence in conflicts continues to be all-too

common.

Identity-based sexual violence

Within India, rape as a weapon to inflict harm upon minority communities has a tragically long history – often with distinct caste, ethnic, or religious motivations.

During the partition of India in the late 1940s, 75,000 women were raped and many were also mutilated in the accompanying sectarian violence.

During Bangladesh's war of independence in the 1970s, Pakistan's army raped a reported 200,000 women, often with the deliberate intention of impregnating Bangladeshi women with Pakistani blood. Meanwhile, riots in the state of Gujarat, along India's west coast, in the early 2000s were also marked by mass rapes, murders, and the extreme mutilation of women's bodies.

With women being too afraid to speak out, or being too afraid to approach state agencies such as the police – who often comprise officers recruited from the same

Local state machinery seems incapable of ensuring the maintenance of law and order.

Shame and stigma continues to discourage women from talking openly about sexual violence while intimidation and the barriers to access the justice system remain a disincentive for complainants. Only

where there's a clear political motive for politicians to get involved, have there been moments of success in recognising and responding to sexual violence against women.

Efforts to overcome impunity

In the 1990s, women's organisations united in their demands for better safety for women. This followed the caste-motivated rape of Bhanwari Devi. Devi was a social worker who prevented a child marriage but was allegedly gang raped by men from the upper-caste community who had arranged the wedding – apparently to both punish her and deter other social workers from interfering in what they saw as their cultural rights. The public response was significant and successfully pressured the then government to introduce guidelines surrounding

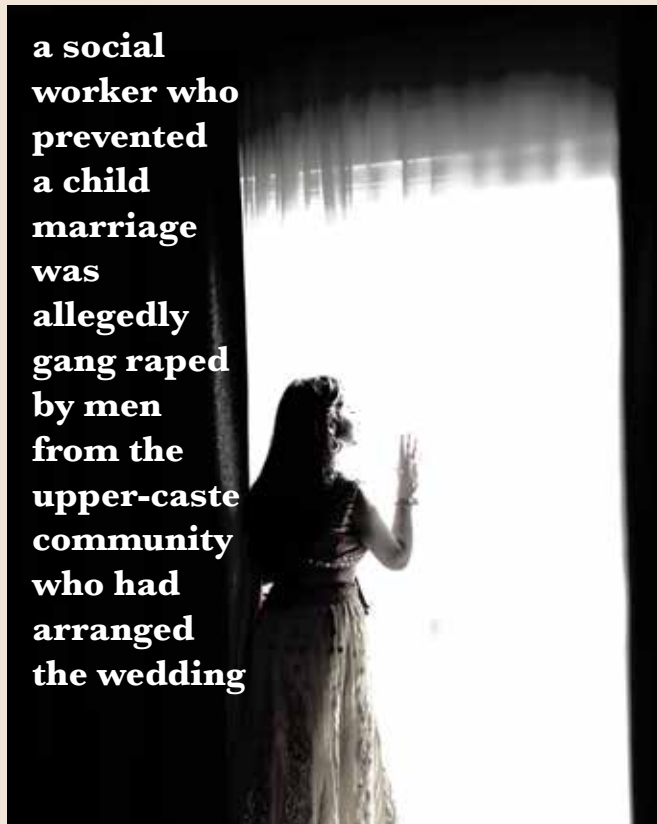
sexual harassment at work but nobody was convicted of the rape. The court's reasons for not finding the accused guilty included the idea that higher-caste men cannot rape lower-caste women – and neither could men in positions of power or elderly men.

In 2002, during the Gujarat riots 20,000 homes were destroyed, and around 150,000 people were displaced, with the majority being local Muslims. Between 800 and 2,000 people, mainly Muslims, were killed and there was widespread sexual violence and the mutilation of women's bodies, again with people's identity, in this case their religion, as the motive. Only one woman withstood social pressure and testified against her attackers. The accused were convicted and sentenced to 20 years in prison but served less than ten after the state government enabled their early release.

In 2019, in another caste-motivated attack, a lower-caste Dalit woman was gang-raped, assaulted and paraded naked in Rajasthan's Alwar district. The complainant

and her husband were verbally assaulted by the police when trying to report the case. But once the news broke, politicians lined up to show sympathy with the survivor – presumably to secure lower-caste votes in the state. The accused were tried in a fast-track court, found guilty the following year, and sentenced to life in prison – where they remain. It shows that fast and effective state responses can be achieved, particularly when there is political pressure. But sexual violence against women has been minimised for too long – and responses all-too-often remain inadequate. Governments must make more effort to guarantee justice and eradicate victim-blaming within the judicial system in rape cases. Prosecutions in the two most recent cases in Manipur would be a start.

a social worker who prevented a child marriage was allegedly gang raped by men from the upper-caste community who had arranged the wedding



Author Severyna McGill Senior Lecturer in Law and Human Rights, Sheffield Hallam University

First published in The Conversation



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Celebrities Who ‘Divorced’ their Parents

For many Hollywood stars ‘divorcing’ their mother and father is as normal as giving the middle finger to the paparazzi. Shaun Anthony takes a look at the child stars who told their folks to take a hike.

Sometimes when a child star makes it big, the fame and fortune can be all too enticing for stage parents who want to get their mitts on the dough. The option of ‘divorcing’ your parents, then, can often be a safety net for vulnerable child earners. However, in some circumstances emancipation is a mutual agreement between parent and teen star, where the latter wishes to avoid child labour laws that prevent them from working on set for longer than eight hours a day. It seems the instances of rebellious Hollywood teens being emancipated from their parents over mismanaged money and bad parenting are the only cases that make the headlines, but occasionally (albeit, very occasionally) there are cases of emancipation for more positive reasons.

free legal aid to minors wanting to be emancipated.



Let’s have a look at Tinsel Town stars that were, emancipated – for better or for worse!

Drew Barrymore - Toxic Parenting

Born into acting royalty, Drew Barrymore shot to fame when she appeared in Spielberg’s E.T. at the age of 7. Barrymore’s relationship with her parents showed signs of being a difficult one early on, as Drew started to develop rebellious qualities at an extremely young age; she was smoking and drinking alcohol in public by the age of eleven,

“When I was a kid, everything was so unplanned, my parents were so erratic, and my world was so inconsistent,” Barrymore told the New York Daily News.

