

1982: I WAS A GARDA. I WAS GAY. I LOST MY JOB

'I was a bloody good policeman, thrown on the scrap heap. I want them to acknowledge the reason'



Conor Lally
Security and Crime Editor

Liam was in his Dublin Garda station in 1982, about to hit the streets for his shift on the beat, when they came for him.

They ordered him out of the room he was in before stripping him of his uniform. And then it was over. He wasn't a guard any more.

"It was in a passageway leading to the cells they told me I was being dismissed. I was to give them my uniform," he says of the traumatic event 37 years ago, when he was in his early 20s.

"There was no sense from them of 'we're sorry it's come to this' or 'we don't understand why it's come to this'; absolutely nothing.

"The sergeant didn't want me to leave, he wanted me to come back in for duty the next day and he would fight it. But I just couldn't do it; no, I didn't want all these things laid bare."

All these things laid bare? Liam – not his real name – was a gay man who had been keeping his sexuality secret.

"At the back of my mind, being the age I was at, I knew there wasn't a hope of getting anywhere against these people," he said of his sense of helplessness when shown the door.

"They took my tie; they took my tunic and my baton. I had no other trousers with me so they didn't take them. And they didn't take my notebook.

"I still have my notebooks from 1982. I've clung on to the hope there may be some streak of humanity in the upper echelons of An Garda Síochána and I might get my job back, but no."

Liam finally gave up on the hope wrapped up in those notebooks when he reached his 60th birthday, beyond which nobody can serve in the Garda.

The day after he was ordered out of the station, he says two other "gloating" Garda members came to his home demanding his spare uniform, his belt, torch and other items.

A gay man in the Garda in the early 1980s, he was shown the door just two days before his two-year probationary period would have expired; he was that close to making the grade.

Liam insists there can have been no other reason, other than his sexuality, for the dismissal. Just weeks before, he had been praised in his official assessment for his work ethic and output. At that point, senior officers had recommended he be retained after his probation period ended.

The only issue he ever had, he recalls, was when he and a number of recruits consumed alcohol in a pub while they were in their first months as recruits. While they were off duty at the time, their visit to a pub was outside the designated period for recreation.

However, he says it was a very minor issue at the time and did not cause any problems for any of those involved, all of whom apart from Liam went on to become full-time Garda members.

When Liam joined the force, nobody knew he was gay. About 18 months into his service, a man named Charles Self was brutally murdered in Monkstown, Co Dublin. In the "witch hunt" that followed this notorious crime, Liam's sexuality became known to some of those investigating the case.

Within months of the Self murder, Liam was stripped of his uniform and shown the door. It was the beginning of 37 years of shame and lies, which he still lives daily. Liam is still not "out" to many people close to him.

How could he tell anyone back then that his sexuality had been discovered by Garda headquarters and that he'd been sacked for being "a queer"? That's what you were in 1980s Dublin, he says – not homosexual, not gay but "a queer".

One or two friends who heard the whispers from inside the Garda now kept their distance from him. Nothing was ever said. They were just friends one day and then gone from his life the next.

He told everyone else he had left the force because "the guards wasn't for me after all". He told his lies well; a little too well, as it turned out. Nobody around him, not his family nor most of his friends, seemed to suspect a thing. He had nobody to confide in so he confided in nobody.

But the lie swallowed him. As Liam saw it, the Garda effectively told him he was dirty and unworthy. That damaging message came to mould him. He took it into his heart and resolved to hide his sexuality for the rest of his days.

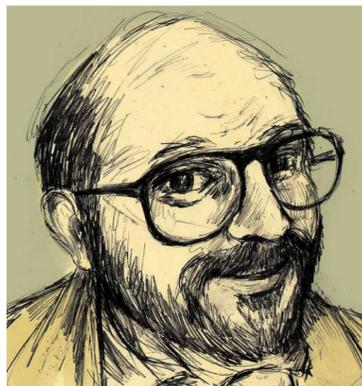
Liam, not his real name, thought about coming out in *The Irish Times* today; maybe telling those closest to him first and then letting the media do the rest.

But after much consideration, he couldn't do it. "I don't think I'd be comfortable admitting my sexuality because that's what this has done to me," he says.

"It's life in the shadows and a mask up all the time. I'm over 60 now and I really don't know how I've stayed sane. I've lived a lie for the best part of 40 years."

Liam has written many times to the Department of Justice and to Garda headquarters. About three years after his dismissal he asked to be reinstated. The reply stated his "situation would not be altered at this time". That gave him hope.

"If it wasn't at 'this time', maybe it would be at 'some time'," he says of his desperate logic.



■ 'I see gardai in the Pride march. But I have no pride. They took that from me,' says Liam, above, who was let go from the Garda in 1982.

■ Far left, Majella Moynihan, charged in the 1980s for breaching the force's rules by having premarital sex with another garda.

■ Middle left, Dublin, 1982.

■ Left, Charles Self, murdered in Dublin in 1982. The investigation turned into a 'witch hunt' of gay men.

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAN BETSON, GETTY IMAGES, RTE. ILLUSTRATION: DEARBHLA KELLY

More recent correspondence has involved him seeking information that would officially confirm he was wronged. The recent case of former garda Majella Moynihan has encouraged him.

Moynihan spoke up about being charged in the 1980s with breaching the force's disciplinary rules for having premarital sex with another garda, becoming pregnant and having a child. She gave her son up for adoption, saying she was put under pressure to do so, before eventually leaving the Garda early.

Like Moynihan, Liam wants his official records from the time. He has his personal file but there is nothing in it about why or how his time in the force ended.

"I just cease to exist," he says of his file ending with letters from senior officers recommending he be retained in service at the expiry of his two-year probationary period.

In one appraisal, apparently during the

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The day after Liam was ordered out of the station, he says two 'gloating' gardai came to his home demanding his spare uniform, his belt, torch and other items

Garda's vetting procedure, there are remarks in his file about his "conduct and character" generally.

"Applicant is of excellent character and he has never come under the unfavourable notice of the gardai. My inquiries show he is honest and sober," it said.

Nearing the end of his probationary period, and when he had served a year and nine months in the force, the comments in his file from those officers who appraised him were clear.

"I recommend that his appointment be confirmed," says one, advocating that Liam be retained as a garda proper after his probationary period expires.

Another comment at that time states: "Should make an efficient member, is fit for retention on the force."

A section of the appraisal drawn up as a part of the process for recommending him, or not, to be retained after his probationary period, which all new gardai still undergo, deals with "behaviour on and off duty".

Every aspect of a recruit's conduct – work ethic, punctuality, appearance, report writing, output on the beat – are assessed with grades A through E.

Most of Liam's grades in the personnel file seen by *The Irish Times* are As. His lowest rating for any category is a B.

Another comment made after he had been in the Garda for about a year states: "Showing satisfactory progress with a high level of output. Very reliable in the performance of his duties."

Though nothing appears about his service ending, the file chronicles in minute detail every other aspect of his training and work performance.

Liam believes there are other documents about his dismissal that he has not been given.

He now wants Garda Commissioner Drew Harris and Minister for Justice Charlie Flanagan to acknowledge he was fired for being gay, to meet him and to apologise – as they have done for Majella Moynihan.

