

America in the grip of
powerful Israeli interest
groups!



As the massacre
in Gaza continues



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Wishing all a Happy New Year

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01 872 0185
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9am to 1am Saturday and Sunday

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01 222 6944
- Finglas County Council
01 890 5090
- South Dublin County Council
01 890 5090
- Dún Laoghaire - Rathdown County Council
01 205 4804

Day Services

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01 671 2555
- Capuchin Day Centre
01 872 0770
- 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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Going Forward: A New Challenge

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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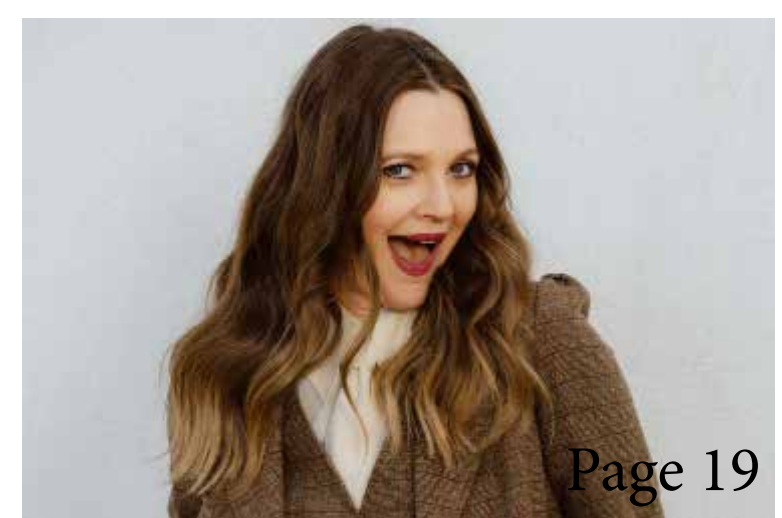
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Illegal Streaming

Many of us will have got our first tablet or laptop at Christmas and it's easy to slip onto illegal download sites where you're opening your devices up to criminals across the globe.

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Letter to my Younger Self - Mary Gabriel

Each issue we ask a well-known person to write a letter to their 16-year-old self. This issue, Co. Galway resident Mary Gabriel (68) who worked in Washington and London as a Reuters editor for two decades, was the 2022 recipient of the NYU/Axinn Foundation Prize and author of countless critically acclaimed books including her new release, ‘Madonna: A Rebel Life.’



My dear confused, frightened self

I know how impossible it is to imagine that anything good will happen, that even one-one-hundredth of your dreams will come true, that you will ever escape a seemingly inevitable decline into booze, drugs and bad relationships, that you will ever be recognised for your brain rather than as a female body, that you will ever be able to respect yourself, that you will ever be loved.

I know how bleak the future looks and how many big mistakes you’ve already made. But I also know that, despite all of that despair and failure, you still have hope and that’s a start. That small spark is something to cling to because, miraculously, as tiny as it is, it will take you to places that you, my sixteen-year-old self, can’t begin to imagine.

**Don’t
think of your life as lesser, just
different and different is always good.**

There is absolutely no point comparing yourself with the kids around you. They are privileged. They have mothers and fathers and live in homes their parents own. They have brothers and sisters and pets. They have confidence because of where they come from, because of what their fathers do for a living, because their families are accepted and respected members of the community. You are not those kids and never will be. You live alone with a single mother in rental places, one of which you were just evicted from. Most of the time, you live alone period because she has a couple jobs and is eternally looking for a man to make her dreams come true. That never happens, and so you help pick up the pieces when her dreams crash and burn. That is your reality, so accept it. Don’t think of your life as lesser, just different and different is always good.

Once you accept who you are, the next step is figuring out how to become who you want to be. Work and discipline are the keys to accomplishing anything – everything – so, get to work. “Where do I begin?” you wonder. By doing it. It’s that simple. You ask, “Well, what is ‘it’?” I would ask in reply, “What do you love to do? When you imagine who you might have been if the stars had aligned in your favour, what does that

person do?" I'll give you a hint, it begins with a word.

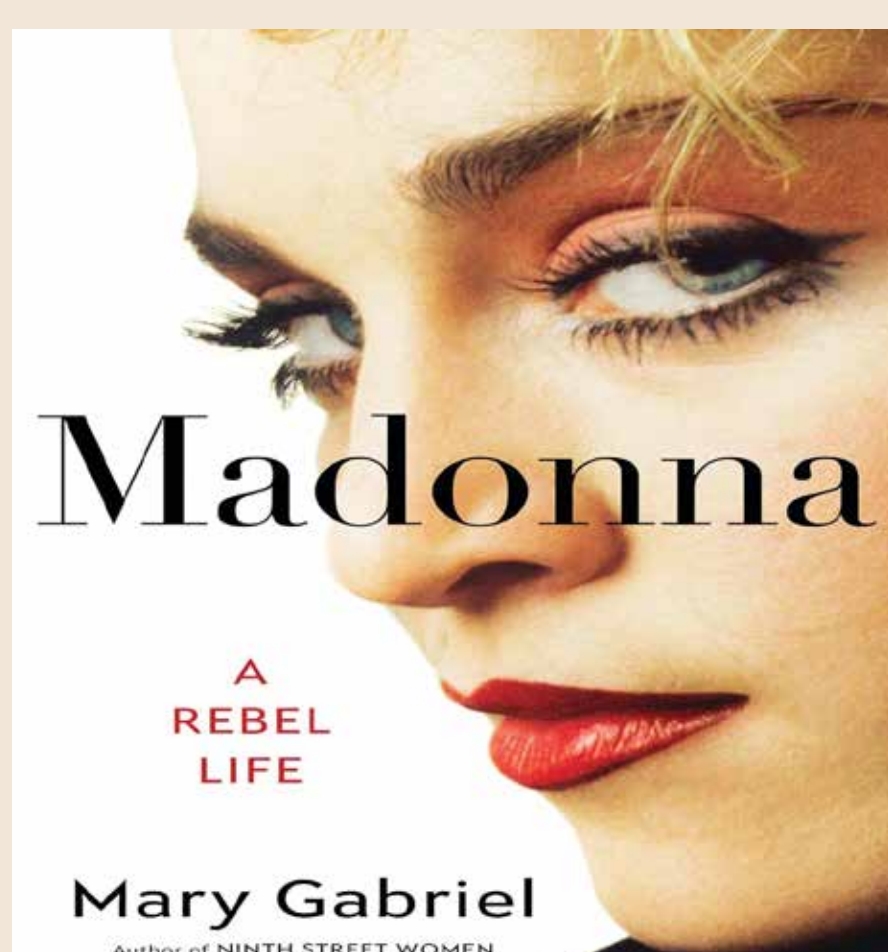


For some reason you feel confident with words. You know you can use them in a way other people your age can't. You know that you're good when a high school teacher, who suspects you of plagiarising a published work, keeps you after school to see what you can do while she's watching. You pass her test. That's the ultimate affirmation. And when teachers begin to remark to each other (and you overhear them) about the books you're reading, books that maybe college students would read, you smile. One of those teachers once asked if you planned to be a stripper when you graduated from high school. I was only a body to that numskull until I wasn't. You surprised him. At that moment, the spark of hope you carry inside becomes a small flame. But those are actually the easy parts. The biggest obstacles you'll face are internal. Sometimes it feels as though you don't have the courage to dare to be who you know you can be. Sometimes the insecurity is overwhelming. Ignore those feelings. Everyone carries within them the seeds of self-destruction, but they also carry the seeds of self-realisation. You're stronger than your fears. You know your value, even if no one else does – yet.

**One
of those teachers once
asked if you planned to be a
stripper when you graduated from
high school.**

Force yourself to take big chances, challenge yourself, live in places where you only have your wits and survival instincts to sustain you. And learn from other people. As Madonna once said, never be the smartest person in the room. Make sure you're surrounded by people who can teach you things, and then soak up those lessons and store them away. Everything you experience is material; everyone you meet will leave an imprint on you. Try to make sure it's a good one. God knows you don't want to be limited by people who try to control you, to squeeze you into a box that they have constructed, who force you to accept their version of who you are.

You'll only find yourself if you trust yourself, trust your dreams. Find that little flicker of hope and it will lead you to the ends of the earth. I probably shouldn't tell you, but that's what you have in your future. Surprise!



**'Madonna: A Rebel Life' by
Mary Gabriel, published
by published by Hodder &
Stoughton is available in all
good bookshops and online**



Israeli Lobby groups hold USA politicians in their grip.

Shaun Anthony looks at the influence and the false narrative being perpetuated by Israeli interests in the USA and abroad.



For most of us looking on it is hard to believe what has been allowed to happen in Gaza. Regardless of your opinions on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, one thing is beyond doubt, what Israel is doing in Gaza is a war crime no less repugnant than the Holocaust and the Hamas atrocities of Oct 7. However, it seems all reasoned debate escapes this right wing Israeli government, if anything, their vengeful policies only serve as a recruiting poster for Hamas. So what are they really trying to achieve? Destroying Gaza, its people and infrastructure can only have one goal, they do not want Palestinians returning, it's a form of ethnic cleansing that should horrify all who care about human life.

What is disappointing is the media narrative in the West, (Ireland excluded) particularly in the USA, where the narrative lacks balance and is, in the main, pro-Israel; a look at who controls the major media outlets in the western world proves informative. In major media outlets, there are 61 pro-Israel writers compared to only 5 who are critical of Israel. When news critical of Israel airs on CNN, it often prompts thousands of protest emails.

It seems that dissenting voices or opinions can also lead to blacklisting, Oscar winning actress Susan Sarandon was dropped by her agency because she dared to speak up as did a lesser known upcoming actress Melissa Barrera who was dropped from the "Scream" movie franchise. Obviously such reactions/reprisals may spell the end of a stellar career for one and the stifling of one for the other.

However, supporting Israel, actress Jamie Lee Curtis published a post to Instagram that showed a photo supposedly of Israeli children looking up to the sky with a caption that included "Terror from the skies" and an Israeli flag emoji. The post was deleted after some pointed out that the children in the photo were in fact from the Palestinian territories, not Israel, how ironic.

While "Justin Bieber posting 'praying for Israel' using a picture of a destroyed Gaza speaks volumes about how knowledgeable about world affairs some of these celebrities really are.

**The
United States is home to
51 pro-Israel lobbying
organisations**

It is interesting however to note that nobody has lost their job for being supportive of Israel and critical of Palestine, neither is it a big reach to guess who controls the entertainment business in the USA.

Many wonder why the USA seem to have little influence on what is happening in Gaza despite contributing billions in aid to Israel each year? Could it be the power of the pro-Israeli lobby and the positions of influence they hold that makes a dissenting voice vulnerable to being labelled anti-Semitic and risk the all-too-real consequences?

It is worth noting that the United States is home to 51 pro-Israel lobbying organisations, the lobby group AIPAC is one of the three most influential lobbying entities in America, working tirelessly in support of Israel.

Organisations like ADL, American Jewish Congress, Israel Policy Forum and the American Jewish Committee maintain year-round oversight of members of the USA Congress and senators.

AIPAC wields such considerable influence that its former director, Steve Rosen, once stated that it would be political suicide for a U.S. politician aspiring to be elected to employ anti-Israel rhetoric.



It is hardly a coincidence that aspiring presidential candidates make a visit to Israel prior to election time and are usually pictured with a government member and a symbolic photo at the Wailing Wall thrown in for good measure. It is a shame that the vast majority of the American population are ignorant to the control these pro-Israeli lobby groups have over their politicians. A recent UN motion advocating a ceasefire was vetoed by the USA obviously the pro-Israeli lobby groups are doing their work effectively. When will the American people wake up to the damage such lobby groups are doing to their country and their puppet politicians. It is unfortunate that the many, many good people of Israel, home and abroad are being immersed in propaganda and are fearful of the consequences of speaking out, while ideological zealots control a false narrative.

I am not one to believe that my opinions are more valid than the next person, but I do believe when possible you should stand up for what is right, and killing children, regardless of their location or heritage is wrong and must be called out for what it is. Turning a blind eye to what is happening in Gaza is no longer an option for those who have a conscience. As a boy I always felt secure that the USA held the high moral ground and small countries could feel safe and secure that they had their backs. Recent American domestic politics and foreign policies have shattered that illusion.

**It
would be political
suicide for a U.S. politician
aspiring to be elected to employ
anti-Israel rhetoric**

It also has to be said that in light of what happened in World War II regarding the Holocaust, Israel's current policies regarding Palestine risk sowing the seeds of the anti-Semitism on a far greater scale than that, which led to the Holocaust.

When, as it will, a ceasefire is implemented and a political solution sought, those responsible for the atrocities on both sides should be held accountable and just like the Nazi war criminals of WWII, hunted down and face their Nuremberg. How ironic would that be?

SHANE MACGOWAN

With The Pogues, Shane MacGowan perhaps proved himself the most important Irish writer since James Joyce, Alexander Howard reports.



Known for his music with The Pogues, and perhaps the most important Irish writer since James Joyce, the venerated and critically acclaimed Shane MacGowan died recently in Dublin at the age of 65.

MacGowan was the primary songwriter and lead singer of the folk-punk band who formed in London in 1982 and became best known for their chart-topping single, Fairytale of New York.