Some celebs who were emancipated to further their careers came out on top, while in many cases those who were emancipated because their parents were squandering their earnings ended up even worse than before. In the U.S. a child is the legal responsibility of a parent or guardian until they turn 18. Emancipated minors must prove financial self-sufficiency, which is why many child actors are successful in their bid for emancipation. Most states require a petition in family court to be signed before a minor can be emancipated, and some states even offer

Barrymore saw her parents as a bad influence. Following time in rehab [where her father made her stay for 18 months] she was successfully emancipated from her folks by the age of 14. Her dad passed away in 2004 when she was 29. Her relationship with her mother made headlines again a couple of months ago when she claimed she was jealous of friends who’d lost a parent, “All their moms are gone, and my mom’s not. And I’m like, ‘Well, I don’t have that luxury.’ But I cannot wait.” She later said her statement had been misunderstood but it’s fair to say there’s not a

Her relationship with her mother made headlines again a couple of months ago when she claimed she was jealous of friends who’d lost a parent

lot of love lost between them.

Corey Feldman - Squandered Earnings

Child star Corey Feldman of eighties classics like *The Goonies* and *Stand by Me* fame, sought emancipation from his parents when he discovered they had squandered his money (he had \$1m in the bank but found his bank statement showing he had less than \$40,000 remaining). Feldman confronted his parents and realised they'd spent his fortune, did not take financial advice they'd received and had even mishandled his career.

By the age of 15 he was completely independent and accused his mother of "making my life a living hell" as "she was mentally ill", "an abuser" and "addicted to drugs." Feldman and close friend (now deceased) Corey Haim were, according to child actress Alison Arngrim, openly "passed around" "major Hollywood figures" for sexual exploitation - another issue Feldman did not forgive his parents for. "I needed normalcy in my life," he would later state, "And my parents could not give me that, so I phoned Michael Jackson." (!!)

Ariel Winter - Beaten, Starved & Sexualised

One of the most recent Hollywood stars to seek emancipation was Ariel Winter who starred as Alex Dunphy on the hit sitcom *Modern Family*. Winter has



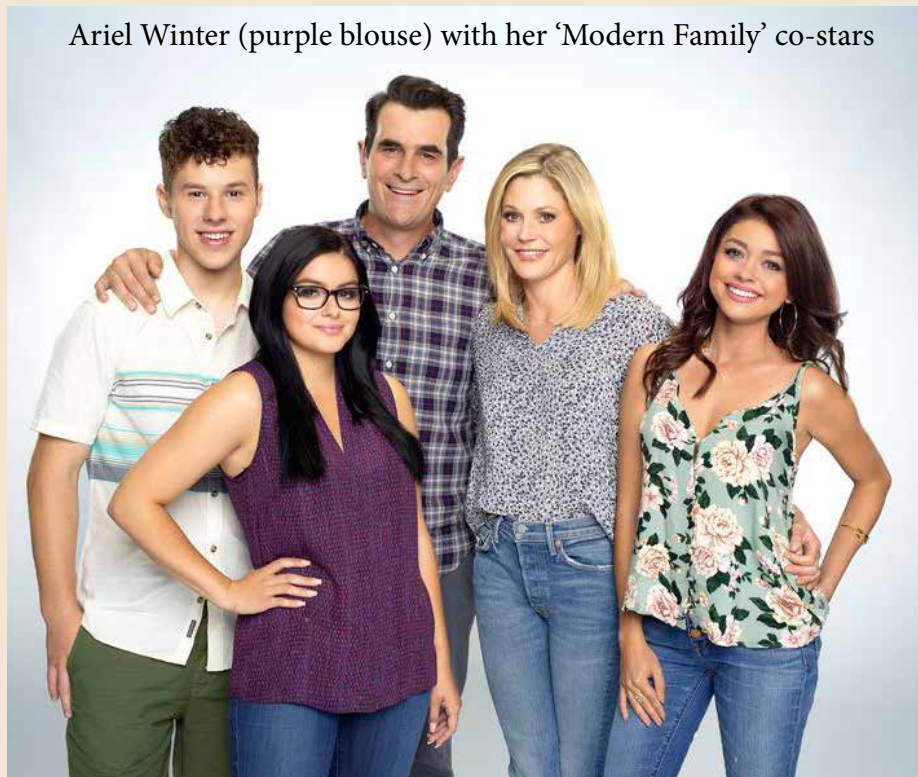
Corey Feldman (far right)

had serious problems with her mother - the actress claims that her mum violently beat her, slapped her around on set and at home and emotionally and psychologically abused her all her life and this included being forced to act from the age of 4, denied food (her mother told her she was too fat to eat), not given school time, taunted with cruel jibes (in a bid to motivate her) and sexualised, "My mother would dress me in the smallest miniskirts, sailor suits, low-cut things, the shortest dresses you've ever seen. People thought I was 24 when I was 12. If there was going to be a nude scene when I was that age, my mother would have a thousand percent

said yes."

Corey Feldman confronted his parents and realised they'd spent his fortune.

Thankfully Winter really did find a family on *Modern Family* and the cast, noticing how Ariel was being treated by her mother supported her and even secretly brought food on set knowing she was not being fed at home.



Ariel Winter (purple blouse) with her 'Modern Family' co-stars

Rose McGowan - Born into a Sex Cult

Rose McGowan [best known as Paige Matthew in *Charmed*] has had a broad-ranging career but had a deeply troubled childhood. Rose was emancipated by the age of 15, was rendered homeless with just 25 cents to her name. In an

interview with *The Big Issue UK* in 2019 she said,

"I was homeless, I was on my own, and I was very lonely. I was entirely focused on just surviving. So when I started having relationships with men I wasn't set up to understand that kind of world. A lot of older men were

attracted to me.”

It's not surprising that Rose had a puzzling concept of sex, consent and relationships, bearing in mind that her father was the leader of the chapter of an Italian cult called the Children of God [now rebranded as The Family] and her mum was one of his many wives, so Rose was born into an extremely sexualised environment where intercourse with very young children was encouraged for their road to salvation. The cult has had thousands of victims come forward in recent years with horrid tales of the most heinous forms of mental, physical and sexual abuse.

Juliette Lewis - No Bad Blood Here

Juliette Lewis was emancipated from her parents at age 14 but there is, in fact, no ill will at all between Lewis and her parents. Lewis' parents actually were in favour of her being emancipated and helped her to do so. The reason was so that she could further her career, avoiding restrictive child labour laws. By being emancipated she was allowed to work longer than eight hours a day if she so chose. Lewis says her parents “are fantastic,” so this is one very rare example of child emancipation that had nothing to do with bad blood.

Macaulay Culkin - Overworked

Manhattan-born Macaulay Culkin was inducted into the world of acting at the age of four, and went on to become one of the biggest child stars of the nineties thanks to his starring role in the Home Alone films, My Girl and Richie Rich, however, his meteoric rise to

fame and cash windfall made for an uneasy relationship between the child star and his parents. At age 15, (and worth, in excess of \$50m) Culkin filed a lawsuit to be emancipated from his parents because he claimed they had mismanaged his income earned from film and TV projects. Culkin won the case and his parents had to pay him \$17 million.