Liam has received replies from the department acknowledging his correspondence and suggesting a further search will be performed. A reply is awaited from the commissioner.

In reply to separate queries made by *The Irish Times* for this article, the Department of Justice said it did not comment on individual cases, adding: "Any correspondence received by the Department is dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedures."

The Garda said it did not comment on its correspondence with "named individuals". It added: "For privacy reasons An Garda Síochána does not comment on the details of an individual's career in An Garda Síochána."

Liam has been informed by an official in the Garda's human resources department that checks have been carried out in the archives, including in Templemore, but that no records on his time in the Garda have been uncovered.

He says this reply is at odds with replies in past years when he received his personnel file, containing records relating to Templemore.

In recent years some of Liam's former colleagues have rallied around him; offering support and urging him to persist with his efforts to get closure. That support is a great comfort to him and is at odds with how lonely he felt 37 years ago when his time as a garda ended.

In June 1980 Liam started his recruit training at the Garda college in Templemore, Co Tipperary. Twenty-six weeks later he was on the beat on the streets of Dublin.

"I was 22 years old and I really liked it," says Liam. "It was a huge culture shock for me... Nothing prepared us for what we saw, in terms of the poverty and in terms of crime." As he gained experience and street craft he could see the heroin problem in Dublin was much bigger than the authorities were acknowledging.

Charles Self was murdered in January, 1982. An English man working as a set designer in RTE, he was found dead at the bottom of the stairs at his home on the morning of January 21st, 1982. He had been stabbed 14 times. There was a slash wound to his throat.

The gruesome killing of an openly gay man and well-known person about town in Dublin garnered a lot of media coverage, putting extra pressure on the Garda.

Liam recalls how, within the Garda, it was strongly suspected – on what evidence never became clear – that the answer to the murder lay in Dublin's gay community.

"I feel [the Garda] carried out a witch hunt into the gay community. Charles Self was known to frequent Burgh Quay, which was an area to pick up rent boys.

"So they confined a lot of the inquiry to the gay community. The investigation was aggressive, heavy-handed, done in a horrible way."

Soon after the Self investigation began, gay men were reporting their concerns to the Irish Council for Civil Liberties, saying gardai had demanded they be fingerprinted and photographed and give statements.

"They claim that detectives have repeatedly called to their homes and places of work, causing them considerable embarrassment," *The Irish Times* reported of the concerns expressed by gay men at the time, many of whom had kept their sexuality concealed from family, friends and colleagues.

Eamon Somers, president of the National Gay Federation at the time, said people were worried that information gathered by gardai could be released to civil servants screening job applicants.

This is effectively what Liam says happened to him: progression through his Garda probationary period was problem-free until his sexuality became known.

In the course of the Self murder investigation gardai monitored several pubs and clubs frequented by gay men: The Bailey on Duke Street off Grafton Street, Bartley Dunne's on Stephen Street Lower and the Hirschfeld Centre in Temple Bar.

Liam frequented the Hirschfeld Centre. He was still ill at ease with being gay but was taking his first awkward steps to-

wards being open about it. He feels now he was probably spotted by other members of the force going to the Hirschfeld Centre and that they passed that information on.

"I was ordered to parade in front of [a Garda officer]," Liam recalls. "From memory it was a small office. He was there in uniform. I was in my best tunic. He didn't introduce himself to me. I saluted him."

"He asked me did I know why I was there and I said no. He said he was investigating alleged conduct that could bring discredit on the force.

"I asked him to explain; I was timid, scared. I was frightened. But he didn't explain and he didn't elaborate.

"He fingerprinted me. In fact, he was insistent on that. I was invited to make a cautioned statement. But I didn't see the point in making a statement. What would I be making a statement about?"

“

Liam believes documents about his dismissal are being withheld. He wants the Garda Commissioner and Minister for Justice to acknowledge he was fired for being gay

"He asked me did I know Charles Self, and I told him I did. Then I knew why I was there. I had a suspicion, but that question confirmed it.

"I was never asked was I gay or if I participated in homosexual activity or if I frequented bars or clubs. It wasn't against the law to be gay. It was against the law to engage in homosexual acts, but I wasn't even accused of that.

"When I went back to the station my sergeant asked me what it was all about and I didn't really want to explain it to him and I didn't tell anyone else about it."

A month passed, and while Liam continued with learning the ropes in the Garda, he had become "consumed by this thing".

He was then summoned to another Dublin Garda station where he says two detectives "interrogated" him, took his prints again and photographed him – like

a criminal suspect. "They were asking did I go to bars, did I go to clubs, was I gay, which I admitted; it was a fact. They were asking had I boy-friends. That went on for three-quarters of an hour.

"It was heavy-handed. I told them that 'Yes, I knew Charles Self, a very affable man. They asked me had I been in his house. I told them I hadn't been."

After it was over, he tried to dust himself down. He discussed what had happened with nobody inside or outside the Garda.

About six weeks after the second interview he went into work on a Wednesday evening to be briefed with the rest of his unit about their tasks for their shift that night.

Just before the briefing started two officers he had never had any dealings with came into his station and sought him out. They asked him to step out of the room he was in before his uniform was demanded.

He cannot recall the exact words used. "It was just 'That's it, your time here is over'," he says. The symbolism of standing in his uniform one moment and then the officers demanding he surrender it was overwhelming at the time. He says it damaged him mentally.

"For about five years then I went off the rails, drinking very heavily. I was arrested one time for being drunk and disorderly.

"It was just all about the ignominy of feeling that I didn't get on in the guards, that the guards didn't want me, that I was a nobody.

"I remember doing up CVs after I left. I couldn't get a job. People looked at your record and they saw you left the guards. People would assume there was something wrong with you. It was tough and it's not getting any easier."

After a period his life settled down, and while he has since run a successful business, not a day has passed without him wishing he had had a Garda career and wondering what that would have been like.

"I look at my Garda personnel file," he says, leafing through it, "and I speak to my former colleagues and they tell it as it is. I was a bloody good policeman.

"But I was thrown on the scrap heap and now I want to know why. I want them to [acknowledge] the reason.

"I was disposable, I wasn't treated as a human being, I wasn't treated with dignity. I hadn't committed any crime; the only thing I was guilty of was knowing Charles Self.

"I see gardai in the Pride march recently and with the patrol cars decked out in the Pride colours. But I have no pride. They took that from me and I want them to acknowledge that much."

Anatomy of a refurb

The breakdown of a €100,000 budget



Property

Suzanne Lynch

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Business + Technology

Newton Emerson

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Opinion

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Garda sacked over 'alleged homosexual activity', says Harris

CONOR LALLY
Security and Crime Editor

A former Garda member who has campaigned for years for the force to admit he was dismissed because he was gay has now been told by Garda Commissioner Drew Harris that his "alleged involvement in homosexual activity" was the issue.

"A document has been located at the Department of Justice and Equality and provided to me, and indicates that your services were dispensed with in advance of your position being confirmed due to suspicions of your alleged involvement in homosexual activity," Mr Harris has now said in a letter to him. The former garda's case was

reported on by The Irish Times last month when he outlined how he was questioned twice about being gay back in 1982.