A mordantly comedic ballad sung by MacGowan and Kirsty MacColl, this unlikely Christmas favourite – which takes its title from a 1973 novel by the American-Irish writer J.P. Donleavy – is the fourth track on *If I Should Fall With Grace From God*.

Released to critical and commercial acclaim on January 18 1988, *The Pogues' third album* provides us with a helpful means to better appreciate the rich musical and lyrical legacy the complex and notoriously unreliable MacGowan leaves behind.

**Sung
by MacGowan and Kirsty
MacColl, this unlikely Christmas favourite
– takes its title from a 1973 novel by the
American-Irish writer J.P. Donleavy**

This album, as with the four others MacGowan recorded with The Pogues, is an intoxicating admixture of the old and new, a heady concoction of the traditional and modern. The opening song on the record – also called *If I Should Fall With Grace From God* – is proof. The track, which rattles along at furious pace and features a typically raspy vocal delivery by MacGowan, takes the traditional Scottish song *The Bonnie Banks o' Loch Lomond* as a primary point of musical reference.

The thematic preoccupations of the lyrics leave little doubt as to MacGowan's political affinities:

*This land was always ours
Was the proud land of our fathers
It belongs to us and them
Not to any of the others.*

Accordion player James Fearnley published an excellent memoir about his tenure as a member of The Pogues in 2012, and has this to say about the album's opening number:

The song was as elemental as the best of all Shane's songs. It had mud and land and rivers and oceans and corpses in it, in a landscape as expansive and ancient and threatening as the melody, bringing to mind the high road and low road, one of which – after the Jacobite Rising of 1745 – led to death.

All this, it should be added, in under two and a half minutes.

A lover of literature

Shane Patrick Lysaght MacGowan was born in Kent, England, on Christmas Day in 1957. His parents were Irish immigrants who moved to England for work. As a child, MacGowan divided his time between the south-east of England and Tipperary, where he first learnt to play and sing Irish music.

A gifted writer, MacGowan won a scholarship to Westminster School in London in 1971, but was expelled for drug possession in his second year.

MacGowan's passion for reading and writing was evident to his family and teachers. By the age of 12, he was reading Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Jean Paul Sartre and D. H. Lawrence.

MacGowan's love of literature and prowess with language comes to the fore in the songs he wrote while in The Pogues. MacGowan took lyrical inspiration from transgressive and rebellious writers like Jean Genet and Federico García Lorca, both of whom are name-checked on The Pogues' 1990 album, Hell's Ditch.

The Irish republican writer and activist Brendan Behan was another enduring literary touchstone for MacGowan. His version of The Auld Triangle, popularised by Behan, can be found on The Pogues first album, Red Roses for Me, from 1984.

With his father, MacGowan read Joyce's Ulysses and Finnegans Wake. Joyce's influence on MacGowan and The Pogues was profound and lasting. (He quite literally appears on the cover of If I Should Fall With Grace From God.)

The academic Kevin Farrell reminds us, at the outset of their career, "the band called itself Pogue Mahone, a playful – and Joycean – attempt to slip Irish language vulgarity past the BBC censors".



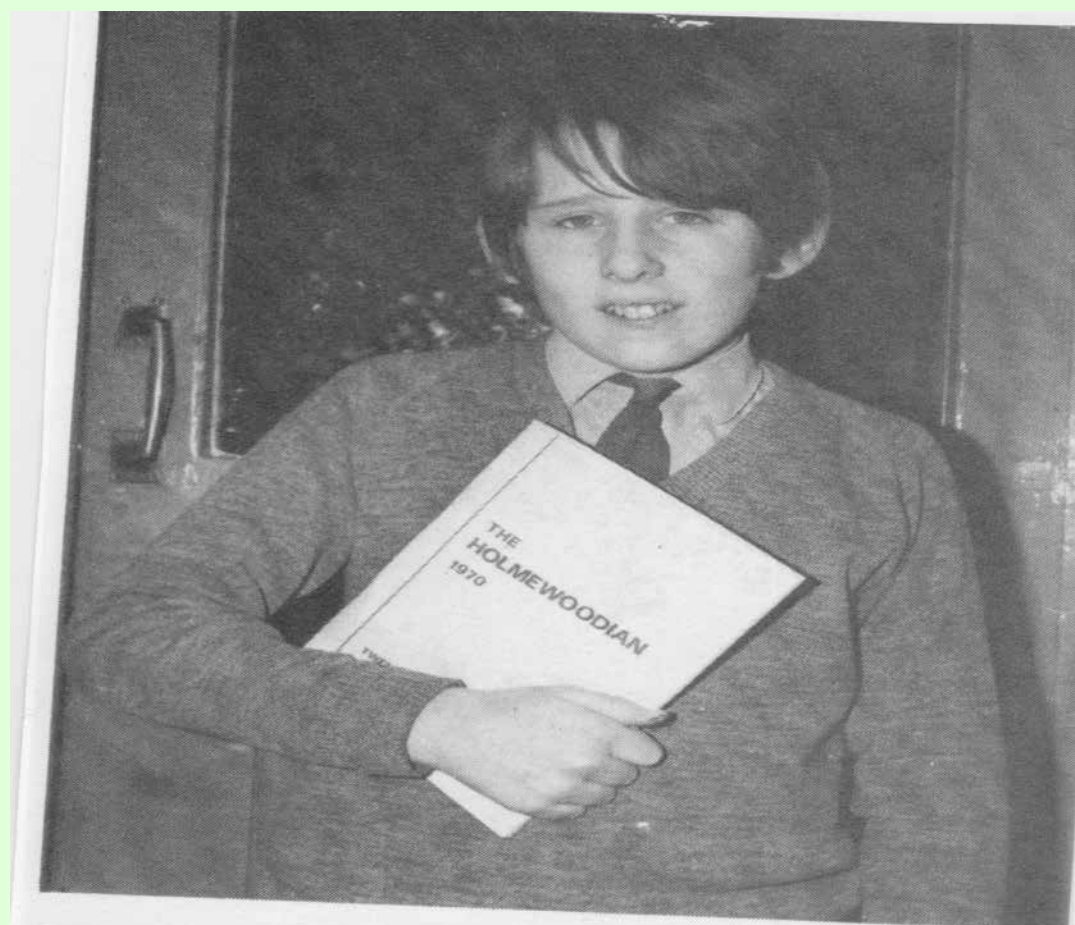
The Gaelic phrase póg mo thóin translates as "kiss my arse", and a variation of the expression can be found in the Aeolus episode of Joyce's modernist masterpiece, Ulysses. While they couldn't get the reference past the censors, it is a clear indicator of the band's love of Joyce, who also struggled against the suppression of expression.

Joyce's influence on MacGowan can be felt in the lyrics of The Sick Bed of Cuchulainn.

**MacGowan's
love of literature and prowess
with language comes to the fore in the
songs he wrote while in
The Pogues**

This song, the first track of 1985's *Rum, Sodomy & the Lash*, serves as a lyrical statement of artistic and political intent: it fuses Celtic mythology with anti-fascist action. Here is a representative slice of the lyrics, which MacGowan delivers at a suitably frenzied pace:

*When you pissed yourself in Frankfurt and got syph down in Cologne
And you heard the rattling death trains as you lay there all alone
Frank Ryan bought you whiskey in a brothel in Madrid
And you decked some fucking black shirt who was cursing
all the Yids
At the sick bed of Cúchulainn we'll kneel and say a prayer
But the ghosts are rattling at the door and the devil's in the chair.*



ABOVE: Shane MacGowan, one of the editorial staff of *The Holmewoodian*, has recently won a prize of £10 in a newspaper literary competition. Another boy, aged 8, Rupert Oxley, won £5.

Cuchulainn is a central figure in *The Ulster Cycle*, a key work of Celtic mythology. A renowned fighter, the heroic Cuchulainn is often romanticised and deified.

MacGowan, who sees affinities between the mythological Cuchulainn and historical figures like the Irish republican Frank Ryan, takes a very different, and overtly Joycean tack.

Deftly toggling back and forth across temporalities, MacGowan foregrounds and celebrates the corporeal. And as with Joyce's everyman hero, Leopold Bloom, MacGowan's Cuchulainn is, as music critic Jeffrey T. Roesgen tells us:

made human, assuming the same misadventures, indulgences, and internal struggles between virtue and vice that consume us.

**By the
age of 12, he was reading Fyodor
Dostoyevsky,
Jean Paul Sartre and D. H. Lawrence.**

This also serves, I think, as a fitting description of MacGowan himself.

**Author Alexander Howard
Senior Lecturer, Discipline of English, University of Sydney**

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The Not so Innocuous Painkiller

Liz Anthony looks at a recent study and speaks to Andrea who was prescribed painkillers for an ice skating accident and got hooked, resulting in Bipolar Disorder and other mental health conditions.



Most of us have used painkillers at some stage of our lives without any problem but for a minority of individuals (for reasons not yet fully understood) they become addicted.

Pain killers are a common remedy for physical ailments, but their impact on mental health is often overlooked. For some taking painkillers can lead to addiction whether that's due to a genetic predisposition, chemicals in the brain or a co-occurring mental disorder. A groundbreaking study conducted by St George's, University of London and the University of Liverpool, led by Professor Sofat, has shed light on the potential mental health risks associated with painkiller use. The study, which analysed the medical records of 853,625 individuals aged two to 24, revealed a significant increase in the risk of developing mental health disorders among those who frequently used painkillers.

Addressing mental health issues is of utmost importance in today's society, and the findings of the aforementioned study highlight the need for increased awareness and intervention. In Ireland 42% of adults have a mental health disorder and one in ten have attempted suicide according to research by academics at Maynooth University, National College of Ireland, and Trinity College Dublin. Mental health disorders can have a profound impact on individuals' overall well-being and quality of life, and the potential link between painkiller use and these disorders should not be ignored.

She was prescribed OxyContin for four weeks and swiftly found herself in a, "love love relationship with it"

Our GPs Must Recognise this Potentially Dangerous Link

Healthcare professionals play a vital role in recognising and addressing mental health issues in their patients, and it is crucial that they consider the potential risks associated with painkiller use before writing prescriptions, furthermore, the general public should be educated about the potential mental health risks of painkiller use and encouraged to seek alternative treatments whenever possible - and there are many, including exercise which releases the body's natural painkiller - endorphins, TENS machines (small, unobtrusive machines with electrodes that attach to the skin and send electrical pulses into the body), heat or ice and even certain health shop staples like Clove Oil. With almost 19,000 people in the Republic waiting on primary care psychology services [April 2023] and that's expected to rise, we must invest in prioritising mental health wellbeing and possibly adopting holistic approaches to treatment.

***Andrea's Story**

A family member who developed a painkiller addiction after an accident at the age of 21, on a university exchange to the States. Andrea (now 51) was 8 weeks into her year abroad when she fell on an outdoor skating rink, injuring her neck. She was prescribed OxyContin for four weeks and swiftly found herself in a,

"love love relationship with it... it zapped the pain, gave me that drunk feeling without the hangover and I loved the warm, fuzzy, safe feeling"

Nearing the end of the four weeks Andrea found herself back at the doctor asking for a refill. Thankfully he refused, but sadly this didn't hinder her and she began purchasing 'Hillbilly Heroin' from,

"...a guy I'd normally have been terrified of on the other side of town ...it's not lost on me how easy I found this gear in a strange city, in a new country.... Looking back, it's terrifying."

By the time she got home, Andrea had a job lined up at the Civil Service. Several months into her contract she experienced "a major meltdown" and pushed her line-manager, an action at odds with her 'normal', conflict-avoidant demeanour.

In a nutshell, over the next few weeks her out-of-character, abusive behaviour escalated, resulting in her mother calling 999 and immediate admission to a guarded Accident & Emergency room,

“I’d lost my job, I was lying about it, I’d no money and was selling everything, I’d become very hostile ... I don’t blame mum for being terrified...I will never forgive myself for striking her...”



Andrea detoxed at a charitable organisation in Belfast, attended NA meetings and relapsed a few times over the next year-and-a-half.