In later years Culkin stated that his father was “cruel” and “deeply jealous” of him, created bad relationships with cast and crews on set and made “impossible demands” on him mentally and physically, “I would beg him, beg him for even a short break and he wouldn't allow it.” The Home Alone star said that he only ever wanted to emancipate from his father but was advised to file for emancipation from both parents as it “would be less messy”, however, he has stated ad nauseam that the financial mismanagement and abuse were his father's

doing and he has never blamed his mother,

“[When his parents were divorcing] My father was spending my earnings on lawyers and my mother was going to get evicted as she'd no money for rent and was about to get evicted from her apartment ... I wanted my money out of his hands so I could help my mother.”



“I would beg him, beg him for even a short break and he wouldn't allow it.”

It seems that Culkin's father was very keen on having custody of the Culkin kids that earned the most ... hardly stellar parenting!

Hollywood is a notoriously difficult world to navigate and operating within this cut-throat environment would be nigh impossible for most, yet sadly most of these child stars felt more secure under the guidance of a paid legal executor than the supposedly loving parents that spawned them.

Jokes

Because laughter is the best medicine!



At the height of a political corruption trial, the prosecuting attorney attacked a witness. "Isn't it true," he bellowed, "that you accepted five thousand dollars to compromise this case?"

The witness stared out the window, as though he hadn't heard the question.

"Isn't it true that you accepted five thousand dollars to compromise this case?" the lawyer repeated. The witness still did not respond.

Finally, the judge leaned over and said, "Sir, please answer the question."

"Oh," the startled witness said, "I thought he was talking to you."

The owner of a drugstore arrives at work to find a man leaning heavily against a wall.

The owner goes inside and asks his clerk what's up.

"He wanted something for his cough, but I couldn't find the cough syrup," the clerk explains. "So I gave him a laxative and told him to take it all at once."

"Laxatives won't cure a cough, you idiot," the owner shouts angrily.

"Sure it will," the clerk says, pointing at the man leaning on the wall. "Look at him. He's afraid to cough."

Josie was in her front yard watering her roses when husband Paudi came out of the house and rushed straight to the mailbox, opened it, looked in, then slammed it shut and stormed back into the house. As Josie was getting ready to prune the roses, Paudi came back out to the mailbox, opened it, felt all the way to the back, and then slammed it closed harder than ever. Puzzled by her husband's actions Josie asked him, "What's wrong with ye?" To which he replied, "I knew it was a waste of money! That stupid computer you got keeps saying, "YOU'VE GOT MAIL."

Real Things Said In Court.

Q: Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?

Q: The youngest son, the twenty-year old, how old is he?

Q: Were you present when your picture was taken?

Q: Was it you or your younger brother who was killed in the war?

Q: Did he kill you?

Q: How far apart were the vehicles at the time of the collision?

Q: You were there until the time you left, is that true?

Q: How many times have you committed suicide?

Q: She had three children, right?

A: Yes.

Q: How many were boys?

A: None.

Q: Were there any girls?

Q: What is your date of birth?

A: July fifteenth.

Q: What year?

A: Every year.

Q: What gear were you in at the moment of the impact?

A: Gucci sweats and Reeboks.

Q: How old is your son - the one living with you.

A: Thirty-eight or thirty-five, I can't remember which.

Q: How long has he lived with you?

A: Forty-five years.

Two rednecks go on a fishing trip. They rent all the equipment - the reels, the rods, the wading suits, the rowboat, the car, and even a cabin in the woods. I mean they spend a fortune! The first day they go fishing, but they don't catch anything. The same thing happens on the second day and on the third day. It goes on like this until finally, on the last day of their vacation, one of the men catches a fish.

As they're driving home they're really depressed. One guy turns to the other and says, "Do you realize that this one lousy fish we caught cost us fifteen hundred bucks?"

The other guy says, "Wow! Then it's a good thing we didn't catch any more!"

Daily Aspirin Doesn't Prevent Strokes

Daily aspirin doesn't prevent strokes in older, healthy people after all, new research indicates.

The daily use of low dose aspirin has been a mainstay of preventing strokes for decades. While there has always

been a risk of bleeding associated with aspirin use, the benefits were thought to outweigh the risk.

Now new research led by Monash University has shown daily, low-dose aspirin doesn't prevent strokes in relatively

healthy people aged over 70. And it increases their risk of bleeding on the brain after falls or other injuries.

But if you're taking aspirin, it doesn't mean you should abruptly stop. It may still have a role to play in treating people at high risk of stroke. Or, after talking to your doctor, there might be better options available.

Why has aspirin been used to prevent strokes?

Aspirin is an anti-platelet medicine, which is commonly known as a blood-thinner. Platelets are the component of

blood primarily responsible for its clotting action. They are what stop you from continuously bleeding any time

you have a cut or scrape on your skin. A stroke is when oxygen can't get into the brain because of a burst or blocked blood vessel. A blockage can occur when platelets in the bloodstream form a clot and it gets stuck in the artery.

Aspirin is a blood-thinner.

Because aspirin acts on platelets, it

can help prevent the clots that can lead to a stroke. But because aspirin acts on platelets, it can also increase the risk of unwanted bleeding, usually in the

stomach. It can also increase your risk of bleeding more when you have another injury, like hitting your head.

Aspirin isn't just used for the prevention of strokes. It is also the first aid treatment for someone undergoing a heart attack.

Findings of the Monash trial

New research from Australia and the United States



low-dose aspirin doesn't prevent strokes in relatively healthy people aged over 70

reports results from the Aspirin in Reducing Events in the Elderly (ASPREE) trial. The researchers examined the protective use of daily low-dose aspirin (100 mg) in nearly 2,000 people who were aged 70 years and older and had no history of heart disease or stroke and whose blood pressure and cholesterol were well managed.



When compared with placebo, aspirin didn't reduce or increase the risk of stroke. Of the participants who took the aspirin, 195 or 4.6% had a stroke. Of those who took the placebo, 203 people or 4.7% had a stroke. But it did statistically increase the rate of non-stroke bleeding in the participants' brains, for example when they injured their head. Those on aspirin showed a rate of bleeding in the brain of 1.1% (108 participants) compared with 0.8% (79 people) for those on placebo. This is a relatively low but serious, risk.

These findings are not entirely new. Research published five years ago based on the same ASPREE trial showed a similar result: a higher rate of bleeding among those taking low-dose aspirin compared with placebo. However as the study authors note, aspirin continues to be widely used for the prevention of stroke.

What are the study's limitations?

The researchers examined aspirin in mostly people of white European heritage. So we don't know whether the results are translatable to people with different ethnic backgrounds. Genetics and ethnicity can significantly impact the efficacy and safety of some drugs.