Weeks later he was preparing to leave his Garda station one evening when senior members of the force sought him out at the station.

They demanded he take off his uniform and informed him

his time in the force was over.

The former Garda member, who was in his early 20s when dismissed 37 years ago, has never come out as gay to those around him, and prefers not to be named. He believes his experience at the hands of the Garda was so severe he has felt the need to conceal his sexuality.

Last night he said he "welcomed" the correspondence from the commissioner, and saw it as a vindication.

He now wants a meeting with Mr Harris over the matter.

The commissioner has informed him additional searches for more documents were being conducted, adding he would make contact again soon. Mr

Harris offered him a meeting with the Garda's head of human resources as an interim measure.

Last month, when his story was first highlighted in The Irish Times, the man at the centre of the case said he believed his mixing on the gay scene had been observed by detectives in early 1982.

The force had placed gay pubs and clubs under surveillance as part of the investigation into the murder of Charles Self, a gay RTÉ set designer murdered in a house in Monkstown in January 1982.

How an excellent garda was dispensed with: page 6



Germany presses Syrians to return
'The last I heard was that he was still in prison, and then there was no more news of him'
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Incorrect test results sent to 400 women

Patient waiting six months for results erroneously told she is HPV negative

Latest mistake revealed after recent report into CervicalCheck process failings

MARIE O'HALLORAN

Approximately 400 women whose cervical smear test results were delayed for months in the cancer screening controversy, have this week received a letter with incorrect information about those results.

This latest mistake has emerged in the wake of the publication of the MacCraith report on the 4,088 women affected by an IT failure and human error.

The report by DCU president Prof Brian MacCraith found that in the case of 873 women who had a repeat HPV test, no results were sent to them or to their GP for over six months and, in the remaining cases, GPs were informed but not the women concerned.

The HSE yesterday confirmed that almost half of the 873 women received a letter in the last week from CervicalCheck that "contained an inaccuracy".

The latest error in the ongoing cancer saga emerged after a woman contacted The Irish Times following publication of the MacCraith report.

Repeat test

Preferring to identify herself only as Ms Scullion, she said she was one of the 873 women who had not received any results of a repeat test for HPV, a virus which can cause cancer.

She received a letter on August 6th, but dated August 1st which told her: "Please be assured that as expected your HPV re-test result is unchanged from your original smear test of the above date (July 2018) and remains HPV negative."

Ms Scullion said she is HPV positive, known from a previous testing and investigation. She said the letter appeared to be a "mail merge", an automated letter to multiple recipients, and "looks like an administrative error".

She contacted CervicalCheck who "apologised profusely" and confirmed it as an administrative error. Ms Scullion said she "just couldn't believe it".

'Embarrassing'
"It's just embarrassing that there is yet another mistake and you start wondering what else will happen." She said she will attend for her next test at the end of the year.

The MacCraith report urged the HSE to move quickly to ensure CervicalCheck becomes a well-structured organisation with an active culture of risk management.

In a statement, the HSE said they were "very sorry for any confusion" the error may have caused. The HSE said that at the time of the original HPV-positive result, the women's GPs would have recommended further testing.

"We are nonetheless again very sorry for any confusion or distress this error may have caused. We will be writing to women involved... to correct this error."

The revelation came as Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and Minister for Health Simon Harris met cervical cancer campaigners about a formal State apology to those affected by the on-going controversy. Mr Varadkar is expected to make a formal apology in the Dáil when it resumes in the autumn.



Texan protest Trump visits El Paso and Dayton in wake of mass shootings

Miguel de Anda, who was born and raised in El Paso, Texas, protests against US president Donald Trump's visit to the city yesterday following a mass shooting which left 22 dead. Mr Trump also visited Dayton, Ohio, the site of another recent mass shooting. Report: page 8 PHOTOGRAPH: MARIO TAMA/GETTY

Smartwatches linked to spike in college exam cheating

CARLO O'BRIEN
Education Editor

Universities have recorded a sharp increase in the number of students wearing banned smartwatches in exam halls.

Most third-level institutions prohibit the use of Fitbits, Apple Watches and other devices which allow users to upload and access information.

NUI Galway this year recorded an increase in the number of breaches of exam regulations, up from 56 last year to 83 so far this year. It said a key factor was the use of smartwatches.

Its penalties for breaches of exam regulations range from letters of reprimand to permanent exclusion from the university.

NUI Galway said it recorded a similar increase after it banned mobile phones several years ago.

Not all cases of students wearing smartwatches involve an intention to cheat, however.

The university said in some cases students reported the devices to invigilators prior to the exam. Nevertheless, all such cases were reported as exam breaches.

Trinity College Dublin, which also bans the use of smartwatches, recorded a total of 42 breaches of exam regulations this year, along with 10 incidents of cheating.

Blanket ban

It did not provide a breakdown, but one source said use of smartwatches is becoming a significant issue and is difficult to police in a crowded exam halls as they resemble regular watches.

This has prompted a number of UK colleges to introduce blanket bans on wristwatches of any kind.

City, University of London, for example, now requires all students to remove their watches prior to exams and to place them in a bag.

Despite the advent of technology, old-fashioned approaches to cheating are still favoured by a very small minority of students.

Students have been penalised for smuggling notes into the exam or for writing on their sleeves or hands.

On a positive note, latest figures suggest cases of plagiarism seem to be on the decrease.

At Trinity, for example, the number of cases of plagiarism has halved year-on-year, down from 33 cases last year to 17 in the 2018/19 academic year.

Some say this is due to greater awareness on the part of students over sourcing and use of third-party material.

Weather

Mainly dry with sunny spells at first but rain in Munster and south Leinster by evening. Highs of 18-22 degrees.

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Property: US group Hines has emerged as the preferred bidder for a 19-acre residential development site close to Croke Park after an offer of €105 million.

Hermitage Clinic: A boardroom row at the Larry Goodman and Seán Mulryan-backed facility has deepened.

Sports Thursday

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Rugby: James Ryan (23) has been voted Writers' Player of Year, becoming the award's youngest recipient: page 19

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Lotto: 2, 3, 7, 16, 29, 37, (41). Plus 1: 9, 14, 16, 27, 32, 34, (17). Plus 2: 12, 16, 21, 30, 35, 44, (22).

Student rents rise before new limits set

Rent in purpose-built accommodation has risen by 10-15% in some cases

CARL O'BRIEN
Education Editor

Owners of purpose-built student accommodation have been accused of raising prices ahead of new caps on rent increases coming in next week.

Until now, purpose-built student accommodation has been exempt from legislation capping increases in designated pressure zones.

This is due to change next Thursday, when it formally

comes under new legislation that will limit price increases to 4 per cent per annum.

The cost of private purpose-built student accommodation in Dublin in many cases has risen by between 10 and 15 per cent, with the most expensive rooms now costing up to €1,500 a month.

Laura Beston, president of the Union of Students of Ireland (USI), said: "They knew this was coming down the line and we've seen huge increases

in some instances."