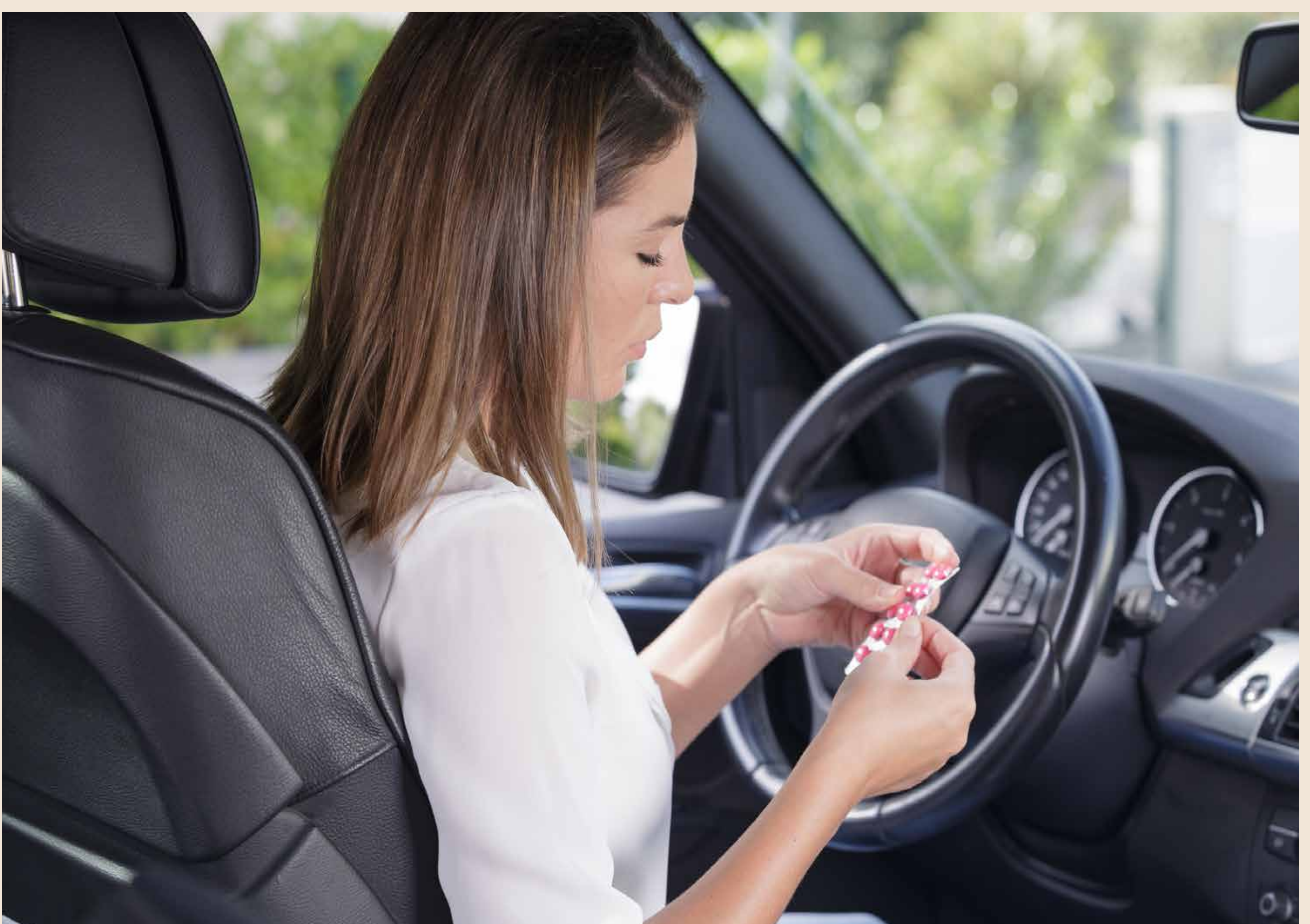
After being clean for “quite a few years”, she began “having severe meltdowns”. After several visits to the GP, she paid for private consultations at a clinic in Belfast to discover she was suffering from Bipolar Disorder, Depression, Anxiety and SAD, no doubt caused, according to the specialist, by her painkiller addiction.

Andrea, like many who’ve succumbed to painkiller dependency that has led to serious mental health issues feels “we need more education, more awareness” around painkillers, potential addiction and possible mental illness later in life.

“I’d lost my job, I was lying about it, I’d no money and was selling everything, I’d become very hostile..”

The alarming connection between painkiller use and mental health disorders in young individuals is a pressing issue that cannot be ignored. Andrea had so much potential, she had some of the highest exam results in the country and the upward trajectory of her life and career seemed set in stone,

“Instead I have to work seasonally as I suffer from severe SAD [Seasonal Adjustment Disorder] and even then I often need time off when my meds need tweaked. I never had children, despite really wanting them for fear of being unable to care for them when I’m not stable. I haven’t been able to maintain a romantic relationship to date..... I’m testament to how ‘innocent’ pain pills can destroy your life..... If it could happen to me it could happen to anyone. I was the girl next door, the school Prefect ... Head Girl...”



Adopt a Healthy Fear

Informal chats around reports such as Professor Sofat's could open communication and equip young people with tools and strategies to cope with real-life situations. We need a healthy fear of painkillers, as we live in a culture where the slightest twinge is medicated. I know women who take painkillers prior to having their legs waxed.... I see school girls in Starbucks passing out Co-codamol for period cramps, in fact, I remember during my own school days carrying painkillers in my backpack (as did most of my female friends) and sharing them for menstrual cramps, headaches and the like. It's frightening to think how blasé we are around this medication despite the great potential for harm.

**In Ireland
42% of adults have a mental
health disorder and one in ten have
attempted suicide**

It's our collective responsibility to ensure that young individuals are educated around these crucial issues. Countless families have an 'Andrea' - a special individual who never achieved their full potential due to mental illness caused by painkiller addiction.



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New Year – New You?

New Year's resolutions are hard to keep but like the former ice-hockey player Wayne Gretzky once said, "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take" so at least giving it your best shot gives you a chance of succeeding. And yes, my diet starts on the 1st. Sineád Dunlop reports.



As we enter the new year, it's time to start thinking about our goals and resolutions for the year ahead. Setting resolutions can be a great way to start the year off on the right foot and work towards self-improvement. Whether you want to focus on your health, career, relationships, or personal growth, there are endless possibilities for resolutions.

Reflection on the Past Year

Before we dive into the best New Year's resolutions for 2024, it's important to take a moment and reflect on the past year. Think about what worked well, what didn't, and what lessons you learned. Reflection allows us to gain insight into our strengths and weaknesses, enabling us to set more realistic and meaningful resolutions for the upcoming year.

...
it's important to take a moment and reflect on the past year. Think about what worked well, what didn't, and what lessons you learned.

Setting Achievable Goals

Now you've reflected on the past year, it's time to set some achievable goals for the upcoming year. The key to successful New Year's resolutions is ensuring that they are SMART, i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely. Setting unrealistic goals only sets you up for disappointment and frustration.

Start by evaluating what areas of your life you want to improve. Whether it's your health, career, relationships, or personal development, narrow down your focus. Instead of making a long list of resolutions, choose one or two goals that you are truly committed to achieving.

Once you have identified your goals, break them down into smaller, manageable steps. This will make them more achievable and less overwhelming. Set specific deadlines for each step to keep yourself accountable. Perhaps invest in a bullet journal to help.

Prioritising Health and Wellness

One of the most popular New Year's resolutions is to prioritise health and wellness. It's no surprise, as taking care of ourselves is essential for overall well-being. However, it's important to approach this resolution in a realistic and sustainable manner.

Start by identifying specific areas of your health and wellness that you want to improve. It could be incorporating more physical activity into your daily routine, adopting a healthier diet, practicing better sleep habits, or reducing stress levels. Whatever your focus may be, make sure it aligns with your long-term goals and values.

Once you have identified your areas of improvement, create a plan that supports your goals. This could involve scheduling regular exercise sessions, meal planning and prepping, setting aside time for relaxation and self-care, or seeking support from a healthcare professional or wellness coach.

Consistency is key when it comes to prioritising health and wellness. Make a commitment to yourself and stick to your plan, even when motivation wanes.



Investing in Personal and Professional Growth

Another important New Year's resolution to consider for 2024 is investing in personal and professional growth. This resolution can have a significant impact on your overall happiness and success.

When it comes to personal growth, look for opportunities to learn and develop new skills, this could be as simple as card making or as challenging as applying to university as a mature student. There's so many opportunities, especially if you live in a town or city to attend a workshop, conferences or seminars, or even take a refresher course.

On the professional front, set career goals that align with your long-term vision. Whether it's getting a promotion, switching careers, or starting your own business, determine the steps you need to take to achieve these goals. This might involve updating your CV, networking with professionals in your desired field, investing in further education or even setting up a LinkedIn page.

Whether you choose to help at a homeless shelter, tutor underprivileged children, or participate in environmental clean-ups, every act of kindness makes a difference.

Giving back to the community

In addition to investing in personal and professional growth, another impactful New Year's resolution for 2024 is giving back to the community. This resolution not only benefits those in need but also brings a sense of fulfilment and purpose into your life.

There are numerous ways to contribute to your community. Consider volunteering your time and skills at local charities or non-profit organisations. Whether you choose to help at a homeless shelter, tutor underprivileged children, or participate in environmental clean-ups, every act of kindness makes a difference.

Making time for self-care and relaxation

Self-care encompasses a wide range of activities, and it is all about taking the time to nurture and care for yourself. This can be as simple as carving out a few minutes each day to engage in activities that bring you joy and help you relax. Whether it's taking a long bath or indulging in a hobby, these moments of self-care are essential for recharging your batteries. For stress relief I've found that an activity that engages my hands and requires concentration works best for me but you may find totally switching off recharges your batteries - we are all different and that's okay.

Staying organised and managing time effectively

As we dive into a new year, one of the best resolutions you can make is to focus on staying organised and managing your time effectively. With the demands of work, personal life, and other commitments, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and lose track of priorities. However, by implementing a few simple strategies, you can regain control and optimise your productivity.

Start by decluttering your physical and digital spaces. A cluttered environment can cause unnecessary stress and make it difficult to find what you need. Take some time to tidy up your workspace, clear out your inbox, and organise your files and folders. This simple act can help you stay focused and work more efficiently.

Building strong relationships

In addition to staying organised and managing your time effectively, another key resolution for the new year is to focus on building strong relationships. As social beings, our connections with others play a vital role in our overall well-being and happiness. Whether it's with family, friends, colleagues, or even new acquaintances, investing in meaningful relationships can bring immense joy and support.



Tracking progress and adjusting as needed

Tracking progress and adjusting as needed is a crucial resolution for the new year. Setting goals is great, but it's equally important to have a system in place to track your progress. This allows you to see how far you've come and identify areas that need improvement.

Regularly review your progress and make adjustments as needed. Life is unpredictable, and circumstances may change. Flexibility is key in making your resolutions achievable. If you find yourself falling behind or facing unexpected challenges, don't be afraid to modify your approach or set new goals that align with your current situation.

...
**the purpose of resolutions
 is to improve yourself and your life.
 It's not about perfection or reaching an
 arbitrary benchmark.**

Remember, the purpose of resolutions is to improve yourself and your life. It's not about perfection or reaching an arbitrary benchmark.

And finally ...

None of us are perfect. Do your best and in the words of Dolly Parton, "Find out who you are and do it on purpose."

 This is a promotional graphic for Dublin City Council's Sport & Recreation Services. It features a row of four small images at the top: a person at a desk, a modern building, an indoor swimming pool, and a person playing soccer. Below these is a large, colorful logo with the text "Dublin City is YOUR City" where "YOUR" is in large blue letters. To the right of the logo is a list of 14 sports facilities with their addresses and phone numbers. At the bottom, it says "Dublin City Council Sport & Recreation Services" and includes the council's logo and name in Irish and English. A blue banner at the very bottom contains the website URL.

Aughrim St Sports Hall, Stoneybatter, D7. (01) 8388085

Tony Gregory Community, Youth & Sports Centre, Ballybough, Dublin 3. (01) 2228584

Sports & Fitness Ballyfermot, Le Fanu Pk. Ballyfermot, D10. (01) 2228580

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

Cabra Parkside Community & Sport Complex, Ratoath Rd, Cabra, D7. (01) 2227559

Clogher Road Sports Hall, Clogher Road, Crumlin, D12. (01) 2228594

Clontarf All Weather Pitches, Alfie Byrne Road, Clontarf, D3. (01) 2226578

Sports & Fitness Finglas, Mellows Rd, Finglass, D11 (01) 2228620

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

Dublin City Council Sport & Recreation Services

Comhairle Cathrach
 Bhaile Átha Cliath
 Dublin City Council

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

Drew Barrymore: From Child Star to Addict to Starting Over

Drew Barrymore shot to fame in E.T. the Extra Terrestrial as Gertie, the adorable little sister but behind that immense talent was a terrified little girl crying out for affection and stability. Shaun Anthony reports.



Drew as Gertie in E.T.

Drew Barrymore was born on 22 February 1975 to actor John Drew Barrymore and wannabe actress Jaid Barrymore (born Ildikó Jaid Makó) who was born in a displaced persons camp in Brannenburg, West Germany to Hungarian WWII refugees. It's fair to say that young Drew was born into Hollywood royalty - her paternal grandparents, John Barrymore and Dolores Costello, were actors, with John being arguably the most acclaimed actor of his generation. Barrymore is also a niece of Diana Barrymore, a grandniece of Lionel Barrymore, a great grandniece of Broadway idol John Drew Jr. and silent film actor, writer and director Sidney Drew so she came from quite a long line of successful thespians.

Early life

Drew grew up in West Hollywood in a dysfunctional home. Her parents split when she was still a baby and her mother swiftly began taking her infant to castings - in fact, way before she'd even hit her first birthday, Drew was earning a living in TV commercials and was the breadwinner.

...way
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first birthday, Drew was earning a
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breadwinner.

Determined to ensure her daughter hit the big time (Jaid was living vicariously through her), Drew was ferried around countless auditions each week and made her big-screen debut at the age of 5 in Ken Russell's *Altered States* (1980). However, it would be playing Gertie, the adorable little sister in Spielberg's *E.T.: The Extraterrestrial* in 1982, at the age of 7 that young Drew would become a household name.

Spielberg was informed quite early on that young Drew ate her lunch in the little room E.T. was kept in. Staff listened outside as she talked about her worries and asked the little alien questions. The director decided to keep E.T. 'on' to keep her company and to build her bond with it.

Immediately after the film's release, a tiny Drew appeared on NBC's *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson where she trips and falls on her way to sit down then innocently takes out her fake front teeth ("so I can talk better") that her mother forced her to wear (to cover up the milk teeth she's lost), telling Johnny she must not forget to lift them off his desk or "my mother will kill me."