The clinical trial only included people who were not significantly at risk of a stroke, and had no history of

heart disease. Younger age groups were not studied either, so we cannot make any conclusions about their use of low dose aspirin to prevent stroke. It's also possible the potential benefits and risks are different for those who have underlying heart problems or who have previously had a stroke and are therefore at higher risk of

another stroke.

concerned by the results of the study, it's important you don't just stop taking your medicine.

I'm taking aspirin, what should I do?

If you're taking daily low-dose aspirin and are concerned by the results of the study, it's important you don't just stop taking your medicine. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist.

For people who are at high risk of having a stroke, or have previously had one, low-dose aspirin may remain on their treatment of choice despite the slight bleeding risk. If you're at high risk of bleeding, for example because of falls and other accidents due to advanced age, frailty, or another underlying condition, your doctor may be able to reduce the amount of aspirin you take by adding in dipyridamole or prescribing a different medicine completely, such as clopidogrel.

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First published in The Conversation

S C R E E N

S C E N E

Animals Up Close With Bertie Gregory ***

Starring: Bertie Gregory
Run Time: 6 x 60 mins
Streaming on: Disney+
Available: 13th September

M3GAN ***

Starring: Allison Williams, Violet McGraw
Run Time: 102 mins
Streaming: Sky Cinema
Available: Currently

Bertie Gregory is back, and this time, the adventures are even more epic! Bertie takes us to the most spectacular corners of our planet — from Antarctica to Africa and South America to Asia – tracking down extraordinary animals to capture their daily lives like never before. Armed with drones, state-of-the-art cameras, and underwater tech, he and his team brave subzero seas, climb snow-capped mountains, and sleep suspended 120 feet in the air to reveal the challenges these animals endure, their fierce rivalries, and the threats they face on our changing planet. “Animals Up Close With Bertie Gregory” shows all the behind-the-scenes moments he and his team face while adapting to unpredictable wildlife in remote environments where filming rarely goes as planned. There is no script for this unique series, but through it all, Bertie brings the audience with him every step of the way.

Following the death of her parents in a car accident, eight-year-old Cady is sent to live with her Aunt Gemma, a roboticist and toy designer. Struggling to connect with her niece, Gemma decides to show Cady her latest creation, an artificially intelligent robot companion named M3GAN. Paired to each other, M3GAN and Cady soon develop a strong bond of friendship, which Gemma encourages, as it demonstrates the lucrativeness of the robot as a toy design. However, things soon take a dark turn, as M3GAN’s instinct to protect her new friend veers out of control. And if you love it - the sequel has just been greenlit for 2025.



Women Talking ***

Starring: Rooney Mara, Claire Foy
Streaming: Disney+
Run Time: 104 mins
Available to stream: Currently

“Women Talking” is based on the 2018 Canadian novel of the same name by Miriam Toews, which was itself inspired by the gas-facilitated rapes that occurred at the Manitoba Colony, a remote and isolated Mennonite community in Bolivia. The film follows a group of American Mennonite women who discuss their future, following their discovery of the men’s history of raping the colony’s women. How do they move forward and create a better world for themselves and their children? Do they stay and fight or leave? One thing’s for sure - they can’t leave things as they are.



Cobweb **

Starring: Lizzy Caplan, Antony Starr
Available: At cinemas nationwide
Run Time: 88 mins.
Available to watch: 1st September

Horror-thriller Cobweb tells the story of an eight-year-old boy named Peter, a young lad living with his over-bearing, yet emotionally distant parents who tries to investigate the mysterious knocking noises that are coming from inside the walls of his house - only to discover a dark secret that his sinister parents have kept hidden from him.

An impressive directorial debut from Samuel Bodin but not the best horror you’re likely to see despite the fact there’s some really original, scary scenes!



Matthew Toman: *From Lurgan to LA*

Matthew Toman battled dyslexia, left school at 15, made a fortune, lost it in the economic crash, battled depression and alcoholism, was on the dole, started his own business from scratch and now works as a movie producer and business course provider residing between LA and Dublin.

I have never met a self-starter like Matthew Toman nor have I ever encountered anyone so enthused by life and its possibilities. Matt is infectious and incredibly likeable and it's impossible to be in his company and not come away energised ..

Matthew Toman grew up in Lurgan, Co. Armagh. As a boy he spent his time playing on the streets or riding his scrambler through the park,

“Looking back we would have looked like renegades to the locals yet by today’s standards we were good kids. We had no technology, we made our own entertainment; I’m glad I grew up in those times. I had a wee business going by the time I was 13 washing cars.... I’d have people come down my driveway and I’d wash their car for a fiver... I always knew I could make money.”

When Matt was 15 his National Insurance Card arrived in the post and he decided to hit the road running in a bid to not only leave school but start earning a living,

“That morning it arrived I’d my school uniform [for St. Paul’s] on and my best mate and I went into a recruitment agency. The woman asked our ages and we lied and said 16, to which she replied,

‘Can you start work today?’

And we said yes, so at 4 o’clock we got the bus to

Moypark [Chicken] and started that day. My mate’s mum worked the evening shift there and we’d seen her that morning... and guess what? We were put on her line! There we were with our hair nets on and she happened to look up and there we were.... She just gasped, ‘What the f**k are you two doing here?’”

I’ve never heard of anyone ditching school the day they got their card.

“I hated school. I was in the top class and was top of the class when I went to big school (at 11) to progressively falling to the bottom as the years went by. Dyslexia was not understood as well back then and I wouldn’t get diagnosed until I was in my 20s.”