She said it began last year with a private student accommodation provider for DCU students raising prices 27 per cent, while another private provider for NUI Galway students increased prices 18 per cent. Ms Beston said this was putting accommodation well out of the range of most students. "Most accommodation is totally inaccessible and unaffordable."

In addition, some third-level institutions have been accused of hiking the cost of on-campus accommodation ahead of the introduction of the caps.

UCC has recorded some of the highest rent hikes, according to figures compiled by the Irish Independent, with its prices

jumping by between 10 and 11.5 per cent. The most expensive on-campus student accommodation for the academic year is in Dublin, where top prices

€1,500

Monthly cost of the most expensive student accommodation

range from €8,000 at Trinity to €11,000 at UCD.

Most colleges have said the need to increase costs was linked to refurbishment or the expense of providing utilities.

Ms Beston said it was vital that colleges ensure on-campus

accommodation is made available at cost-rental prices. "They should not profit from it: it should be made available at the lowest price possible," she said.

The Government has defended its record, saying it is hitting its targets to increase the supply of student accommodation.

Minister of State at the Department of Education Mary Mitchell O'Connor said recently that some 6,691 purpose-built student spaces had been completed since the Government published a blueprint in July 2017.

Almost 6,000 further bed spaces are under construction, while permission has been granted for more than 8,000 other bed spaces.

"The National Student Accommodation strategy was designed to increase supply and so assist in moderating rental costs for students. As the figures show the strategy is working and we are on track to exceed the target set at the outset," she said.

'Boutique hotels'

However, Ms Beston said the vast bulk of new private purpose-built accommodation in the capital resembled expensive boutique hotel rooms.

"They are not building what students want. There are bowling alleys, cinema rooms and luxurious rooms, and they're charging €200 a week or more."

How an excellent garda was 'dispensed of' over 'suspected homosexual activity'



Conor Lally
Background

Commissioner supplies 'Liam' with unseen documents, but not an apology

Plucked from the bowels of the Department of Justice archive stores in recent weeks, a document from 1982 about the dismissal of a young garda offers a chilling insight into how the force's dark arts were mobilised against one of their own when it became clear he was gay.

Last month that garda told his story for the first time in The Irish Times, using the pseudonym "Liam". He was contacted last week by Garda Commissioner Drew Harris, who supplied documents about his dismissal that he had never seen before.

Mr Harris also acknowledges Liam's services were "dispensed of" due to "suspicions of your alleged involvement in homosexual activity". The commissioner stopped short of apologising, though assured him searches for more documents were under way and further contact would follow as soon as possible.

Now close to retirement age, Liam says he has never come

out as gay because he felt so scarred by his treatment at the hands of An Garda Síochána almost four decades ago.

He joined the force in 1980 and all of his professional appraisals were positive as his two-year probationary period progressed, commending his work rate and professionalism.

However, then came the stabbing to death of RTE set designer and gay man Charles Self in a house in Monkstown, south Dublin, in January, 1982. The Garda became convinced the answer to his murder, which has never been solved, lay within the gay community in Dublin.

Liam always believed he had been spotted frequenting the Hirschfeld Centre, a gay venue in Dublin's Temple Bar, by detectives working on the Charles Self murder inquiry.

No charge

He was never charged with any criminal offence or disciplinary matter. When he was dismissed he was never told why. Instead, he was stripped of his uniform in the station where he worked and told to leave and that his time as a member of the Garda was over.

The personnel file he obtained recently from the Garda, after years of correspondence, stopped with the glowing performance appraisals, with no reference to his dismissal. But the document drawn up between February and May 1982, provided to him by Harris last week, confirms his movements within the gay community were observed, documented and used against him.

Back in 1982, homosexual acts were illegal, though it was not against the law to be gay.

In the document drawn up between February and May 1982,



recommending Liam's service be brought to an end just days before his two-year probation ended, incidents as far back as January 1981 were cited.

This is despite appraisals of his performance, character and conduct on and off duty through 1981 and into the first weeks of 1982 proving positive at the time and recommending his retention as a Garda member after his probation.

Suspect activities

But in the 1982 document, his being "found in the vicinity of Burgh Quay in the company of

three other men" the previous year was deemed as evidence of his unsuitability to serve in the Garda because Burgh Quay was a cruising spot for gay men.

Being assaulted and having his car stolen at another location were also seen as suspect activities, as gay men were known to frequent that area.

The document, which was signed by then Garda commissioner Patrick McLaughlin, effectively confirmed Liam would be dismissed over his links to the gay community but it also praises his work as an "excellent" garda.

"On 7th May, 1982, the above named was interviewed by the officer in charge of the Charles Self murder investigation," it says. "In reply to the various allegations concerning his presence and activities in areas known to be meeting places for homosexuals and male prostitutes he stated 'just curiosity, that's all'."

"In a further reply in relation to visiting a club organised by the National Gay Federation he stated it was 'just to see what was going on there'. Apart from the aforementioned it is stated the member is an excellent

worker, good timekeeper and maintains a high level of cleanliness."

McLaughlin then adds: "I intend to dispense with his services at an early date."

Nine months after signing off on Liam's dismissal, McLaughlin resigned after the tapping of the telephones of two journalists, Geraldine Kennedy and Bruce Arnold.

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THE IRISH TIMES

Briefs

Dublin Coroner's Court

Man died after being found on a city street on a very cold morning

A homeless man found on a set of steps in Dublin city centre died due to hypothermia, an inquest has heard.

Steponas Jankovskis (54) was spotted outside a house on Lower Gardiner Street by a passing woman shortly after 7am on January 19th, 2018.

Garda Hannah Quinlan described it as being a "particularly cold" morning during an inquest into his death at Dublin Coroner's Court.

Mr Jankovskis, who was wearing a number of coats, was checked on by the woman, who was concerned that he was very cold and contacted the emergency services.

He was brought by ambulance to the Mater hospital where he later suffered a cardiac arrest. He was treated in the intensive care unit but died two days later.

"He deteriorated quite a lot in that time between when he was found in the street and getting to hospital," coroner Dr Myra Cullinane said.

Gardaí notified the Lithuanian embassy in an attempt to contact relatives of the deceased. He was identified by a photograph provided to gardaí in an email sent by his son.

The coroner returned a verdict of misadventure.
LOUISE ROSEINGRAVE

Sligo District Court

Released prisoner accused of damaging vehicles in traffic jam

A man attacked a number of vehicles in a traffic jam in Co Donegal just hours after he was released from prison, Sligo District Court has heard.

Francis McConnell was before the court charged with a number of offences following a series of incidents at Oldtown Bridge in Letterkenny at about 7.30pm on Tuesday.

The accused (30), of no fixed abode, was arrested a short time later by gardaí after an alleged assault close to a McDonald's outlet in the town. He was still wearing his grey prison tracksuit.

The accused appeared before Judge Deirdre Gearty at a special sitting of the court charged with causing criminal damage to a number of cars, assault and public order offences. He was also charged with a public order offence at Letterkenny University Hospital yesterday.

An application for bail was adjourned until a hearing at Letterkenny District Court today.