Drew's Descent into Drugs & Alcohol

Now a recognisable face, Jaid began ferrying her young child to clubs and bars (as Jaid revelled in the attention) and by the age of eight was partying up to five nights a week, being encouraged to dance with famous young men and was introduced to drugs (by her mother). By 12 she'd already been to rehab and by 13 was starting an 18-months stint for alcohol and drug dependency. Desperate for some stability and very aware she couldn't depend on her mother or father, Barrymore went to court and got emancipated at 14, however, despite feeling she'd be free of problems being away from her mother, she swiftly fell into a very deep depression and attempted suicide. Again placed in rehab she fought her demons and came out and lived with David Crosby (of *The Byrds*) and his wife. The stay was precipitated, Crosby said, because she "needed to be around some people that were committed to sobriety."

At just 15 Drew moved into her own apartment but the press hounded her relentlessly, especially since the

move corresponded with the release of her book, *Little Girl Lost* - a truly shocking memoir detailing a chaotic, difficult childhood devoid of boundaries or parental affection. Eight year old Drew was not allowed sugar but it was fine for her to get drunk, smoke and get high on marijuana.



Drew Capitalises on her Troubled Girl Persona

Despite being in and out of rehab, Drew continued working and cashing in on her troubled girl reputation, she took on roles like *Far from Home* (which was ridiculed for making Barrymore a sexual object at 14), erotic thriller *Poison Ivy*, which, today would seem a rather strange choice for a schoolgirl. Around this time Drew posed naked for *Interview* magazine and continued to choose movies that sexualised her and portrayed her as a 'bad girl.' The reason for this could be two-fold: Drew has spoken in interviews about her childhood and teen years when she vehemently believed she was "a bad person" because her father had no interest in visiting her and her mother showed her no love or affection.... Bearing in mind her mum was no longer her manager and the supervisor of her rehab Drew seemed to be taking more and more liberties in her life (including choosing her scripts), Drew's career choices seemed increasingly misguided. In fact, when she posed nude again - this time for *Playboy*, Steven Spielberg was very angry and sent her a quilt with a letter scolding her and telling her to "cover up." Did she do what she was told? Of course not. She appeared soon after on *The Late Show* with David Letterman where she climbed onto his desk and flashed her bare breasts for his birthday! Drew has spoken out in more recent times about this period of her life stating, "I would never allow my girls to do what I did..... I made very poor choices..."

Eight
year old Drew was not
allowed sugar but it was fine for her
to get drunk, smoke and get high on
marijuana.

Reestablishing her Career

Barrymore has made no secret of the intense therapy she's undertaken for years and after taking a hiatus from the industry she relaunched herself in 1995 by co-founding a production company, Flower Films. That same year, she gave a solid performance in the movie *Boys on the Side*, co-starring with Whoopi Goldberg and Mary-Louise Parker. Barrymore had come back and proved she had beat her demons and was ready to become a major player in Hollywood once again.

Countless other hits followed throughout the 90s including *Scream*, *The Wedding Singer* and *Ever After*, a version of the Cinderella story, with Anjelica Huston. Barrymore's performances were lauded by the likes of the Salon critic Charles Taylor and Roger Ebert who described her performance in *Never Been Kissed* as proof she has "star power." The film grossed \$84.5m and really made the world fall in love with Barrymore all over again, with her comedic timing and portrayal of geeky Josie Geller.



The 2000s

The Noughties were equally great for Barrymore, opening with Charlie's Angels with Cameron Diaz and Lucy Liu. The film was a major box office success and helped solidify Barrymore's standing in her production company as one of the film's producers. Riding in Cars with Boys, the tale of a teen mother in a failed marriage also ticked all the boxes and proved that Barrymore was more than a pretty face - she was a major player with a successful production company producing consecutive hits. In fact, when Barrymore heard about a film called Donnie Darko that was threatened due to lack of financing, she financed the venture and took a small role in the film. Despite not being a huge box office hit, it reached cult status after the DVD release, inspiring numerous websites devoted to unraveling the plot twists and meanings. Throughout the mid 2000s, Barrymore would team up with other production companies like Happy Madison Productions and bring some great movies to the cinema including 50 First Dates with Adam Sandler - a film that made a staggering \$197m - making Barrymore an incredibly wealthy woman.

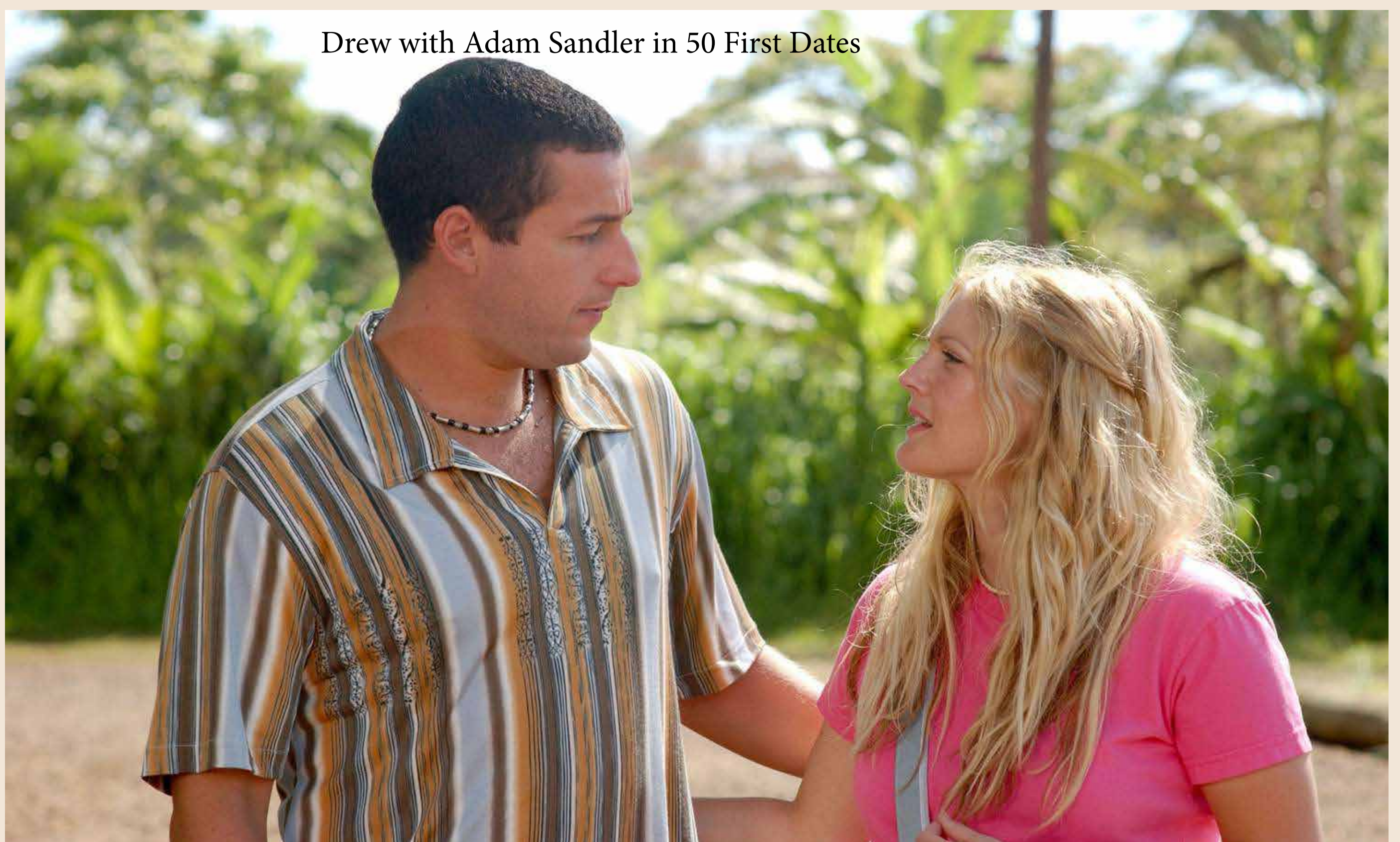
...she
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affection..

Barrymore has continued to star in and produce some excellent movies throughout the '10s and '20s including Blended with Adam Sandler and Miss You Already with Toni Collette about two long-time friends whose relationship is put to the test when one starts a family and the other becomes ill.



Taking full advantage of the new golden age of TV, Barrymore's production company made the Netflix original 'Santa Clara Diet' a real estate agent who, after experiencing a physical transformation into a zombie, starts craving human flesh.

In more recent times Barrymore launched a syndicated talk-show, The Drew Barrymore Show which uses her immense knowledge of the industry not to mention her personal experiences to bring a really unique voice and perspective to interviews. She wrote a best-selling cook book and produces a lifestyle magazine called Drew Magazine and has really repackaged herself as a brand.



Unlucky in Love

Throughout the years Barrymore has had a string of romantic interests and sadly none of them have really 'stuck'. She wed LA bar owner Jeremy Thomas and filed for divorce just weeks later. She then married comedian Tom Green but the marriage ended as quick as it began. She would wait a full ten years before marrying again but sadly this was another short-lived union, this time to art consultant Will Kopelman. The pair had two girls, Olive and Frankie. Olive and Frankie are rarely seen as Barrymore does not want them in the spotlight and has spoken at length about her fears of them repeating her mistakes.

It can't be easy
- she still carries a lot of her
childhood scars and that's bound to
take its toll on her personal life.

Drew has had very little luck in love, with marriages or partners and often jokes about it on her TV show. It can't be easy - she still carries a lot of her childhood scars and that's bound to take its toll on her personal life, however, her early experiences (good or bad) undoubtedly shaped her into the person she is today and there's no doubt that her talk show has really succeeded where many fail because there's a real authenticity around her - she's experienced life, the ups, the downs - the getting back up and making lemonade when life deals you lemons and a lot of her stories on her show centre around her bad dates and inability to find the perfect man for her.



A disturbing childhood can have a profound impact on one's psychological well-being, and Barrymore's story is no exception. Growing up in the spotlight, constantly subjected to media scrutiny and the pressures of fame, took a toll on her young mind. The turbulent relationship with her parents added another layer of complexity and it's something of a miracle she's even alive today given her early life, her alcoholism and heavy drug use.





Cllr Shane Moynihan

Fianna Fáil

South Dublin County Council

*Representing communities in Palmerstown, Lucan,
Balgaddy and North Clondalkin*

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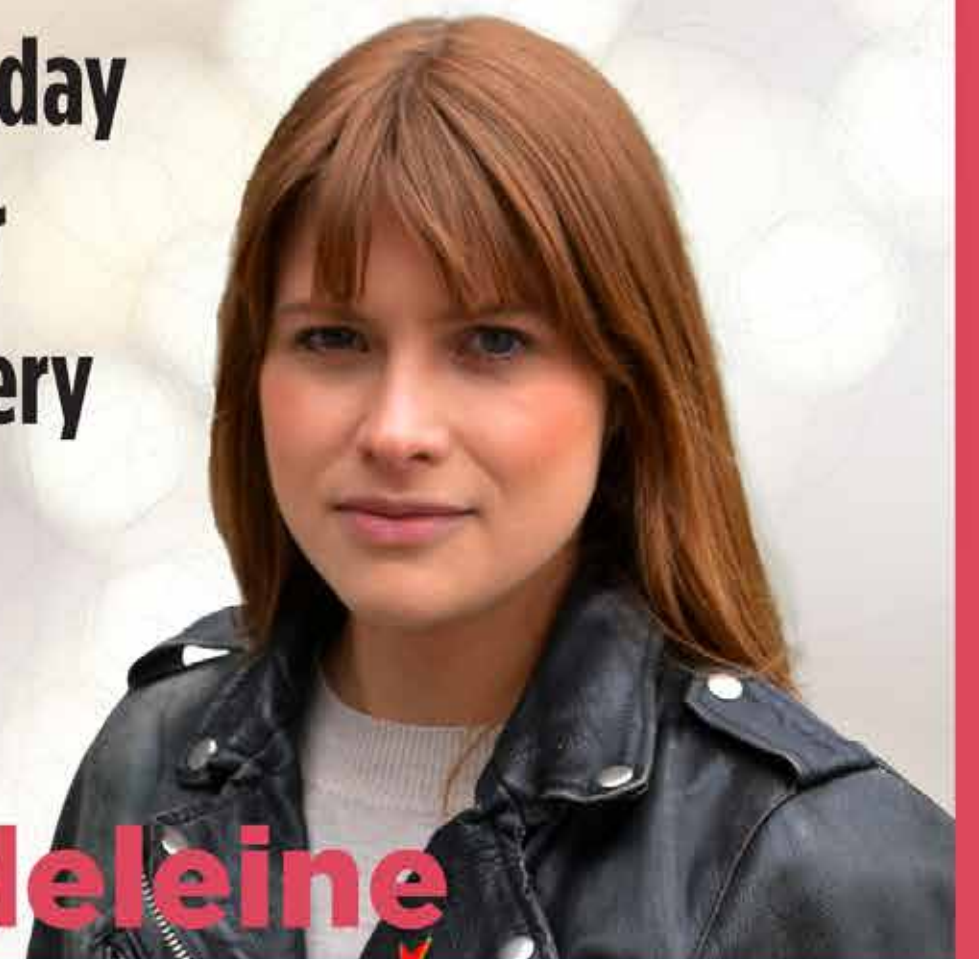
**Community Advice, every Monday
and Friday 11am-1pm in our
constituency office, 3 Monastery
Road, Clondalkin Village**



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Women's Homeless Team to Receive Match Kit

Fantastic afternoon was had recently at the Women's National Team training session as representatives of the Irish Homeless Street leagues were met by Manager Eileen Gleeson & Captain Katie McCabe.