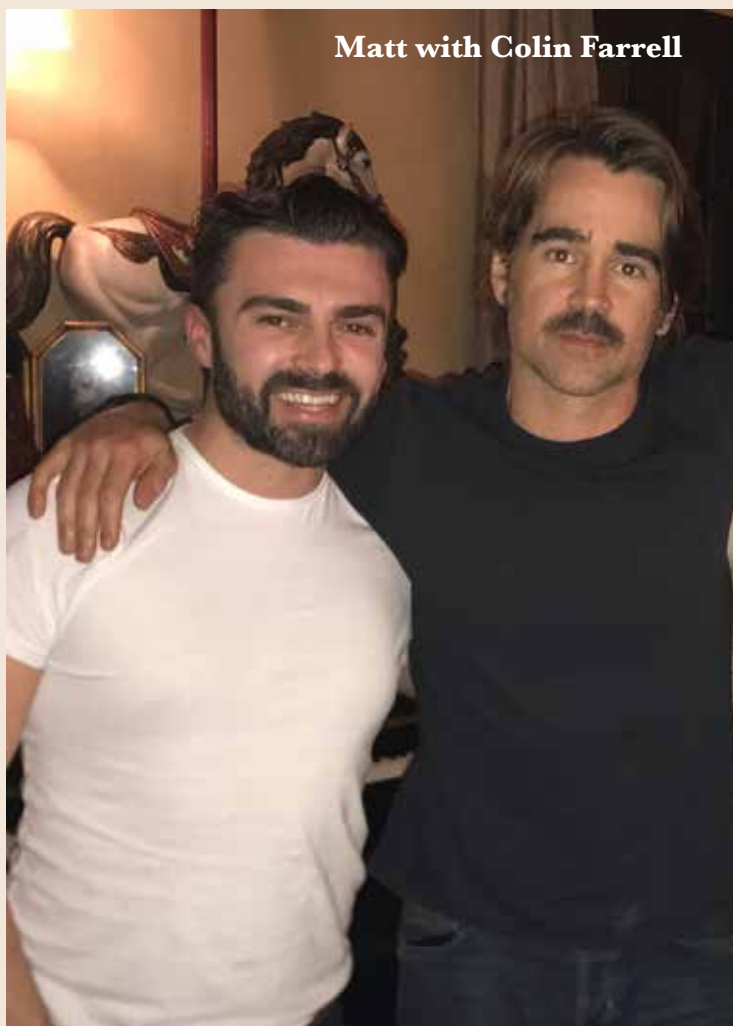
As Matt neared the end of his second week at the chicken factory he decided to leave as,

“I always smelled of chicken and I’d hardly any money after the taxman took his cut.”

I lived right on Bondi Beach.

Determined to make a decent living he took a job in a clothes shop and delivered Chinese food on the side but looking to his well-to-do uncle for inspiration [“he always had a nice car and bought houses”] he decided he’d need to find a way to earn a better income so trained as a refrigeration engineer,

“That income gave me the opportunity to start investing



and I bought my first house at 19.”

At 19 a lot of people are heading off to university and you bought a house.

“Yes.... I’d bought another house by 22 and some of my friends were leaving university with huge debts and I was glad I was doing what I was doing because I was well on the way to buying my third house...”

As a young man with a considerable income at this stage, did you enjoy splashing the cash?

“Well, I rented out houses and started getting involved in various other businesses and began investing my money, all the while still working in refrigeration. But yeah, I had the nice cars and was loving life, travelling the world.... I lived in Australia, working in refrigeration and earned good money out there too.”

Where did you set up home in Oz?

“I lived right on Bondi Beach.”

Wow.

“[Laughs] Yes, everywhere I’ve ever lived, I’ve gone there for the weather. Every day by 3pm I was in the sea. The party scene out there was crazy, bars stay open 24/7. I’d go diving off the Coral Reef, swimming with sharks, sky-diving and I travelled all over. I found the experience very eye-opening in Australia ... the world suddenly felt very big and this made me realise there was so much more to see, so much more of the world to experience. I then got a camper van and travelled New Zealand, both North and South Island.”

Any downsides to living out there?

“There were no apps back then so to ‘phone home

you’d have to scratch a call card, type in 24 digits then the actual number in a phone box and hope the person you were calling back home was there to pick up.... It made the distance so much bigger having such a task in reaching family and friends.”



However, what goes up, must come down as they say and not long after Matt came back to N. Ireland in 2007 and added another property to his portfolio, then the economic crash hit - and one-by-one his businesses failed. To add insult to injury he was in a relationship that he couldn’t get out of,

“We were so in love, but it was that toxic ... the kind where neither of you can leave So I knew I had to physically move - so I set up home in Dublin and started working there and began acting class. I wanted a whole new life.”

He would later lose his job due to the economy and,

“I just didn’t know what to do with myself. I’d got used to money I always had it yet strangely, never knew the value of it.”

I’d got used to money I always had it yet strangely, never knew the value of it.

A Change of Career

Not being one to feel sorry for himself, Matt decided to learn some new skills and sighed up for acting classes, quickly getting involved in a low budget movie which

led to another film, during which the director and producer fell out and the film lay in limbo. Determined to get the movie produced, Matt read a book ‘How to produce a film’ and produced the movie himself,

“I was determined to finish the film so I read a book, which in itself was a huge challenge (Dyslexia)... I had to have the text a certain size, the background a certain colour... all these things I have learned in recent times that help me read and I got the film finished.”

But you decided acting wasn’t for you?

“My casting director Maureen [Hughes] and I were out on the drink one night and I told her, ‘I hate acting...I don’t think I’m very good. I want to be a producer,’ and she said, ‘Come in to the office tomorrow and we’ll write a letter to Ed Guiney [of Element Pictures] and see if he’ll take you in as an intern.’ So I thought about it overnight and I said, ‘F**k this.... I’m opening my own production company ... I wanted to work for myself and I was going to make it happen.... I had to. I couldn’t work for free... I was unemployed with no money.”

So it was sink or swim.



and produced a nationwide cinema release, ‘South’, which won ‘Best Feature’ at two festivals. He has also produced other movies including ‘Release’, the story of a former boxer, sent down for armed robbery for 8 years and ‘Dive’, a film set in modern-day Ireland about a

teenage swimmer with dreams of competing in the Olympics who has to make a life-changing decision when she discovers she’s pregnant.

Matt also runs Bankhouse Media - a portfolio of businesses including his own podcast and business and development courses. He resides in LA (legally based

in Ireland but spends the majority of his time in the U.S),

“Yes, and being on the dole was a challenge because I lived in this lovely apartment in Dublin and so someone from the social security would do these random checks. I remember one morning at 10am my phone rang, ‘Hi, it’s Kieran here, I’m at your front door, let me in.’ I said, ‘Who the f**k are you?’ He said, ‘Let me in or your money will stop so I let him in.

“Living in LA is great, everyone eats healthy, it’s a direct flight home, which I love and I have great friends and neighbours here. I love the fact you can bump into just about anyone out here, I’m always meeting interesting people ... in fact, a guest who’s on my next podcast, I just met in a lift.”

He said, ‘Let me see your bedroom’. I said, ‘Are you for real mate?’ Then he walked into my living room and said, ‘Whose girl’s shoes are they?’ I actually laughed, I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. I was so angry I just said, ‘How could you possibly want do to this for a living? Take a look at me. Look at my apartment. Do you think I’m enjoying being unemployed? What’s wrong with you?’

He said, ‘Matthew, I think you’re depressed,’ and he invited me round to the Ringsend Rowing Club and I started rowing for them. During this time I was also battling alcoholism. The second time I was checked on by the dole it was a girl called Claire and I was living in Thomas Street. I was angry with her and she said, ‘There’s resources to help you. I want to help.’ I told her I wanted to start my own business and she said, ‘Come with me now then’ and we went up to Inner City Enterprise and from there I started my business, Bankhouse Productions [in August 2014]. Two years later Matt won ‘Most Innovative Business’,

I just wanted money but when I was on the dole and working for free I realised that money wasn’t the driving force

Any negatives about LA?

