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FIGHT EXCLUSIVE

GLOVE/HATE



VIOLENT: Pair fight as (right) actor John looks on as 'fair play' man

LOVE/HATE actor John Connors acted as a 'fair play' referee in a €20,000 bare knuckle boxing match yesterday. And he told *The Star* he was happy to be involved in the "good, clean" Traveller fight.

Telly star Connors is 'fair play' man in €20k bare knuckle bout

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LOVE/HATE ACTOR

BOY (17) FACES 14 RAPS FOR 'EXTREME VIOLENCE'



CONTEST: Love/Hate star John Connors watches on as the two burly bruisers fight it out for €20k

OUT AND ABOUT...

A YOUTH took part in a litany of "extreme violence" in Dublin during "28 minutes of madness", it has been alleged in court.

At a preliminary hearing at the Dublin Children's Court yesterday, Judge John O'Connor viewed an hour of CCTV evidence of the unprovoked street attacks. He held that the case was too serious to be dealt with in the Children's Court, meaning the 17-year-old school boy's case will go forward to the Circuit Court, which has tougher sentencing powers.

The court heard the teenager was filmed on a phone, with blood-stained hands, bragging about the incidents and a victim's inability to defend himself.

Incidents
He faces 14 charges arising out of incidents in the city centre in the early hours of November 17 when eight young men were attacked, allegedly at random, and seven of them sustained serious injuries. The court heard the victims were aged 19 and in their early 20s.

In an outline of the allegations, Garda Niall Murray told the court the first incident happened at 3.12am at Harcourt Street when a man was punched. Seven minutes later another young man was attacked, resulting in the loss of his front teeth and needing two stitches to the back of his head. It was alleged the teen was the first to come at him with a "flying kick" and he

■ Tom TUIE

was also involved in the attack afterwards, Garda Murray said. Four minutes later, at Montague Street, three men were attacked with punches to the head. It was alleged it continued on to Camden Street and the Garda said the boy, who cannot be identified because he is a minor, was involved and could be clearly seen striking their faces. The court heard the teen knocked one of the men unconscious and the second man had a broken nose and two other fractures on his face.

Wall

A minute later, another man was attacked at Camden Row after his phone was grabbed from his hand and smashed against a wall, allegedly by the teen.

The man was knocked to the ground after he sustained a number of blows to his head.

He needed three stitches above his right eye, had an abrasion on his cornea and suffered blurry vision for two weeks after the attack.

Garda Murray said the teenager engaged in "extreme violence" during this incident.

The last attacks, on two other men, was minutes later, Judge John O'Connor heard.

One man suffered a broken jaw while the second man had fractured ribs after the attack.

Garda Murray said it was a "savagely assault".

Fake gun rap man avoids jail

A MAN who was arrested following the airing of CCTV footage of an incident on Crimecall has been given a suspended sentence for having a realistic imitation firearm.

John Walsh (45) cut his hair in an effort to change his appearance after he was informed by someone that they had seen him on the RTE programme.

Walsh, of The Atrium, Island Street, Dublin 8, pleaded guilty at Dublin Circuit Criminal Court to possession of a realistic imitation firearm at Spar, Thomas Street on September 1, 2016. He got a suspended three-year sentence yesterday.

He produced the imitation weapon in a dispute with store staff after he was told they didn't stock the can of Linden Village cider that he wanted.

THESE exclusive pictures show Love/Hate star John Connors acting as a referee in a €20,000 bare knuckle bout.

The well-known actor and director agreed to act as a 'fair play man' in a fight between boxing bruisers John Paul Collins and John Quinn McDonagh yesterday.

The TV and film star — who first made his name as Traveller bomb maker Patrick in hit crime show Love/Hate — was one of two fair play men used for the fight, which took place in Drogheda, Co Louth.

Connors was called into action several times to keep the brawling pair separated as punches rained down in the fight.

And he agreed to call the fight a draw after Collins and McDonagh bashed each other for up to half an hour without a break.

Fair play men are seen as crucial to ensure a bare knuckle brawl is fought fairly, with both fighters allowed to choose one each.

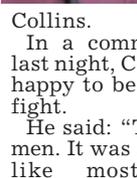
For yesterday's fight, Connors was chosen to act as fair play man for Coolock man

TV star is 'fair play man' in brawl



EXCLUSIVE

■ Keith FALKINER
PICS: PAUL NICHOLLS



DRAMA: John Connors in hit RTE crime series Love/Hate

was happy to show fair play."

The actor also said that bare knuckle fights were part of the Traveller community's culture.

He added: "It's our way of life and it should be respected."

"It's a whole lot better than shooting each other up across Dublin."

"Both men were willing and equal. When it was over they went home safe to their families."

Boxing

The actor, who also wrote the hit movie Cardboard Gangsters, has previously spoken out in favour of bare knuckle boxing — even revealing that he has fought in bouts in the past.

He said: "I fought bare knuckle, if I was asked to fight bare-knuckle again, I would. I wouldn't say no to a fight. I'm not against bare-knuckle fighting."

"In terms of fighting, I think any Traveller out there or Traveller organisations who

are saying bare-knuckle fighting is not a part of our culture and are denouncing bare-knuckle fighting, I just think they become Uncle Thomas to be honest with you, because that is a part of our culture.

"I love it and I think it's a great way to settle a fight."

He added: "I think it's a lot more civilised than if me and a fellow have an argument and he brings me to court for two years and we put on suits and we sue each other to death."

"I think punching each other's heads in and going for a pint of Guinness afterwards is a lot more civilised, or maybe it's not but whatever that is, I'd prefer that."

The fight between Collins and McDonagh took place yesterday after the pair had traded insults online for the past two weeks.

Speaking in a video last week, Collins waved €10,000 in cash at the camera, asking his opponent to fight for cash and branding him "bacteria beard", while McDonagh hit back in his own video.

fights. "It has solved a dispute between the two men and I

AT BARE KNUCKLE BOUT



RIVALRY: John Paul Collins (left) takes on rival John Quinn McDonagh in the bare knuckle bout



REFEREE: Actor John Connors at the fight and (below) wrapping Collins' hands



STALEMATE: The fight was called a draw after the two heavyweights bashed each other for up to half an hour



BRUISING: The pair fought after trading insults online for the past two weeks

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