Eileen Gleeson, Ireland team Manager, Vanessa Ogbonna (IHSL)
Katie McCabe Irish Captain, Shauna Kavanagh (IHSL) Allison
Ryan (IHSL) Chris O'Brien (IHSL) Sean Kavanagh (IHSL)

The Ireland Women's National Team reaffirmed its support to the Irish Women's Homeless World Cup squad by donating a full set of match kit for 2024.

With the help of primary sponsors Sky Ireland, the WNT squad were keen to follow up on the link created in 2021 between the two teams where they supplied much-needed gear and equipment.

Now, they will present the players who are selected from the Irish Homeless Street Leagues with new Sky-branded Castore kit ahead of competing in the Homeless World Cup next year.

The Homeless world Cup team finished 4th in this years tournament in Sacramento, USA, winning eight of their eleven games the team is made up of players from diverse backgrounds and circumstances; using football as a positive force to change lives.

Through the Irish Homeless Street leagues the players are introduced to an environment that creates positive change by motivating, inspiring and developing people who have experienced homelessness, alcohol and substance abuse, or are ex offenders or refugees. This results in increased positive outcomes, that challenge the stigma and perceptions often related to people with these social issues.

The Homeless World Cup is an annual tournament with over 40 countries participating. Players representing Ireland are selected not just for their footballing abilities, their commitment to training, positive attitude, teamwork, discipline, health & wellbeing play a role in their selection.

These are the attributes that empower them to move on in life. To be chosen to represent Ireland is validation of that and is life changing.

2024 Promises to be an exciting year for the IHSL with a 6 nations tournament being organised for June in Tallaght to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the founding of Street Leagues. Ireland's Katie McCabe a Tallaght native indicated her desire to attend the tournament if she is available.

Illegal Streaming: *Stay Savvy on the SmartPhone, Tablets & Laptops*

Many of us will have got our first tablet or laptop at Christmas and it's easy to slip onto illegal download sites to obtain 'free' music, movies or books; I say 'free' because, of course, it isn't really free - you're opening your devices up to criminals across the globe and could find your privacy compromised and your bank account emptied.



New cybercrime research released recently has revealed some alarming statistics on the views and opinions people across Ireland have towards illegal streaming. The research, which was conducted on behalf of the BeStreamWise campaign – a new initiative designed to highlight the dangers of illegal streaming – shows that 43% of the Irish population are not knowledgeable about the dangers; that's despite almost one in three (31%) saying that they, or someone they know, have been a victim of fraud, scams, or identity theft as a result of illegal streaming.

Forty-five per cent of Irish people regard illegal streaming as unsafe, and perceive the risks involved to be the same as the risk of checking banking apps on public Wi-Fi or sending bank details online, however, illegal streaming services are increasingly operated by sophisticated criminal networks, often involved in other types of crime. Upon accessing and registering for these illegal streaming services, users could unknowingly open themselves to fraud, scams, and identity theft. Giving away personal data and visiting unfamiliar links are two tactics which allow criminals and hackers to attack and gain control of devices and networks.

Speaking on the dangers of illegal streaming, Jenny Radcliffe, Social Engineer and People Hacker, said,

“The perception that illegal streaming is a victimless crime is completely inaccurate. The sites that host these services are loaded with malicious links, back doors and tricks to access people's digital and financial information, giving professional criminals an open invitation to steal from anyone who engages in these activities.

45%
**of the Irish population are
not knowledgeable about the dangers
of illegal streaming...**

“Whether it's multiple charges to credit cards, installing malware on devices, accessing bank accounts, or stealing personal information such as emails, messages, contacts, photographs, documents and browsing history, engaging in illegal streaming makes you a prime target for professional fraudsters. And what is worse, because these activities are illegal, victims may have little or no recourse for recovering their losses and may even face criminal charges themselves.”

Providing tips on how to stay safe when streaming content, BeStreamWise.com and Social Engineer and People Hacker Jenny Radcliffe recommends:

- 1. Beware of online pop-up ads and ads for streaming services online. Verify their legitimacy independently by researching the brand. A simple way to do this is by searching the provider's name alongside “SCAM” to uncover information. If it is a scam, you may well find feedback about this online.**
- 2. Never share personal or financial details online or elsewhere unless you are certain you are dealing with a legitimate brand. Be suspicious of adverts that use urgency or other pressure tactics to get you to buy or subscribe. Don't act in the heat of the moment. It is always best to verify their official website or with their customer service before acting.**
- 3. Use unique strong passwords with numbers and special characters for all your accounts. Never reuse your password for more than one site and use a password manager if possible.**

Enabling MFA (multi-factor authentication) allows for another layer of security whenever someone tries to log in to your accounts.

4. Check your bank statements regularly. Notify your bank if you see anything suspicious or unexpected on your account.

5. Remember that scams come in all shapes and sizes. You can be contacted via phone, text, email or through social media DMs. Scammers will ask the victim to give something whether that's money, information or even to click on links or open attachments. You should be suspicious and double-check before sending money or information, especially if you feel emotional or time pressure to do so.



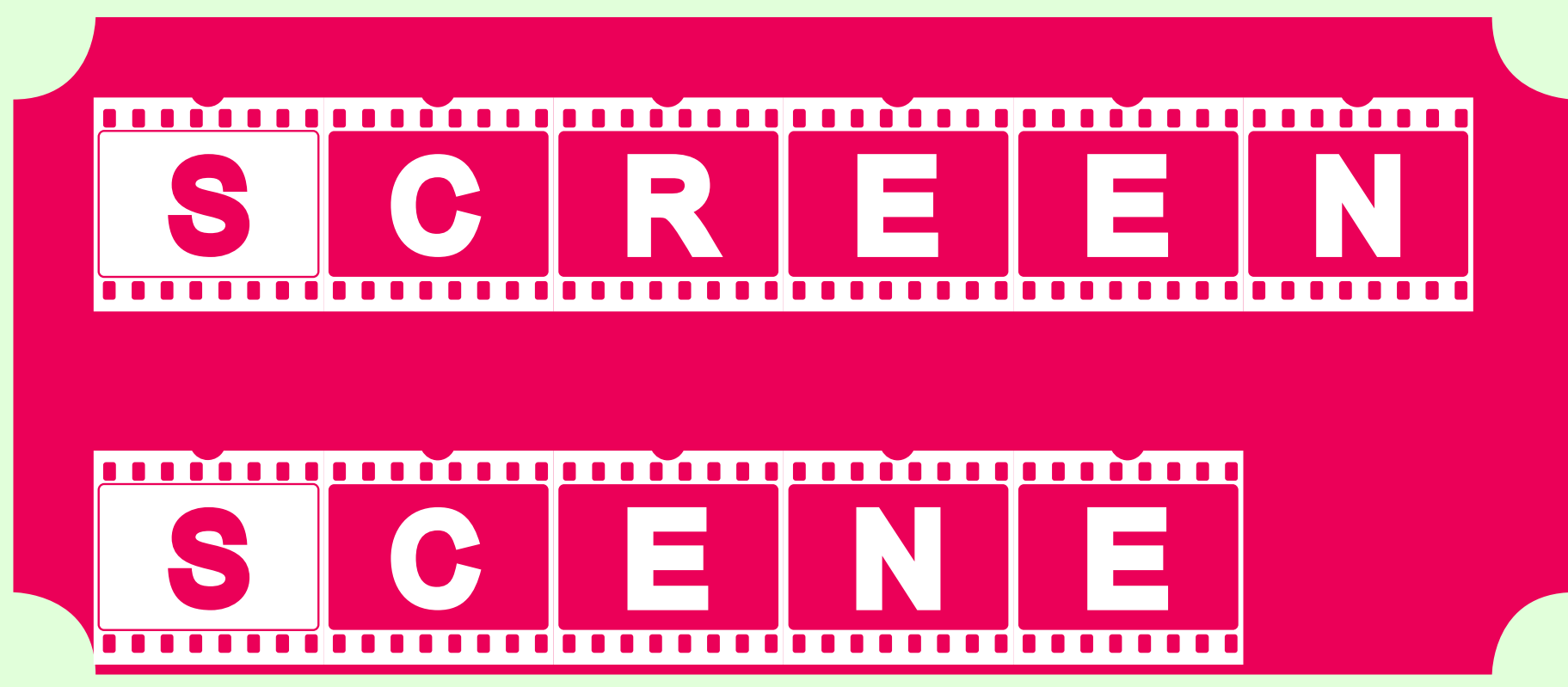
We are currently living in the age of the SmartHome, many of us have smart fridges, tumble dryers, lights etc and back in 2019, the FBI actually issued an excellent piece of advice stating that we should never have our smart home devices like fridges and the like on the same network as our laptop (or anything containing private information). It makes sense - hackers aren't interested if you're running low on milk; the unsecured fridge is just an access point for breaking into your wireless network to steal data from your laptop or phone, so prevent this by putting your appliances on multiple networks. Most routers allow the creation of a secondary guest network, which can also be used for those smart home gadgets. This not only frees up bandwidth for browsing and streaming, but can potentially separate these devices from the data you want to protect. If you do get hacked, any malware that infects your smart home instruments is unlikely to make the jump and corrupt others on your main network.

The perception that illegal streaming is a victimless crime is completely inaccurate.

It's also worth monitoring your network regularly. You can manually monitor who is on your Wi-Fi. The program Wireless Network Watcher, for instance, shows every device connected through your router, so you can crosscheck them against owned gadgets. This is also a good idea just to see if any of the neighbours are piggybacking (i.e. stealing your internet!) You might just be surprised.

With all the safety tips out of the way, we wish you all the best with your new phone, laptop, tablet or whatever smart tech Santa has brought you. Just employing common sense and the safety tips provided will mean you can surf the 'net until your heart's content - free from the fear of being scammed - financial or otherwise.

For further information on how to view your content safely visit [BeStreamWise.com](https://www.bestreamwise.com)



Bitconned ***

Starring: Ray Trapani
Run Time: 93 mins
Streaming on: Netflix
Available: Currently

Ray Trapani had always wanted to be a criminal, even as a young boy. In 2017, amidst the economic frenzy of the Bitcoin boom, there was no better place for scammers than cryptocurrency. So when Ray's friend approached him with the idea of creating a debit card for crypto, Trapani jumped at the chance. There was only one problem: he had no idea how to do that. But thanks to fake LinkedIn profiles, paid celebrity endorsements, and the online community's insatiable desire to "get rich quick," Centra Tech was soon raking in millions of dollars a day. Was it real? No. But did it work? Maybe. In this fast-paced, debauchorous documentary from director Bryan Storkel (Producer of *The Legend of Cocaine Island* + Director of *The Pez Outlaw*), Ray himself guides viewers through the ups and downs of his dramatic journey, alongside his family, former friends, and the journalist who exposed Centra Tech as the first high-profile fraud case of the crypto era.



Last One Laughing Ireland ****

Starring: Graham Norton
Run Time: 6 x 60 mins
Streaming: Prime
Available: From 19th January

Using his trademark wit, host Graham Norton will oversee the 10 comedic stars, brought together to make each other laugh by using every unpredictable comedic tool in the box ... without cracking a smile themselves. With the added bonus of some celebrity cameos, their performances will have viewers - but hopefully not their fellow stars - laughing out loud. As the clock counts down and the tension rises, whoever can outlast their competitors will be crowned the first winner of Last One Laughing Ireland and win a grand prize of €50,000 for their charity of choice.

Last One Laughing Ireland stars Graham Norton, Aisling Bea, Amy Huberman, Catherine Bohart, David McSavage, Deirdre O'Kane, Emma Doran, Jason Byrne, Martin Angolo, Paul Tylak and Tony Cantwell.



Masters of the Air ***

Starring: Barry Keoghan, Callum Turner
Streaming: Apple TV+
Run Time: 9 x 60 mins
Available to stream: 26 January

Based on Donald L. Miller's book of the same name, and scripted by John Orloff, "Masters of the Air" follows the men of the 100th Bomb Group (the "Bloody Hundredth") as they conduct perilous bombing raids over Nazi Germany and grapple with the frigid conditions, lack of oxygen and sheer terror of combat conducted at 25,000 feet in the air. Portraying the psychological and emotional price paid by these young men as they helped destroy the horror of Hitler's Third Reich, is at the heart of "Masters of the Air." Some were shot down and captured; some were wounded or killed. And some were lucky enough to make it home. Regardless of individual fate, a toll was exacted on them all.

"Masters of the Air" is enormous in both scale and scope, and depicts a unique and crucial time in world history. A genuine cinematic achievement, the series shot on locations ranging from the bucolic fields and villages of southeast England, to the harsh deprivations of a German prisoner-of-war camp.



The Artful Dodger **

Starring: Thomas Brodie-Sangster
Streaming: Disney+
Run Time: 8 x 60 mins.
Available to watch: 17th January

An irreverent follow up to Dickens' Oliver Twist exploring the adult double life of Charles Dickens' famous prince of thieves. Set in 1850's Australia, in the lively colony of Port Victory, we meet Jack Dawkins, The Artful Dodger, who's transferred his fast fingers as a pickpocket to the nimble skilled fingers of a surgeon.