“In more recent times the homelessness here has got really bad, even spreading to areas you’d never imagine like West Hollywood as the cost of living has quadrupled and that includes the cost of apartments.”

As we’re finishing up our conversation Matt tells me he’s been sober for seven years now, loves the fact he can live in whatever country he wants due to his company being digital and finally feels he’s keeping all the balls in the air,

“I’m happy with what I’m doing. We were talking earlier about the Letter to my Younger Self feature in the magazine and I know I’d tell myself to find what you love and do it. I always worked for money before ... I just wanted money but when I was on the dole and working for free I realised that money wasn’t the driving force; so I’d tell younger me that success is not driven by money. Just do what you love and the rest will follow.”

A LITTLE BIT OF IRISH

Phrase:	Translations:	Pronunciation:
Tá brón orm faoin moill	I am sorry for the delay	Thaw bro/inn ur/im fween mwil
Ná déan deramad ar do lón!	Don't forget your lunch!	naw dane djar-mad air duh loan
An miste leat labhairt níos moille?	Can you speak a little slower?	on mishteh lat low-art neice mwille
An bhfuil tu damhsa liom?	Would you like to dance with me?	On will two dowsa lum
Na dean sin!	Don't do that!	Naw dane shin
Níl sé/sí istigh inniu	He/She is not in today	Kneel shay/shee ish/tig in/u

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. Blandishment	blan-dish-muhnt	1. An action or speech, that tends to flatter, coax, entice, etc.
2. Circumlocution	sur-kuhm-loh-kyoo-shuhn	2. A roundabout or indirect way of speaking
3. Engender	en-jen-der	3. To produce, cause, or give rise to
4. Evince	ih-vins	4. To show clearly; make evident or manifest; prove.
5. Fallacious	fuh-ley-shuhs	5. Containing a fallacy; logically unsound:
6. Fetter	fet-er	6. A chain or shackle placed on the feet.
7. Inure	in-yoor	7. To accustom to hardship, difficulty, pain, etc.
8. Neophyte	nee-uh-fahyt	8. A beginner or novice.
9. Pellucid	puh-loo-sid	9. Allowing the maximum passage of light, as glass
10. Probity	proh-bi-tee	10. Integrity and uprightness
11. Protean	proh-tee-uhn	11. Readily assuming different forms or characters.
12. Toady	toh-dee	12. An obsequious flatterer; sycophant.

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

Armagh Rail Disaster

On Wednesday 12th June, 1889 some 89 men, women and children died in what has gone down in history as our biggest rail disaster. Liz Scales reports.

Wednesday 12th June 1889 was a bright sunny day, excitement was in the air. Armagh Methodist Sunday School overseers, led by Surgeon-Major Lynn (a retired army officer and lay preacher) had been organising a day trip for some weeks and had settled upon Warrenpoint, a small port town south of Newry so that, weather permitting, the children could enjoy the seaside. Despite being a mere 24 miles away, both the children and adults were really looking

outside the Methodist Church in Abbey Street at 9 o'clock sharp, as was the custom in preparation to march behind the Royal Irish Fusiliers, 3rd Battalion Military Band to the Railway Station to board the train. The

89 people died in the Armagh train disaster



parade eventually arrived at Armagh Railway Station where the carriages stood ready to receive an abundance of excited passengers clutching their tickets for the GNRI. After

forward to, what was, a major annual community event that attracted families from all sections of Armagh and the local vicinity. Buckets and spades were packed as were picnics and swimming attire.

everyone boarded, the train pulled out of the station at 10.15 to undertake the 60 minute jaunt

The runaway carriages gathered speed rapidly for the next mile-and-a-half before the unthinkable happened...

The leaders of the Sunday School were renowned for their excellent family fun days and so, large numbers were always attracted to their excursions, and this one would be no different. A special Great Northern Railway of Ireland (GNRI) was arranged for the outing, intended to carry about 800 passengers and demand for tickets was very high.

to Warrenpoint. The driver was Thomas McGrath, a Dundalk native with over 13 years service under his belt with Great Northern Railways. Every carriage was filled to capacity with even the luggage and guard's compartments holding 15 extra passengers. This was a huge undertaking for a small engine and as the train approached the steep gradient three miles out of Armagh, it became increasingly slower with the burden of the load, eventually stalling 200 yards from the summit and close to Dobbins Bridge. McGrath and Chief Assistant James Elliot decided to separate the front four carriages, move them to

On the morning of the trip, the families convened

Hamilton's Bawn, and then to return for the remaining eight carriages. Train Guard William Moorhead put stones behind the wheels of those carriages, but as the engine restarted with its pistons in the 'dead centre' position, it moved back slightly, crushing the stones. The carriages now had only the handbrake in the guard van to prevent them from rolling backwards. Unfortunately, as it gained momentum the inadequate break system such as it was could not contain the speeding carriages as they continued back down the slope.

Runaway Train

The runaway carriages gathered speed rapidly for the next mile-and-a-half before the unthinkable happened - the unbridled carriages crashed into another train and one of the last sounds heard by the passengers before the loud noise of the fateful collision was the long shrill of the whistle from the No 9 Engine of the oncoming train, the driver horrified at seeing the approaching carriages applied the brakes and slowed down almost to a halt preventing an even greater tragedy.

Alarm Emanates

Initially there was widespread terror and confusion but this was swiftly replaced with downright horror. As the doors were locked (to prevent fare-dodgers) many kids were saved by being hurled from the windows (which were too small for adults). The impact of the crash meant that some doors burst open and as a result some adults were able to throw themselves down the Killuney embankment on the right hand side of Portadown Road

just outside the city boundary where the crash occurred.

Mrs Hamilton, the wife of an RIC Sergeant, said that she had thrown her own and other kids to safety before jumping from an open door. Sadly, many others were not so lucky and had no option but to resign themselves

to a terrible fate. There was a horrendous aftermath, many perished and countless others were badly wounded. Surgeon-Major Lynn observed,

“Many a bitter battlefield did not display such carnage.” This was a scene of utter devastation.

Help Arrives

Help was mustered. The Army from Gough Barracks and the RIC quickly arrived. Pieces of rail carriages and equipment were strewn everywhere; the personal belongings of passengers were littered on the embankment – the scene was one of unthinkable carnage. Parents stumbled, shaken and confused, searching in torment for their children. Desperation filled the air, and in the midst of this chaos others did what they

could to assist, for instance, one onlooker, gave an account of his efforts to help amongst the debris, relating how he saw a dead child with little sisters standing nearby; he witnessed several bodies mutilated beyond recognition and people walking around confused.