Patsy Gallagher, solicitor for the accused, asked for all the necessary medical treatment to be given to his client.
STEPHEN MAGUIRE

Co Limerick



Love Island winner O'Shea gets 'amazing' welcome home

There was a huge scrum to see and photograph Ireland Sevens rugby star and Love Island winner Greg O'Shea when he arrived home to Ireland yesterday.

The Limerick man's flight from London touched down at Shannon Airport shortly before noon.

An estimated 300 fans were waiting to see him. "It's amazing. I thought only my family would be here but all these people. Literally, it could have been my dad outside the door and I would have been happy, but this is amazing," said the 24-year-old.

The big question on fans' and reporters' minds

Ashes of 'Ballymena boy' reach family grave

COLINGLEESON

"A Ballymena boy come home at last", reads the stone over the grave of Sam Gilmour, whose ashes were finally scattered among the remains of his family yesterday, more than 50 years after he left for Australia.

His son, Bob Gilmour, made the more than 17,500km journey from Tasmania to Co Antrim - via Milan, Italy - to honour his father's wish to have his ashes scattered in his home place. He is to travel to Birmingham to do the same for his mother tomorrow.

Gilmour and his family spent four days in limbo after Aer Lingus lost his bags - and with them the remains of his parents - en route from Milan, but was reunited with them three hours before the scheduled ceremony in Ballymena yesterday.

"Everything worked out really well," he told The Irish Times. "The ceremony was very informal, just a small, family group. He was 88 when he died and was gone from Ireland a long time so there wouldn't be many people here still alive who remember him."

"It's a family grave where his mother and father, his sister and her husband, and other family members are buried. We scattered his ashes and said farewell."

Sam Gilmour initially left Ballymena at 18 years of age to join the Royal Air Force. It was 1943 and Britain was at war. He had completed his training as an engine fitter but was desperate to join the air crew.

"The air force knew he was a mechanic, and they needed mechanics much more than they needed people to man machine guns or radios so he finished up in the air force as an aeroplane fitter," Gilmour says. "He worked on Lancasters and Spitfires, and that's where he met my mum because she was a rigger."

Steel cables

"These days it's all hydraulics, but in those days all the controls on an aeroplane were via steel cables that ran through the fuselage, through the wings and around pulleys. Keeping all that stuff going was a rigger's job, so that was what my mum did."

Sam and Marjorie fell in love and, after the war, they got married. They lived for a short time in Birmingham before returning to Ireland where Sam worked for Associated Electrical Industries in Larne, where he eventually became a foreman.

Although he left school at 14 and had no formal education, Sam was qualified in two trades and his son describes

him as "very intelligent". He wanted more from his life but realised "that was as far as he was going to go".

So, in about 1965, Sam and Marjorie began exploring options to leave Ireland. They decided on Australia after Sam was offered a job with a hydro-electric power group in Tasmania.

"We left on the ferry from Larne to Stranraer on June 2nd, 1967," recalls Gilmour. "My dad settled well. He was an Irishman. He had the gift of being able to talk to people. He was friendly, cheerful and outgoing."

Sam's links with Ireland endured. "I don't know - I'm beginning to feel it myself - there is something about being Irish which is just a little bit special, and he was just never going to let go of that," says Gilmour. "The ties were never severed."

"Australia is a migrant country. When you leave your own country, whatever stories are



“My dad was an Irishman. He had the gift of being able to talk to people. He was friendly, cheerful and outgoing”
- Bob Gilmour on his late father, Sam

happening in that country, they go on. You're not in that story. But, in the new place, you're different. You don't belong. You're not part of the past. I think what happens to a lot of migrant people is you wind up with a foot in each camp but your soul is in neither one.

"For my mum, there was no question; if she had been given the chance to come home to Ireland or England she would have done it in a flash. For my dad, it was a case of, 'I'd like to be there, but we're better off here'... it was a duality. Any time Ireland was in the news, it had an impact on him. Obviously there was all the news of the Troubles and everything that was going on, and there was worry about what might happen to family that were still there."

"While my dad thought we were better off out of all that, part of him was going 'that's my country, I should be there'. He couldn't quite ever let go of that and I don't think in his heart he wanted to."

Dublin Port

Firm fails to vacate site for Brexit impact

A transport and warehousing firm has breached a court order by failing to vacate a site needed to deal with the impact of Brexit, the Dublin Port Company has claimed in the High Court.

As a result of the alleged breach, the State-owned port company is seeking orders that could result in the commitment to prison of one of McQuaid O'Flanagan Warehousing and Transport Ltd's directors and the seizure of that company's property.

McQuaid O'Flanagan was to vacate a site at Tolka Quay, some 600m south of the Dublin Port Tunnel which the port company intends to use as a truck park and a customs, immigration, agricultural inspection post after Brexit. The port company had an order from the Commercial Court requiring McQuaid O'Flanagan to fully vacate the property by the end of last month.

The case returned before Mr Justice David Keane yesterday when lawyers for the port company said McQuaid O'Flanagan was in contempt of the order made in March. The judge, on a one-side-only basis, granted the port company permission to serve short notice of the proceedings on the defendants and adjourned the matter to tomorrow.

AODHAN O'FAOLAIN and RAY MANAGH

PAT FLYNN
Photograph: Brian Arthur

Dismissed gay garda seeking an apology

Fianna Fáil says Government should now acknowledge State's wrongdoing

Officer sacked in 1980s two days before he was due to become full-time garda

CONOR LALLY
Security and Crime Editor

The Government should apologise to a former Garda member who was dismissed from the force because of suspected "homosexual activity", Fianna Fáil has said.

Last night the former garda welcomed the comments by the party, adding that he was seeking an apology.

The Irish Times yesterday revealed the man, using the pseudonym 'Liam', has now received an acknowledgment from Garda Commissioner Drew Harris that his services were dispensed of in 1982 due to his "alleged homosexual activity".

Fianna Fáil has compared the case to that of Majella Moynihan, the former garda forced from her job and disci-

plined for giving birth out of wedlock in 1984. She received face-to-face apologies from Mr Harris and Minister for Justice Charlie Flanagan earlier this year.

Fianna Fáil's justice spokesman Jim O'Callaghan said, like the Moynihan case, the "deeply disturbing" dismissal of the former garda because of his sexuality was a reminder what a "cold" place Ireland was in the 1980s.

"Drew Harris deserves to be commended for taking the lead in seeking to acknowledge the wrongdoing of An Garda Síochána in this act," said Mr O'Callaghan.

"The Government should now acknowledge the State's wrongdoing and apologise to the [former] garda on behalf of

the State for what was, on any analysis, an unfair and shameful dismissal."

Liam was dismissed in his early 20s just days before his two-year probation period was due to expire.

Appraisals
His staff appraisals in 1980 and 1981 were all positive and recommended his retention as an "excellent garda".

However, when RTE set designer Charles Self was murdered in a house in Monkstown, south Dublin, in January 1982, gardaí focused on the gay community. Liam was spotted by the investigating officers as he moved around in Dublin's gay circles.

Once it emerged he was gay, he was interviewed twice about

his sexuality and in mid-1982, two days before he was due to become a full-time garda, he was stripped of his uniform in his Garda station by senior officers who ordered him to leave.