Dodger's past returns to haunt him with the arrival of Fagin, luring him back into a world of crime.

A greater threat – to Dodger's heart – is Lady Belle, the Governor's daughter, determined to become the colony's first female surgeon.

From heists to life-and-death surgeries, from soirées to street violence, this is a tale of reinvention, betrayal, redemption and love with a twist.



THE RISE AND FALL OF ROGER CASEMENT: A STORY OF BETRAYAL AND HEROISM

Roger Casement was executed by the British government 107 years ago for his participation in the Easter Rising of 1916. Liz Scales reports.



Roger Casement, a name that has become synonymous with both betrayal and heroism, is a complex figure in our history. Born in Sandycove, Dublin in 1864, Casement rose to become a prominent British diplomat and humanitarian, however, his involvement in the Easter Rising of 1916 ultimately led to his downfall and execution for treason. His story is one of bravery, passion, and controversy, making him a fascinating and controversial figure in Irish history. Here we explore the rise and fall of Casement and the impact he left on our land.

Born in Dublin in 1864, Roger Casement had a humble beginning. His father, Captain Roger Casement, died when he was just nine years old, leaving his mother, Anne Jephson, to raise him and his siblings on her own. Despite the challenges they faced, Casement excelled academically and displayed a natural curiosity about the world around him.

His story is one of bravery, passion, and controversy, making him a fascinating and controversial figure in Irish history.

In 1880, Casement began his career as a civil servant in the British Colonial Service, which would lay the foundation for his future involvement in politics. He was assigned to various locations, including Africa and South America, where he witnessed first hand the brutalities of colonialism. These experiences fuelled his passion for justice and human rights, shaping his future actions. During his time in Africa, Casement exposed the atrocities committed against indigenous people by the Belgian authorities in the Congo Free State. His report, known as the Casement Report, brought international attention to the horrific human rights abuses, resulting in international condemnation of the Belgian colonial rule. Casement's activism continued when he turned his attention to his homeland. Inspired by the Irish Nationalist movement, he became increasingly involved in politics. He joined the Gaelic League, an organisation dedicated to promoting Irish language and culture, and later became a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

As Casement became more involved in Irish politics, his allegiance to the British government Casement relaxing in became more the Congo strained; his disillusionment with British imperialism and growing support for Irish independence would culminate in him becoming involved at a pivotal point in our island's history.

Easter Rising 1916: The Role of Casement Roger Casement played a significant role in the Easter Rising of 1916, a key event in the fight for independence. He had been a prominent figure in Irish politics for several years and a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a secret organisation dedicated to achieving Irish freedom, and this position gave him access to influential figures and allowed him to play a crucial role in the planning and execution of the Rising.

One of Casement's main tasks was to secure weapons and support from Germany. He believed that an armed rebellion was necessary to achieve independence and saw Germany as a potential ally, however, his efforts to enlist their support was met with challenges and setbacks and his journey there ended in his capture by British

authorities, preventing him from playing a direct role in the Rising.

While Casement's role in the Rising may have been limited, his influence and impact cannot be understated as his involvement, alongside his previous activism, further fuelled the fire of Irish nationalism and united the Irish in their fight for independence.



Trial and Execution: A Controversial Legacy

Roger Casement's trial and subsequent execution have left a lasting and controversial legacy. After being arrested for his involvement in the Rising, he faced a trial that captivated the nation. His former reputation as a humanitarian and his exposure of human rights abuses in the Belgian Congo were juxtaposed with his role in a rebellion against the British government. This contrast divided public opinion and sparked heated debates about his true intentions and loyalties.

During his trial, Casement's defence team argued that he should not be charged with treason, as he was acting out of a genuine desire for Irish independence. They emphasised his earlier activism and his passion for human rights, hoping to sway the jury and the public, however, the prosecution painted Casement as a traitor who had betrayed his country and sought to overthrow the government, highlighting his connections to Germany and his attempts to secure weapons for the rebellion.

The British Leak Journal Exerts

During the trial and appeal, the British government secretly circulated some excerpts from Casement's journals, exposing him as a "sexual deviant". These included numerous explicit accounts of sexual activity. This aroused public opinion against him and influenced those notables who might otherwise have tried to intervene. Given societal norms and the illegality of homosexuality at the time, support for Casement's reprieve declined in some quarters. The journals became known in the 1950s as the Black Diaries and are still in the National Archives.

His reputation as a humanitarian and champion of human rights brought international attention to the cause of Irish independence.

Ultimately, Casement was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death at the age of 51. Many well known names begged for clemency including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, W.B. Yeats and George Bernard Shaw. Novelist, Joseph Conrad could not forgive Casement, nor could Casement's longtime friend, the sculptor Herbert Ward whose son Charles had been killed on the Western Front that January, and who would change the name of Casement's godson, who had been named after him.

Members of the Casement family in Antrim contributed discreetly to the defence fund, although they had sons in the British Army and Navy. A U.S. Senate appeal against the death sentence was rejected by the British cabinet on the insistence of prosecutor F. E. Smith, an opponent of Irish independence.

In the days preceding his execution, Casement asked his family to bury his body near the home of relatives in County Antrim. This was family from his father's side who had taken him in as a young boy after the deaths of his parents. "Take my body back with you and let it lie in the old churchyard in Murlough Bay," he reportedly requested.

Execution

Casement's execution was scheduled for 3rd August 1916. On the day of his hanging at Pentonville Prison he was received into the Catholic Church at his request. He was attended by two Catholic priests, Dean Timothy Ring and Father James Carey, from the East London parish of SS Mary and Michael. There were shockwaves through Ireland - and indeed the world. Many saw him as a martyr and a symbol of resistance

against British rule, while others viewed him as a misguided individual who had chosen the wrong path. The controversial legacy of Casement's trial and execution continues to fuel debates and shape interpretations of his character and motivations.

After being arrested for his involvement in the Rising, he faced a trial that captivated the nation.

Funeral

Casement's body was buried in quicklime in the prison cemetery at the rear of Pentonville Prison, where he had been hanged, though his last wish was to be buried at Murlough Bay. During the decades after his execution, successive British governments refused many formal requests for repatriation of Casement's remains. For example, in September 1953, the Taoiseach Éamon de Valera (on a visit to Winston Churchill) requested the return of the remains. Churchill said he was not personally opposed to the idea but would consult with his colleagues and take legal advice. He ultimately turned down the Irish request, citing "specific and binding" legal obligations that the remains of executed prisoners could not be exhumed. De Valera disputed the legal advice and responded, "So long as Roger Casement's remains remain within British prison walls, when he himself expressed the wish that it should be transferred to his native land, so long there will be public resentment here at what must appear to be, at least, the unseemly obduracy of the British Government."

Valera received no reply.

Finally, in 1965, Casement's remains were repatriated to Ireland. Contrary to his last wishes, Prime Minister Harold Wilson's government had released the remains only on condition that they could not be brought into Northern Ireland, as "the government feared that a reburial there could provoke Catholic celebrations and Protestant reactions."



Casement's remains lay in state at the Garrison Church, Arbour Hill in Dublin city for five days, close to the graves of other leaders of the Rising but would not be buried beside them. After a state funeral, the remains were buried with full military honours in the Republican plot in Glasnevin Cemetery alongside other Irish republicans and nationalists.

Regardless of one's stance on Casement, it is clear that his trial and execution had a profound impact on our history. His story serves as a reminder of the complexities and moral dilemmas that often arise in times of political upheaval and struggle for independence. The legacy of Roger Casement serves as a testament to the power of conviction and the price one is willing to pay for their beliefs.



Because laughter is the best medicine!



A young couple met with their pastor to set a date for their wedding. When he asked whether they preferred a contemporary or a traditional service, they opted for the contemporary.

On the big day, a major storm forced the groom to take an alternate route to the church. The streets were flooded, so he rolled up his pant legs to keep his trousers dry.

When he finally reached the church, his best man rushed him into the sanctuary and up to the altar, just as the ceremony was starting.

“Pull down your pants, whispered the pastor.

“Uh, Reverend, I’ve changed my mind,” the groom responded. “I think I would prefer the traditional service.”

Married 25 years, I took a look at my wife one day and said,

“Honey, 25 years ago, we had a cheap apartment, a cheap car, slept on a sofa bed and watched a 10 inch black and white TV, but I got to sleep every night with a hot 25 year old blonde. Now, we have a nice house, nice car, big bed and plasma screen TV, but I’m sleeping with a 50-year-old woman. It seems to me that you are not holding up your side of things.”

My wife is a very reasonable woman. She told me to go out and find a hot 25-year-old blonde, and she would make sure that I would once again be living in a cheap apartment, driving a cheap car, sleeping on a sofa bed.”

A professor was travelling by boat. On his way he asked the sailor Deco, “Do you know Biology, Ecology, Epidemiology or anthropology?”

“No, said the sailor.”

The professor got angry with Deco, the sailor, and said,

“What the hell do you know on this earth? You will die of illiteracy.”

One hour later the boat started sinking.

The sailor Deco, asked the professor,

“Do you know swimminology and Escapeology from Sharkology and crocodileology?”

“No,” said the professor.

The Sailor said, “Well that means crocodileology will eat your assology and you will dieology with your knowledgeology because of your big mouthology.”

Jock & Jimmy were walking along a street in London. Jock looked in one of the shop windows and saw a sign that caught his eye.

The sign read, “Suits € 5.00 each, Shirts € 2.00 each, Trousers € 2.50 per pair”.

Jock said to his pal,

“Look at the prices! We could buy a whole lot of these and when we get back to Scotland we could make a fortune. Now when we go in you stay quiet, okay? Let me do all the talking cause if they hear our accents, they might think we are cheap Scotsmen and try to screw us. I’ll put on my best London accent.”

“OK Jock, I’ll keep me mouth shut,” said Jimmy.

They go in and Jock said in a posh voice,

“Hello my good man. I’ll take 50 suits at € 5.00 each, 100 shirts at €2.00 each, and 50 pairs of trousers at € 2.50 each. I’ll back up me truck ready to load them on, old chap!”

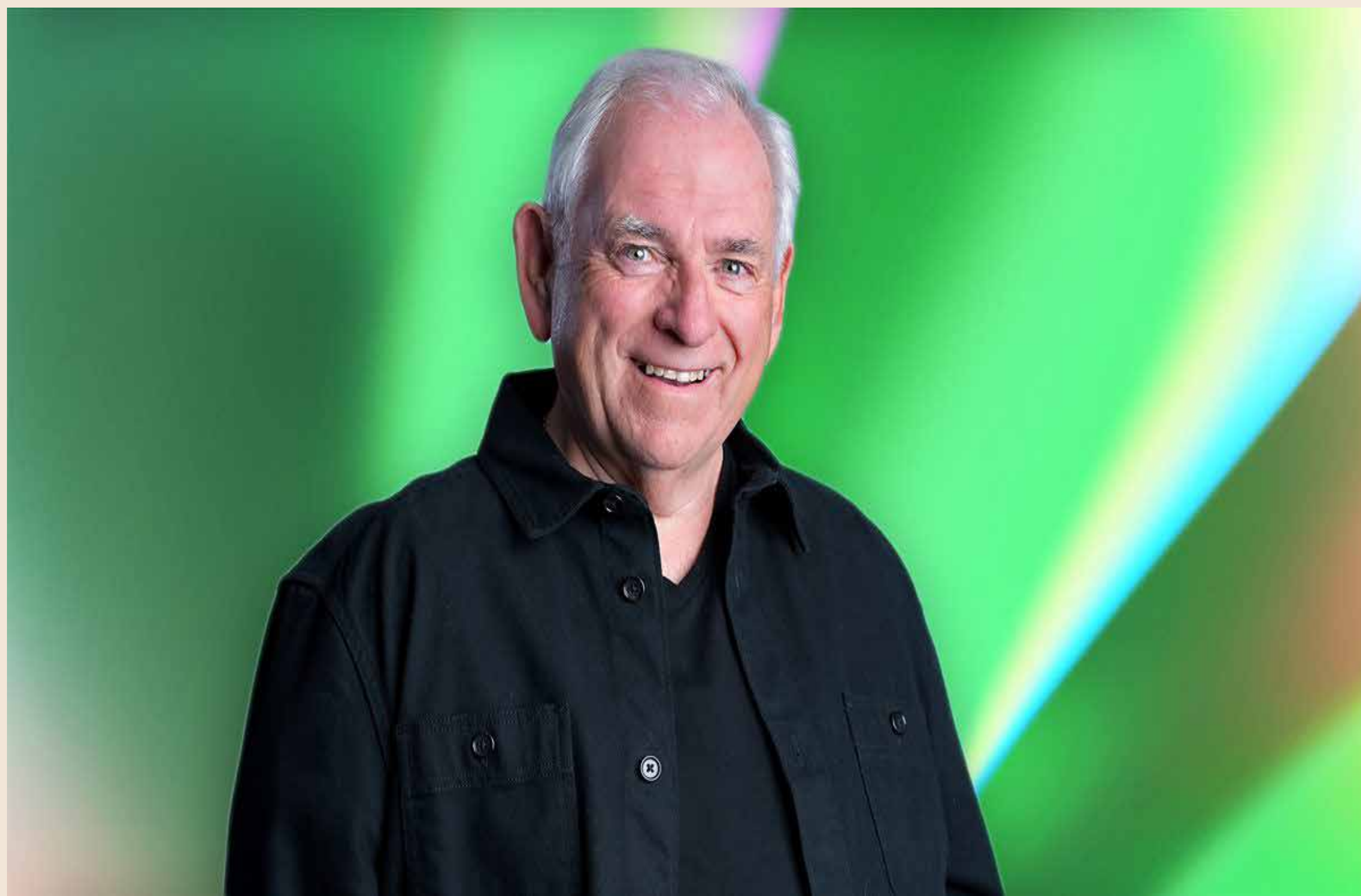
The owner of the shop said quietly, “You’re from Scotland, aren’t you?”