Another spectator said,

“the screams of the injured were heart-rending. I shall never forget the scene as long as I live.”

Surgeon-Major Lynn, Dr Palmer of the local hospital and a myriad of other local doctors worked with the maimed. The Army brought ambulances and transport

Memorial to those who lost their lives in the Armagh Rail Disaster Located at the West end of The Mall, Armagh City, Co. Armagh.



the driver horrified at seeing the approaching carriages applied the brakes

was arranged to transfer the dead. Some doctors came from Belfast and beyond to help as news of the scale of the disaster spread. The Armagh Infirmary was extensively used to care for the injured.

Eighty-nine men, women and children died at the scene or from injuries sustained and this included individuals from the Church of Ireland, Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and others.

Amongst those who perished was the son of the Rev. William R McMullan, Minister of Abbey Street Methodist Church, who was at a conference in Cork. When he arrived home, as well as the unthinkable distress of his son lying in a coffin in the Manse, he found that his Sunday School Superintendent, Samuel Steel, was dead and every member of his church choir were either dead or injured. The loss included many young people - nineteen were under the age of 15, twenty-seven were between 15 and 20. The dead were from every walk of life and included several from the same family.

The following day the bells of the city churches took turns to ring out, businesses closed and the streets were empty as the magnitude and sorrow of the tragedy took

its toll on the area. There followed a long succession of funerals with the last thirty-five victims buried on the Saturday.

Surgeon-Major Lynn observed, “Many a bitter battlefield did not display such carnage.”

The Armagh Rail Disaster had a far-reaching impact. A special relief fund was established to help the injured and bereaved. It was also this fund that helped establish a new ward in the Armagh infirmary as a memorial to the Armagh Rail Disaster.

Thomas McGrath, James Elliot and William Moorhead were charged with manslaughter and sent for trial in Dublin. None of them were found guilty as it was determined they had not set out to destroy the train and cause the resulting devastation, ultimately it was the inadequate braking system..

The Board of Trade produced a report and promised that it would bring in a Bill to improve rail safety. On 30th August 1889 the Regulation of Railways Act came into force to ensure that such a tragedy would not happen again.

Families in Armagh to this very day recall through the generations the reverberation of the rail disaster.



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Using Theatre to Educate and Shape Public Housing Policy

Shared?, an interactive play by Partisan Productions in collaboration with Clanmil Housing will tour venues across Northern Ireland as part of Good Relations Week 2023

Following a highly acclaimed run of its Belfast debut last year, social theatre company Partisan Productions, in partnership with Clanmil Housing will tour the play 'Shared?' across NI as part of Good Relations week in September.

The shows will be staged at the Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown on the 19th; the Barron Hall, Newtownabbey on the 21st; Old Town Hall in Banbridge on 26th and the Community Cinema in Newcastle on the 28th of September.

Shared? follows a colourful cast of characters living in, and nearby to a shared housing association development.

Clanmil Housing, one of NI's leading housing associations, provides almost 6,000 homes for people across the region. They have been praised for being the first NI housing association to use forum theatre to encourage audiences to think and talk about social housing; to actively listen for insights they can use and share to inform housing policy and ultimately improve the lives of people living together in NI. Shared?'s playwright, Fintan Brady, describes forum theatre as, 'Encouraging candid discussion of societal issues.' Clanmil facilitated conversations between Partisan and their residents during the script writing process. Brady states, 'We wanted the storylines to genuinely reflect the experiences of people who live in or alongside areas of shared housing.'

Jennifer Cuthbert, Community Investment Manager with Clanmil says, "We are delighted with the success of Shared? last year. It is such an innovative approach to improving community relations and we hope it will help

influence future housing policy. The feedback that came up during the performances in Belfast was useful for us in shaping our Customer Promise in November 2022, followed by our first Customer Strategy in December. Cuthbert adds, 'Clanmil continues to work in partnership

with local Advisory Group stakeholders, and with residents to develop each scheme's Good Relations Plan. The organisation's Good Relations activities are part of Housing for All, the Department for Communities and Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Shared Housing Programme, which forms part of the Programme for Government'.

Shared? is a thought-provoking, moving and sometimes surprisingly funny exploration of contemporary housing issues and the human lives behind the social housing statistics and stereotypes.

Partisan Productions are core funded by the Community Relations Council and the Arts Council NI.



Free admission. To book visit www.eventbrite.co.uk and search Shared? For full programme of Good Relation Week events: <https://goodrelationsweek.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.

How to Build a Boat – Elaine Feeney – Harvill Secker



Jamie O'Neill loves the colour red. He also loves tall trees, patterns, rain that comes with wind, the curvature of many objects, books with dust jackets, cats, rivers and Edgar Allan Poe. At age 13 there are two things he especially wants in life: to build a Perpetual Motion Machine, and to connect with his mother Noelle, who died when he was born. In his mind these things are intimately linked. And at his new school, where all else is disorientating and overwhelming, he finds two people who might just be able to help him. How to Build a Boat is the story of how one boy and his mission transforms the lives of his teachers, Tess and Tadhg, and brings together a community. Written with tenderness and verve, it's about love, family and connection, the power of imagination, and how our greatest adventures never happen alone.

Aisling Ever After – Emer McLysaght, Sarah Breen – Gill Books

Living in the Big Apple feels like a movie, especially when Aisling finds her ex-boyfriend John on her doorstep. Can his new-found devotion (and his new six-pack!) lure her back home, or should she continue to chase the American dream with the Irish Mafia and Jeff the ridey fireman? Meanwhile, in Ballygobbar, it's all go. Baby showers are the new hen parties, Mammy and Dr Trevor are more serious than Aisling thought, and the prospect of two evil stepsisters has her doubting her place in the family. Pulled between head, heart and home, Aisling strives to finally create her own happy ever after. The last in the iconic Aisling series will be devoured by her multitudes of fans.



Death Writes – Andrea Carter – Constable



The next gripping book in the Ben O'Keefe series. A very public death in front of an adoring crowd... or something more sinister? Early summer in Glendara and the town's literary festival, Glenfest, is about to begin with Phyllis Kettle, the bookshop owner, at the helm. The big news is that Gavin Featherstone, the peninsula's bestselling but reclusive writer, has been persuaded to take part. An eager crowd awaits his first public appearance in ten years. Unexpectedly charming, he is just about to read from his new memoir when he collapses and dies on stage. Ben discovers that she holds Featherstone's will at the office, drafted by her predecessor. But just as it is confirmed that the author's death was murder, his assistant appears in Ben's office, brandishing a rival will which is very different from the one Ben has and Ben and Molloy are thrown into an investigation where they are pitted against a

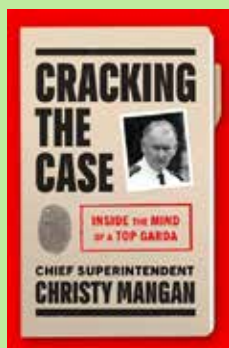
killer who has nothing left to lose. And although working together, there are secrets Ben has to keep from Molloy... but is he keeping his own secrets from her?