He has written to Garda Headquarters and the Department of Justice many times in recent years. However, the copy of his personnel file he was allowed access to was incomplete and contained no material related to his dismissal.

Last month, The Irish Times reported extensively on his case and now Mr Harris has provided Liam with documents about his dismissal, pledged to search for more and to contact Liam again when that search is complete. Liam said while he felt vindicated by the commissioner's confirmation that his

sexuality was the reason he was dismissed, he wanted a meeting with Mr Harris and an apology.

Tonie Walsh, a campaigner for gay rights for decades and curator of the Irish Queer Archives, welcomed the case being highlighted and said it was an example of the "unfinished business" Ireland had with how gay people were treated in the past.

Mr Walsh added while it was "dangerous" for one generation to assume responsibility for the wrongs committed by previous generations, Ireland needed to acknowledge the legacy of the hurt that had been caused by gay people. He said cases like those of Liam's remained very difficult to highlight because the men involved were unwilling to speak out.

Water company at centre of product recall raided

JACK HORGAN-JONES

A Co Monaghan water company at the centre of a product safety recall over arsenic in its products was raided last week by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI). The Irish Times has learned.

The raid took place following allegations about the plant made by a former employee, Celtic Pure confirmed last night.

Agents from the FSAI, who sources said were supported by the Garda in the unannounced inspection, made copies of company and financial records from Celtic Pure during the operation last week.

The raid took place before 9am last Thursday, with FSAI officials remaining on site to complete the work through the day and into the early hours of Friday.

The company said it was working with the FSAI on its investigation into the claims made by the former employee. The investigation is separate to the arsenic issue which emerged last week, and which Celtic Pure reiterated was "fully resolved".

"In an entirely separate investigation, the company has been working closely with the FSAI regarding a number of unsubstantiated allegations that were made by a former employee.

"The company absolutely rejects these unsubstantiated claims and will robustly defend them. We cannot comment further."

Filtration

Products supplied by the company to some of the largest retailers in the State were the subject of a recall notice issued last week by the FSAI. Lidl, Aldi, Dunnes, and others all withdrew products from their shelves which were supplied by Celtic Pure.

Issues around the levels of arsenic in the water products first emerged on July 27th when BWG Foods, which owns the Spar and Londis brands, withdrew a batch of its own-brand water from sale.

The recall notice was issued following the detection of levels of arsenic above the legally acceptable limit in Celtic Pure products.

In a statement issued last weekend, Celtic Pure said the recall was the result of a mechanical failure of a filtration device. The FSAI last week said the recall was part of an ongoing investigation by it and the HSE.

The investigation into the arsenic issue, the company argued last night, was complete. However, there is a wider investigation into other matters raised in the disclosure to the FSAI, and the company said it was co-operating in that investigation.

Following the initial recall of product by BWG, a wider product recall notice, affecting many other large retailers' own-brand bottles of water, was issued by the FSAI.

Unlimited

Following the recall, the FSAI said people "should not be alarmed or concerned as the levels detected, whilst above the legal limit, are not considered to pose any short-term adverse health effects and the risk of any long-term health effect is unlikely".

In a statement last night, the company said the initial recall was "the result of a mechanical failure of a filtration device which has been isolated to one of our many springs. The quality team has taken immediate action and removed this device and source and we can confirm that this issue is now fully resolved.

"No Celtic Pure products were affected by this recall, outside of the limited own-brand batches".

The FSAI had no comment when contacted.

Celtic Pure is a family-run business. It was established in 2000, and in addition to supplying water to some of the largest retailers in the State, it is also the official water of the Football Association of Ireland.

The company was recently re-registered as an unlimited company, meaning there is less financial information available about it.

However, its most recent set of accounts show accumulated profits of €3.8 million. The company's shares are held by an offshore entity, registered in the channel island of Jersey.



'Nóra darling, I love you. Mum is here' – voice played on speakers in jungle search for Irish teenager

ANNETTE GARTLAND
in Kuala Lumpur

A voice recording of the mother of missing Irish teenager Nóra Quoirin was played by police on loudspeakers in the Malaysian jungle as the fifth day of the search took place yesterday.

Several local media outlets reported that in the recording, being played near the Dusun resort in Negeri Sembilan where she went missing, her Belfast-born mother Meabh said: "Nóra darling, I love you. Mum is here." The voices of other relatives have been recorded so that they can also be used.

Search-and-rescue teams have been using local trackers and members of special forces in their continued efforts to find the missing 15-year-old, who has learning and developmental disabilities.

The family have said they remain hopeful after police leading the investigation refused to rule out a "criminal element" in the search for the girl.

Nóra arrived at the resort about 63km south of Kuala Lumpur on Saturday for a two-week holiday with her family—mother Meabh, her French father Sebastian and her younger brother and sister. The family is based in London but the teenager is understood to have been travelling on an Irish passport.

Her father raised the alarm at 8am on Sunday when she was not in her room, and her family believe Nóra was abducted. They insist she would not have wandered off alone in the middle of the night.

The force has analysed fingerprints found in a resort cottage from which Nóra was reported missing. Deputy police chief Che Zakaria Othman said investigations were ongoing to identify the fingerprints which were at an open window in a downstairs hall, not in the bedroom upstairs where Nóra was sleeping with her siblings.

Police added they were "not ruling out any possibility" and that they believed Nóra was still in the area. Initial reports that a



■ A Royal Malaysian Police officer conducts a briefing before a search operation for missing teenager Nóra Quoirin yesterday.
PHOTOGRAPH: MOHD RASFAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

have been staying.

The eco-resort is located in a durian orchard in the foothills of the Titiwangsa mountains and is next to the 4,000-acre Berembun forest reserve, which is a popular attraction for hikers wishing to scale Gunung Telapak Buruk—the highest mountain in the vicinity. There are sun bears, white-handed gibbons, macaques, wild pigs, panthers, tapirs, and barking deer living in the Berembun reserve and locals have seen leopard tracks.

The Star newspaper in Malaysia reported yesterday that the total number of people reported lost in the Malaysian jungle so far this year was significantly higher than in each of the past three years.

Fire-and-rescue department operations director Abdul Wahab Mat Yasin said that, in the first seven months of this year, there were 252 cases of people reported missing in the jungle.

There were 191 cases in 2016, 219 in 2017 and 217 in 2018. Last year, all the missing persons were found, whereas two of those who went missing this year have not been tracked down.

The case of the disappearance of Jenkins, who went missing in Penang on December 13th, 2017, is still unsolved. She had taken an Uber and was due to visit her 101-year-old mother in a care home, but got out of the car ahead of her destination and has been missing ever since. Her relatives accused the police of inaction. The Uber driver was not interviewed, her relatives say, and reported sightings were not investigated.

While foreigners are among those who have disappeared hiking, Malaysia is generally seen as being safe for tourists.

—Additional reporting: PA



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Outpatient waiting lists reach new record

Additional 50,000 people this year bring total on outpatient waiting list to 564,829

Consultants' association urges Minister to 'honour commitment to begin talks'

SHAUNA BOWERS

Hospital waiting lists have reached a new high, with almost 50,000 additional people waiting for an outpatient appointment since the start of the year.