“Well yes,” said a surprised Jock. “What gave it away?”

The owner replied, “This is a dry-cleaners.....”

The Man from Strabane - **Hugo Duncan**

Hugo Duncan recently celebrated 25 years on Radio Ulster and a successful career spanning five decades. Sam McMurdock had a chat with the man from Strabane.



Seventy-three year old Hugo Duncan never stops. From early morning until the wee hours the next morning he's usually in the studio or on the road, a schedule he believes has kept him sane over the years as he battled alcoholism, felt the shame of bankruptcy and battled anxiety over his daughter's cancer diagnosis. Indeed, life has never been easy for Duncan, which makes his sanguine personality all the more commendable. Raised by a single mother in a small Catholic town ("It was a huge scandal for a woman to have a child on her own... you'd get the worst word in people's mouths..."), rejected by his father and labelled as "dumbing down" Radio Ulster when first hired, Hugo has never allowed the cynicism of others to blight his outlook, indeed, even nasty social media trolls are incapable of causing him a passing thought,

"There's always people who don't like you ... who cares? My wife doesn't like me [laughs]. And you have to remember, its something black in these people's minds that causes them to make little of other people."

**"There's
always
people who don't like you ...
who cares? My wife doesn't
like me...."**

Hugo is celebrating his 25th year on BBC Radio Ulster. We have a good friend in common and I'm well aware, amidst a crushing schedule that Hugo would take a 4 hour round trip to visit and comfort that friend during his time of bereavement and calls every day to ensure he's doing okay. That's the thing, I know this is not an isolated incident and Hugo has reached out and helped countless listeners across the religious divide, a kindness the press know little, if nothing about and an act he views as his service to God. He shows no political bias in his show or in his life and one of his best friends is a Free Presbyterian minister, as well as some politicians from the opposite side of the political divide, but Hugo is keen to state that we have more in common than what we realise,

"People say we are two communities here, but we have far more in common than what divides us. Don't we all bleed when we are cut and cry when we are hurt? And sure in Ulster we all love country music!"

For those of you who don't know Hugo Duncan, he was born in Strabane in Co. Tyrone in 1950. The only child to mum Susie "who could play no instruments but was always singing", Hugo dreamt of becoming an entertainer himself,

"My ma was only 5 foot tall, a size 2 shoe and boy, she could really hold a note ... I think that's where I got it from."

By the time Hugo was 20 he had formed his own band, 'Tall Men' and was spotted on a talent show on RTÉ and signed by Release Records, which later gave stars like Philomena Begley, Ray Lynam and Jonny Logan their big break. That year he had a number one hit in the Irish charts with 'Dear God' and his career really took off during the show band era. During the 1980s Duncan would do holiday relief work on Radio Foyle after which he was offered a daily show for a six week period.

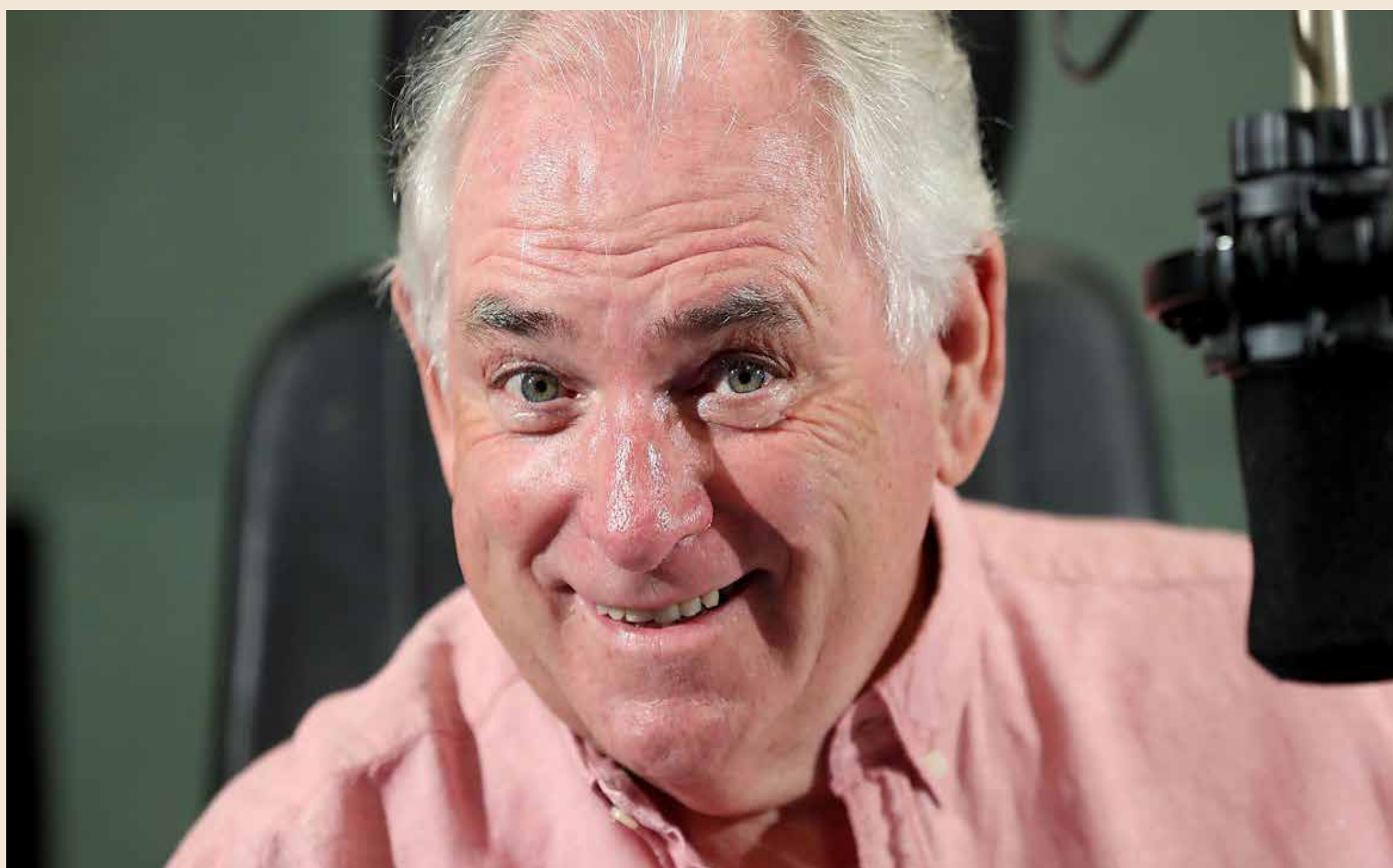
“I was only hired for six months, but they’ve forgotten and are still paying me”

It’s impossible to be in Duncan’s company without his infectious ways rubbing off on you

Do you ever find that the public can be overfamiliar if they see you as you’re in our living rooms every afternoon and it almost feels like you’re part of our families.

“That’s the way it is when you’re out and I like it. I have people come up and confide in me, telling me inner secrets, and that’s because I’m on every day and you become a part of their world. One thing I’d never do is forget that, because I know I’m a part of everyone’s family.

My greatest wish each day is that I make even one person smile. There’s a lot of people going through very hard times, I try to be uplifting. We have to remember, we’re very lucky if we have people in the house with us - many people don’t and I’m very aware that I’m company for them.”



Your faith is incredibly important to you.

“I pray everyday. We need to remember faith and forget about religion. I couldn’t have got through everything I’ve come through without God.”

Do you ever get tired playing the most-requested songs on your show?

“When I’m sitting in the studio I dance about in my seat.... I sing along with all the music. Yes, we get the same requests all the time, but I’m there for the people and I’ll play what they want to hear. People think I’m mad when they see me in the studio... but it keeps me sane.”

Why do you think you’re so beloved on both sides of the political divide?

“I wear my heart on my sleeve and I think that’s something I’d tell everyone.... You need to be you, you need to show people who you are. I’ve been to many places where I’m aware there’s a few boys who’ve no time for me, but I always make sure to get chatting and before I leave, we’re friends. Yes, I take my fair share of stick but I never care.... I’m there to make people smile and I like to build relationships with people because I genuinely like to see people happy.”

“People say we are two communities here, but we have far more in common than what divides us.”

How do you relax at the end of the day?

“When you go out you’re on duty all the time you need to be good, so I like to get out of the van, go into my room and turn on the TV to see my detective shows, then the boss is in the other room watching her shows.”

Speaking of the boss [his wife], how does she feel about being called the Rottweiler?

“[Laughs] We were out in Irvinestown one day, walked into a hotel and this big farmer, a good looking big fellow over six foot tall shouted, ‘How’s the form big lad? Where’s the Rottweiler today?’ And she turned around and shouted, ‘I’m here’. That was it. She was quiet and I actually thought she was offended so I said, ‘I hope that joke hasn’t gone too far,’ but I actually think she likes the attention now when people shout it.”

If you had to take three items to a desert island, what would they be?

“I’d take music, something to do with family and something from my faith.”

You travel a crazy amount each day, what do you listen to whilst driving?

“I listen to a lot of talk radio. I got my education from the radio and from the two ladies I work

with, Mary and Jo because when I came in here 25 years ago I needed their help a lot, so back then I got into talk radio and still to this day I like to learn something new when I'm driving."



You're very proud of Strabane.

"Strabane to me holds all my memories, it's where my ma worked in the parochial hall, played Whisp and raised me It's home."

"I was only hired for six months, but they've forgotten and are still paying me"

How would you like to be remembered?

"I'd love people to smile when they think of me - that's all I ask."

We congratulate Hugo Duncan on 25 successful years on Radio Ulster, his show is loved by young and old and the show really does bring such joy to everyone each day between 1:30pm and 3pm.

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O'CALLAGHAN TD

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FIANNA FÁIL
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

A LITTLE BIT OF IRISH

Phrase:	Translations:	Pronunciation:
Tá sé fuar go leor inniu	It is cold today	aw shay foor guh lore inn-u
Saol fada chugat	Long life to you	sail faddah coogit
Codladh samh	Sleep well	cullah sovh
Cuimhnigh i gconai	Always remember	cweeve-nee ih go-nee
Is baolach	Unfortunately	iss bwail-ock
De reir dealramh	Apparently	day rare deall-ruv

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
1. Nonplussed	non plast
2. Unabashed	uhn-a-bashed
3. Irregardless	ihr-re-gard-lis
4. Aberrant	uh-ber-uhnt
5. Apocryphal	uh-pahk-ruh-fuhl
6. Cryptography	krip-taw-gree-fee
7. Emollient	i-mawl-yuhnt
8. Equanimity	ee-kwuh-nim-uh-tee
9. Equivocal	ih-kwiv-uh-kuhl
10. Expatiate	iks-pay-shee-ayt
11. Ignominious	ig-nuh-min-ee-uhs
12. Jalapeño	ha-luh-peyn-yo

Answers

1. Surprised, confused, not certain how to react.
2. Without any worry about possible criticism or embarrassment.
3. Despite; not being affected by something:
4. Deviating from the norm or typical behaviour.
5. Of doubtful authenticity.
6. Writing or solving codes.
7. Making smoother or less harsh.
8. Calmness and composure.
9. Open to more than one interpretation.
10. To talk or write in great detail about.
11. Very embarrassing.
12. Small green or red pepper.

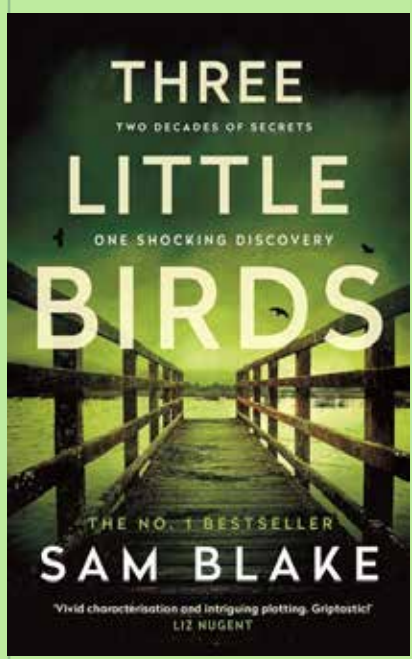
How did YOU score?
10 or more – Perfection!
6-9 Brilliant.
3-5 Well done.
0-2 Must do better.