The Wager – David Grann – Simon & Schuster

On 28th January 1742, a ramshackle vessel of patched-together wood and cloth washed up on the coast of Brazil. Inside were thirty emaciated men, barely alive, and they had an extraordinary tale to tell. They were survivors of His Majesty's ship the Wager, a British vessel that had left England in 1740 on a secret mission during an imperial war with Spain. While chasing a Spanish treasure-filled galleon, the Wager was wrecked on a desolate island off the coast of Patagonia. The crew, marooned for months and facing starvation, built the flimsy craft and sailed for more than a hundred days, traversing 2,500 miles of storm-wracked seas. They were greeted as heroes. Then, six months later, another, even more decrepit, craft landed on the coast of Chile. This boat contained just three castaways and they had a very different story to tell. The thirty sailors who landed in Brazil were not heroes – they were mutineers. The first group responded with counter-charges of their own, of a tyrannical and murderous captain and his henchmen. While stranded on the island the crew had fallen into anarchy, with warring factions fighting for dominion over the barren wilderness. As accusations of treachery and murder flew, the Admiralty convened a court martial to determine who was telling the truth. The stakes were life-and-death—for whomever the court found guilty could hang.



Cracking the Case: Inside the mind of a top garda – Christy Mangan – Sandycove



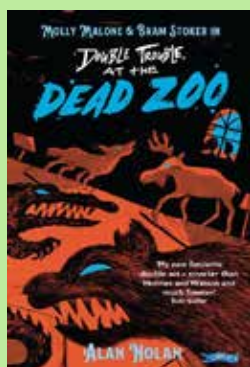
In his forty-year career, Mangan participated in or led over 100 murder investigations. And he set up the Garda cold case unit to examine some of the state's most troubling unsolved killings. Now, in Cracking the Case, he takes a deep dive into how investigations are run. Cracking the Case includes the extraordinary story of Charlotte and Linda Mulhall - dubbed 'the Scissor Sisters' - who killed and dismembered their mother's abusive boyfriend, and how Mangan elicited a full confession from Linda. A gripping account of murder in high society - the 1985 death of Fr Niall Molloy - has a striking analysis of why mishandling of the case led to so many conspiracy theories. And Mangan's description of gang warfare in Drogheda, and the 2020 killing of teenager Keane Mulready-Woods, is as tense as a thriller. It is also a chilling warning of what happens when criminals get their hooks into a community.

In Between Worlds: The Journey of the Famine Girls – Nicola Pierce – O'Brien Press

On board were 194 Irish girls. I heard the emotion in Sarah's voice as she asked, 'Will we ever come back?' 'Come back where?' 'Home,' said Sarah. 'Do you think we will ever see Ireland again?' Maggie and Sarah are on their way to Australia. Their homes and their lives have been devastated by famine, with death coming to so many. Even when they sought refuge in the workhouse they found horror and heartbreak there. When the girls are given the chance of a new life on the other side of the world, they know they have to say yes – no matter the price. On board ship, they are caught in between worlds. How will they find the courage and strength to build new lives in a strange land? In Between Worlds is a gripping historical novel that will engross younger readers.



Double Trouble at the Dead Zoo: Molly Malone & Bram Stoker (Molly and Bram) – Alan Nolan – O'Brien Press



Dublin, 1859. Bram Stoker: Boy seeking adventure (and things to write about) Molly Malone: Part-time sneak thief and full-time Dublin legend! When Bram and his best pal Molly meet a lonely boy called Sanjit in Dublin's Natural History Museum, they can see he needs some friends. So they, along with Molly's gang, The Sackville Street Spooks, take him under their wing. Sanjit tells them the tale of the dread (and very dead) pirate, Captain Lamprey and his links to the Museum. Soon the new shipmates find themselves outwitting vagabonds and villains, hot on the trail of a mysterious long-lost treasure ... the Rajapur Ruby! But little do they know that not everyone they come across is who they claim to be! Where CAN that ruby be? Hilarious and very clever, young readers will love it.

The Podcast Review

We source the best selection of podcasts each issue. This time we bring you Mindset & Marketing with Matthew Toman, Filthy Ritual, My Perfect Console, The Last Soviet and Desert Island Dishes.

Mindset & Marketing with Matthew Toman (Business)

Matt Toman, founder of The Evolution of Success and Bankhouse Media brings a new episode each week, teaming up with some of the country's most successful business owners to bring you their expertise to help improve your business. From top photographers to fitness entrepreneurs, from social media influencers to utilising the digital world, you're bound to find an episode that resonates with you.



of writing about gaming with the depth, wit and intelligence usually reserved for art and cinema. In this punchy series, he chats to celebrated people who have some connection to video games, asking them to pick five titles to put on their perfect console. It's Desert Island Discs with Metal Gear Solid instead of Elgar's "Enigma Variations", basically.



The Last Soviet (Science)

What do NSYNC and the Russian Space Program have in common? That'd be Lance Bass. The former boyband member hosts a podcast about Sergei Kirkekey, the Russian cosmonaut who was stranded in space for a year following the collapse of the USSR. An odd choice of host you might think, but during a hiatus from his pop career in 2002, Bass travelled to Russia to train to go to space as part of a canned MTV reality show. Over the course of eight episodes, he explores the geopolitics of space travel, shares anecdotes from his time in training and answers the age-old question: how do astronauts pee in space?

Filthy Ritual (True Crime)

You know those stories where you just can't see where its going? Filthy Ritual is one of them. Filthy Ritual is the story of Juliette D'Souza, whose well-carved image helped her swindle half of one of London's richest areas (Hampstead) as part of a series of intricate scams. The podcast is helped by the genuine likeability of the interviewees and the expert hosts, who are seasoned true crime presenters.



Desert Island Dishes (Food)

If BBC classic 'Desert Island Discs' is a bit heavy on Beethoven and childhood anguish for your liking, give this spin on the concept a whirl. It's hosted by food writer Margie Nomura with an ear for a good story and a savvy sense of the connection between food and emotion. The guests usually wax nostalgic about the dishes that made them. If you fancy hearing Stanley Tucci saying the word 'risotto' a lot – and trust me, you do – look no further.



My Perfect Console (Gaming)

Simon Parkin is one of very few journalists capable

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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