A record 564,829 people were awaiting a hospital outpatient appointment at the end of July, an increase of 4,578 when compared with June, according to data from the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF).

An outpatient department treats people with health problems who visit the hospital for diagnosis or treatment, but do not require a bed or to be admitted for overnight care.

Numbers have increased

66 The number of patients waiting for inpatient or day cases fell slightly month-on-month

10.4 per cent year-on-year, with 511,675 patients on the list this time last year. Since the start of 2019 an additional 48,667 have joined the waiting list, figures show.

The Mater Misericordiae University Hospital had the highest number of people awaiting an appointment with 44,782, followed by Galway University Hospital, which had 42,683.

There are also currently 46,949 children across Ireland waiting to see a paediatrician for an outpatient appointment in the three Dublin hospitals that make up Children's Health Ireland.

The number of patients waiting for inpatient or day cases fell slightly month-on-month, with 68,807 people waiting in July, compared with 69,971 people waiting in June.

However, some 10,633 people on the inpatient list have been waiting for more than a year, and of those almost half have been waiting for more than 18 months.

The NTPF figures also show how waiting lists vary dramatically by hospitals. More than 20 per cent of all patients who have been waiting for more than 18 months for an inpatient appointment were in Galway University Hospital, while 15 hospitals had no patients waiting that length for an appointment.

Waiting lists also varied depending on speciality, with 9,901 patients on the waiting list for orthopaedic surgery.

Vacant posts

Dr Donal O'Hanlon, president of the Irish Hospital Consultants Association (IHCA), said it was not surprising the outpatient waiting lists were greatest in those specialities with the greatest shortage of consultants or where vacant posts were more prevalent.

He said waiting list numbers would not improve without the required number of hospital consultants.

"The numbers waiting to see a hospital consultant continue to grow by an average of almost 7,000 new patients each month since the start of this year. Looking at what has happened over the past five years the numbers are even more stark, where numbers of patients waiting have grown by 200,000 over that time."

He added: "We need to end this crisis. To do so Minister for Health Simon Harris must honour his commitment to begin talks with consultant representative bodies in September."

The IHCA is running a campaign called CareCantWait, which seeks to raise awareness about staffing shortages in hospital departments.

The NTPF collates data relating to nine categories of waiting list in the public health system, but other waiting lists – such as those for scans and scopes – are not centrally collected.

There were 1,124,598 people on health waiting lists during the first half of 2019, Fianna Fáil has estimated, based on information collected from various sources.



Kenny and Grylls team up to win royal charity regatta

IAN JOHNSTON

Former taoiseach Enda Kenny and adventurer Bear Grylls formed a winning partnership at a charity sailing event organised by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge off the Isle of Wight.

The inaugural regatta of the King's Cup in Cowes was established by BBC presenter Dan Snow, who finished just ahead of Prince William. The duchess picked up the wooden spoon in last place.

The former taoiseach and the adventurer were represent-

ing Tusk, a wildlife and conservation charity active in Africa.

According to Tusk, the Mayo TD was participating as an ambassador of the Japanese NGO International Sports Promotion Society, a major financial backer of Tusk's activities.

The NGO, also known as ISPS, was founded by Japanese religious leader Haruhisa Handa, with the aim of promoting blind golf and several other sports for people with disabilities.

Other ISPS ambassadors in-

clude golfers Pádraig Harrington and Ernie Els, and New Zealand rugby player Dan Carter.

In his role as patron and ambassador, Mr Kenny appears at several events that promote the power of sport. He was previously seen in royal company in July 2018 when he joined Prince Harry and Meghan Markle at a polo match sponsored by ISPS, which raised €1.1 million for children affected by HIV.

Among the other charities represented at the King's Cup were mental health organisation Place2be, Child Bereavement UK and the Royal Foundation, a philanthropic fun run by the duke and duchess.

The event was watched by 800 spectators, including Mr Kenny's wife, Fionnuala.

■ Bear Grylls holding the King's Cup alongside Enda Kenny, Kate Middleton and Prince William. PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW MATTHEWS/GETTY IMAGES

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Protests at beef-processing plants suspended

AINE McMAHON and BRIAN HUTTON

Protests at meat-processing plants will be suspended pending talks, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Michael Creed has said.

Threatened legal proceedings by the industry against protesters will also be suspended. Beef farmers have been picketing outside meat factories for the past 12 days over the prices they are getting for their animals.

Earlier, protesting farmers had been urged by the Minister to lift their pickets in order to al-

low settlement talks take place. The Beef Plan Movement, which is behind the protests, has said the prices farmers are offered do not reflect their place on the production line.

Movement co-chair Eamon Corley said protesters had been issued with solicitors' letters at five processing plants – Dawn Meats, Kepak, Liffey Meats, ABP and Slaney Meats.

Mr Creed said last night both sides had accepted "compromise proposals" aimed at resolving the dispute.

A Department of Agriculture spokesman said all protests at meat-processing plants and le-

gal proceedings were to be suspended with immediate effect until the talks had concluded.

"A meeting will be held on Monday involving both MII [Meat Industry Ireland] and the Beef Plan Movement and also including representatives from the farm organisations, the department and its agencies."

Independent chair

An independent chair will be appointed for the talks and will preside over an "agreed agenda".

Meat Industry Ireland welcomed the development in a statement last night: "These

protests had brought beef processing to a virtual standstill in the country, causing significant disruption in the beef trade and also led to temporary staff layoffs.

"Real damage has been done to domestic and export business as a result of these protests and it is high time for the sector to get back to business. Processing needs to take place if we are to avoid losing more customers for Irish beef and lamb."

In a WhatsApp message sent to members of the Beef Plan Movement last night, they were told an agreement had been

reached with Mr Creed "following what we and others consider to be heavy-handed tactics by Meat Industry Ireland through the introduction of legal proceedings that could ultimately end in the High Court".

"The introduction of these legal proceedings has forced us into a position where we have no option but to agree to suspend our protests with immediate effect until talks conclude," it said.

The message from Beef Plan leaders also said "all beef industry stakeholders" had been invited to Monday's meeting.

Laws used to dismiss gay garda wrong, says Flanagan

CONOR LALLY
Security and Crime Editor

An unacceptable system of laws and standards pertained in the Republic in 1982 when a Garda member was dismissed from the force over suspicions he was engaging in homosexual activity, Minister for Justice Charlie Flanagan has said.

A statement issued on the case by the Department of Justice on behalf of Mr Flanagan said it was "our understanding" the Garda member did not want to be named. "Following correspondence, the department located papers from 1982 and sent these to the Garda authorities to assist them in responding to the person," the statement said.

"The Minister is supportive of the Garda Commissioner who, he believes, is dealing appropriately with the matter."

The department pointed out that last year on the 25th anniversary of the decriminalisation of homosexual acts, Mr Flanagan had "referred to the hurt and harm that had been caused to gay people".

Unacceptable

He had also "fully acknowledged and apologised for the discriminatory nature of those laws which had very real and sometimes tragic consequences" for people's lives.

"The standards and indeed the laws that applied in 1982 were wrong and would be completely unacceptable today."