Patricia Scanlan's Book Club



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

Three Little Birds – Sam Blake – Corvus

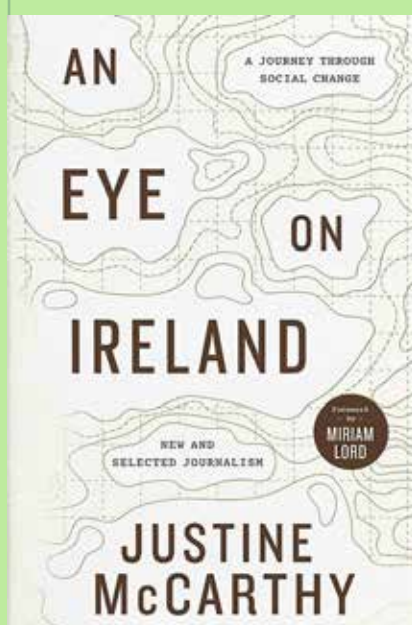
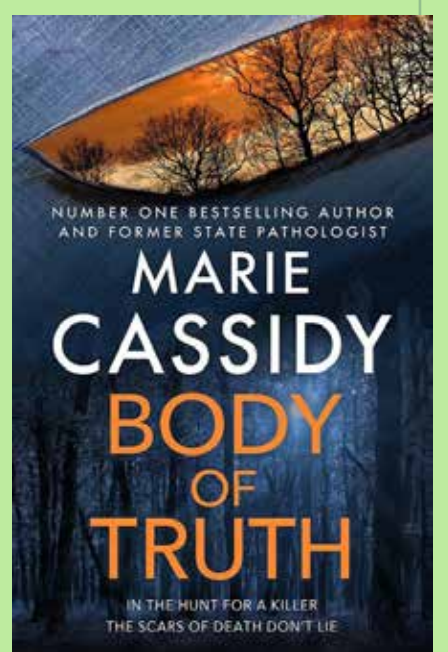


Two decades of secrets. One shocking discovery... When a skull is found in Lough Coyne, facial reconstruction expert Dr Carla Steele is drawn into a fourteen-year-old case - but not all cases are cold, as Carla discovers when she and DS Jack Maguire find the brutally murdered body of a local woman close to the water's edge. Together with Carla's partner, criminal psychologist Grace Franciosi, Carla and Jack uncover a tragic story with very dangerous and current implications. Since the disappearance of her best friend, Carla has dedicated her career to bringing the dead home, but this time it's the living who are counting on her. In a race to save another woman, will they be able to stop the killer in time?

Body of Truth – Marie Cassidy – Hachette Books Ireland

Dr Terry O'Brien has recently arrived in Ireland from Scotland to take up a position as State Pathologist when a high-profile murder occurs. The victim is Rachel Reece, host of a popular true crime podcast on unsolved murders of Irish women and niece of a prominent politician.

As Terry gathers evidence to help with the police investigation, she becomes convinced that they are following the wrong line of inquiry and begins her own research. She soon finds herself in the thick of cold cases of murdered Irish women, with questions mounting. What did Rachel Reece find out about the unsolved murder of Eileen McCarthy before she died? Who is sending ominous messages to Terry and what do they mean? And why is she increasingly at odds with her superiors? Terry knows that the pathology never lies. But when her forensic skills reveal something that might hold the key to the case, little does she know the deadly risk of revealing the truth . . . A gripping thriller from Ireland's former State Pathologist.



An Eye on Ireland: A Journey Through Social Change - New and Selected Journalism – Justine McCarthy – Hachette Books Ireland

For four decades, Justine McCarthy's fearless journalism and commentary has challenged stereotypes and held power to account as she, in her own words, 'grew up alongside my country'. The book opens with an extended piece of new writing in which Justine describes her formative years and entering the male-dominated Irish newspaper culture in the 1980s, a time when a woman getting too many bylines could, and did, lead to a National Union of Journalists bar. From Mary Robinson making history as Ireland's first female president to a present-day RTÉ in crisis, over thirty years of stories are collected here. In her long career, Justine broke child sexual abuse scandals and reported from the frontline of the Northern Ireland Troubles; she covered the major reforming referenda, documented political turmoil and charted the role of Ireland on the world stage. She followed the times the country let down its people, through its ailing health system, its legal system, the domination of the church, and its treatment of women. An Eye on Ireland maps a transformative era in Irish life towards a more progressive and just society, and one woman's

extraordinary career at the forefront of change.

The Silver Road – Sinéad O’Hart – Piccadilly Press

The seandraiocht - the Old Magic - isn’t remembered like it once was. Its power is fading... When Rose is entrusted with a powerful stone by a Frost Giant, she is swept into an adventure full of danger. The stone can be used for great good or great evil, depending on its keeper. It leads Rose to discover the magic that runs through all of Ireland. A magic that is threaded together beneath the land: the Silver Road. But the Silver Road is under threat. Now Rose must keep the stone from falling into the wrong hands and embark on a quest to find its rightful owner and keep the magic alive.



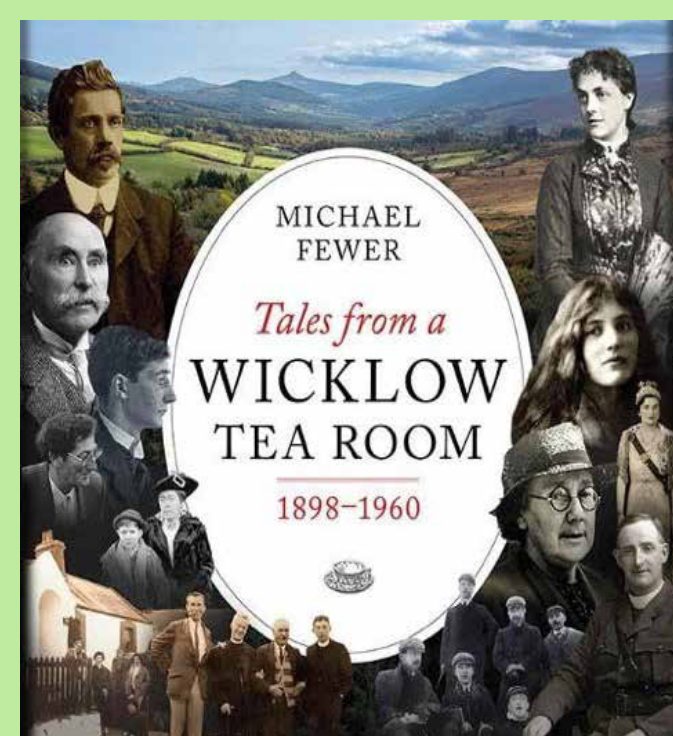
Finucane and Me – John Clarke – Gill Books



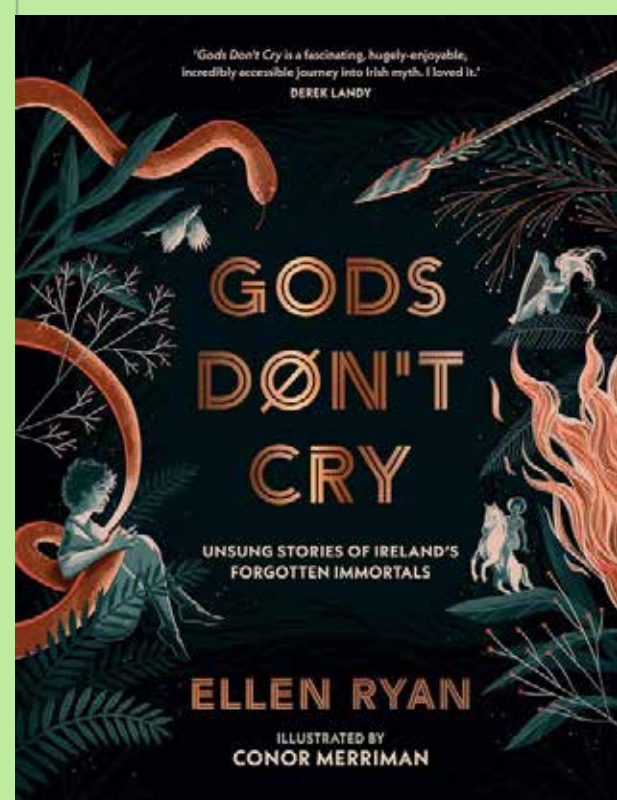
Marian Finucane was a trailblazing broadcaster, the first to champion women’s issues on air, and respected for her fairness, empathy and doggedness. One of a small group of Irish people known simply by their first name, the nation mourned when she died suddenly, aged 69, in January 2020. But John Clarke, Marian’s widower, doesn’t use her eponymous moniker – instead, he calls her ‘Finucane’. It highlights the gap between the woman so many felt they knew and the woman he loved – the real Marian – who was by turns curious, fiery, emotional, stubborn, charming and endlessly excited by life. When John and Marian first got together, they promised each other that they’d never be boring. What ensued was forty years of conversation and thousands of miles travelled. *Finucane & Me* is an unexpected love story: the story of two people who ‘made a pact for madness’; the story of a never-ending search for meaning; the story of two people who lived life to its fullest.

Tales from a Wicklow Tea Room –Michael Fewer – Veritas Books

Tales from a Wicklow Tea Room is the story of a tiny cottage in Glencree in the Wicklow Mountains and the tea room run there by the McGuirk family, which gained a remarkable reputation between the 1880s and the 1960s. Over this most formative period in Irish history, the cottage became a meeting place for poets, artists, writers, scientists, politicians, lawyers, and indeed, representatives of every aspect of Irish society, including some of early-twentieth-century Ireland’s most influential people, where they could relax over a cup of tea. Arthur Griffith, Robert Lloyd Praeger, John Millington Synge, Ellen Duncan, Denis Devlin, Mervyn Wall, Constantia Maxwell, Oliver St John Gogarty, Hugh Lane, William Beckett and Ella Webb are among the host of visitors. Features: photos, drawings and signatures.



Gods Don’t Cry – Ellen Ryan (Author) Conor Merriman (Illustrator) – Harper Collins Children’s Books



Ancient stories that challenge modern notions of what it means to be a hero. The ancient gods of Ireland were once worshipped throughout the land. Powerful and brave, they were unafraid to show their vulnerability, reject violence, or lean on others for support. Sadly, their stories – passed down by our ancestors – are all but forgotten. *Gods Don’t Cry* reawakens these gods, whose ancient tales redefine modern ideas of what it means to be a hero. From Mannanán, who uses his neurodiversity to discover the Otherworld, to Méiche, who finds the courage to accept his illness, Fer Maise, a monster slayer who gives up glory to become a healer, and Cnú Deróil, who overcomes bullies with his musical talent. Hurlers and warriors, academics, and activists – these are gods of many abilities, sizes, and skin shades, from every corner of Ireland. Follow their adventures as they perform magic, battle demons, overcome struggles and find the courage to be true to themselves. You might even see yourself in their stories and discover, that you too, are a hero.

The Podcast Review

We source the best selection of podcasts each issue. This time we bring you, Sisters in Sobriety, Hot Money, Political Currency and Million Dollar Love Interest.

Sisters in Sobriety (Lifestyle)

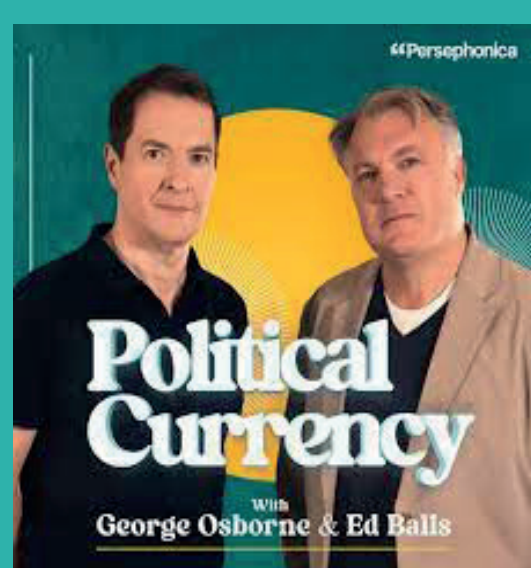


You know that sinking feeling when you wake up with a hangover and think: “I’m never doing this again”? But what happens when you follow through? Sonia Kahlon and Kathleen Killen can tell you, because they did it! They went from sisters-in-law, to Sisters in Sobriety.

In this podcast, Sonia and Kathleen invite you into their world, as they navigate the ups and downs of sobriety, explore stories of personal growth and share their journey of wellness and recovery. Get ready for some real, honest conversations about sobriety, addiction, and everything in between. Episodes will cover topics such as: reaching emotional sobriety, how to make the decision to get sober, adopting a more mindful lifestyle, socialising without alcohol, and much more. Tune in for a weekly dose of vulnerability, mutual support and much needed comic relief.

Hot Money (Crime)

In this podcast, Financial Times reporter Miles Johnson investigates a mysterious murder in a small town that leads to a web of drugs, money laundering and state-sponsored assassinations stretching from Dublin to Dubai. At the centre is a cocaine super cartel that is revolutionising the global drugs market. This eight-part investigative podcast, published twice-weekly, probes the links between criminals and legitimate businesses, and between governments and gangsters.



Political Currency (Economics)

Ed Balls and George Osborne take us behind closed doors into the rooms where decisions are made. Having battled it out across the despatch box, the UK’s former Chancellor and shadow chancellor now meet in the studio to discuss the decisions that affect people’s pockets. They explain how good politics follows the economics - and expose how the powerful become powerless when faced with market forces and political currents they can’t control.

Million Dollar Lover (Human Interest)

This harrowing five-part series investigates what happened at a Yale fertility clinic, where many patients underwent excruciatingly painful procedures thanks to an unscrupulous nurse. It’s eye-opening and absolutely engrossing.



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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