The statement related to the case of a gay former Garda member who told his story last month in *The Irish Times* using the pseudonym Liam.

He was dismissed in his early 20s just two days before his two-year probation period was due to expire. His staff appraisals in 1980 and 1981 were all positive and recommended his retention as an "excellent garda".

However, when RTÉ set designer Charles Self, a gay man, was murdered in a house in Monkstown, Co Dublin, in January 1982, gardaí focused on the gay community. Liam was spotted mixing in Dublin's gay circles by the investigating officers.

Once it emerged he was gay he was interviewed twice about his sexuality and in mid-1982, two days before he was due to become a full-time garda, he was ordered to take off his uniform in his Garda station and leave.

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Briefs

Kerry

Man in his 60s killed in house fire named

The man who died in a house fire near Killorglin, Co Kerry has been named locally as Michael Sheehan. In his 60s, he lived alone in a remote area near Glencar.

A unit of the fire service on its way from attending a road traffic incident spotted the blaze from the main Killorglin to Glencar road at about 4.30am on Friday.

Gardaí believe the fire at Glencuttane Lower, Killorglin, to be a tragic accident and said there was nothing to indicate it was suspicious. However, Supt Flor Murphy of Killarney gardaí, who attended the scene, said the final course of the investigation would be determined by a post-mortem examination.

The body has been removed from the scene and a post-mortem is to take place today at University Hospital Kerry. The scene has been sealed off for technical examination.

Mr Sheehan was well known locally and from a family with connections in business and the GAA. He is the uncle of the Love/Hate actor Robert Sheehan whose father Joe Sheehan from Glencuttane was a garda.

Twenty-five years ago, Mr Sheehan's father had also died in a house fire, local councillor Michael Cahill said. "It is very sad news. Everyone is very upset," he added.

Cork

Child (5) returns home with substance suspected to be heroin

Gardaí in Cork are investigating after a five-year-old child out playing found a small amount of what is suspected to be heroin on a street on the north side of the city.

The child returned home with a small quantity of a substance contained in two small plastic wraps found in an estate in Knocknaheeny.

Fortunately the child did not open the wrapping but instead showed it to their parents who contacted gardaí.

In a statement the Garda press office confirmed an investigation has been launched. "Gardaí-in Gurranebragher are investigating the find of a small amount of suspected heroin (pending

analysis) by a member of the public in the Knocknaheeny area on Thursday 8th August 2019. No arrests have been made and investigations are ongoing," it said.

Sinn Féin councillor Thomas Gould said parents were shocked. "Parents are shocked because we've got a great community here with a great community spirit where people feel safe on the streets. Something like this is just horrific."

This is the second incident in Cork involving small children and heroin this summer. In June a boy (4) who was out playing in Toghher on the south side of the city was pricked by a "heroin needle."

Tipperary

Proceedings against Traveller couples adjourned to allow talks

Talks are to take place aimed at resolving a dispute between two couples facing the prospect of being jailed over their alleged failure to vacate an unofficial halting site in Co Tipperary and the local council, the High Court has heard.

Ms Justice Leonie Reynolds had in early July made orders in favour of Tipperary County Council against several people whose presence at Cabragh Bridge, Cabragh, Thurles, is alleged constituted a public nuisance. Some people at the site had moved on in compliance with the orders, but the

council claimed two couples and their families had remained at the site, in contempt of the court's orders.

Ms Justice Reynolds said she was prepared to grant one further adjournment to allow talks between the families and council take place. The matter will return before the court later this month. The injunctions require the defendants to remove their mobile homes, vehicles and caravans from Cabragh Bridge, and not cause any obstruction to the roadway. **AODHAN O'FAOLAIN and RAY MANAGH**

Wildlife



Disease fatal to rabbits and hares confirmed in the wild

A disease which is fatal to rabbits and hares but of no risk to humans has been confirmed in the wild in Ireland for the first time.

Rabbit haemorrhagic disease (RHD) causes death within a few days of infection, with sick animals having swollen eyelids, partial paralysis and bleeding from the eyes and mouth.

Irish domestic rabbits were first reported to have the disease in 2018, but it has now been confirmed in the wild from a rabbit in Co Wicklow and another in Co Clare. Yesterday a hare in Co Wexford was also found to be infected.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service is asking

the public to report any suspected cases, and conservation rangers continue to monitor the situation.

The disease is highly contagious, and can be spread directly between animals and in the faeces and urine of infected animals.

The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has decided to suspend the licences issued to the Irish Coursing Club to capture and tag hares for the 2019/20 coursing season with immediate effect until a clearer understanding of the extent and implications of the virus emerges. **SHAUNA BOWERS**

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Off-market deal in Sandyford

Legionaries of Christ sell 6.5 acres for €23m



Commercial Property

Gordon D'Arcy

A Six Nations pay wall would have people up in arms



Sport

Niall O'Dowd

Time to include Sinn Féin in government



Opinion

THE IRISH TIMES

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Second case of Covid-19 confirmed in east of Ireland

Department advises against non-essential travel to four Italian regions

Cabinet agrees to set up committee and a forum for people working in the area

PAUL CULLEN
Health Editor

A second case of the coronavirus has been confirmed in the east of Ireland, again carried from northern Italy.

The case is a female whose infection is unrelated to the first case, reported on Sunday.

The woman is receiving appropriate care, the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) said yesterday evening, and efforts to trace her contacts have begun.

Chief medical officer Dr Tony Holohan described the case as "not unexpected" and said Ireland remains in a containment phase and has yet to experience local transmission, as is the case in other EU states. Dr Holohan said he did not think it likely there are any other cases in Ireland.

397

Number of people tested for the virus here since the outbreak started in January

The Department of Foreign Affairs is now advising against all non-essential travel to four regions in Italy – Lombardy, Veneto, Emilia-Romagna and Piedmont. Italy, with more than 2,000 cases, is the European country worst affected by the coronavirus outbreak.

The department had previously advised against non-essential travel in northern Italy to 11 towns in the region.

A total of 397 people have been tested for the virus here since the outbreak started in January, public health officials said yesterday, compared with 90 this time last week. The increase was expected as the number of areas of the world subject to coronavirus-related travel advice was broadened last week.

Guidance on mass gatherings is to be published in the coming days, following a cross-Government review, Dr Holohan said.

But he added that "as things stand" he saw no reason why

the St Patrick's Day Festival could not go ahead this month.

The testing of suspected cases is to be moved from hospitals to the community, most likely people's homes. Dr Holohan said this would take further pressure off hospitals. The tests would be carried out by paramedics.

Subcommittees
Issues relating to vulnerable people, healthcare workers, medicines supply and the preparedness of hospitals are to be examined by four subcommittees, the NPHE also announced.

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar said yesterday the Government expects more cases of the coronavirus but some of the actions seen in other countries are "not necessary" in Ireland at this stage. If efforts to contain the disease here did not work, Ireland could move to a mitigation phase focused on treating the ill "in a few weeks' time".

He was speaking after the Cabinet agreed to set up a special committee on the outbreak, chaired by the Taoiseach, and a stakeholder forum to engage with people working in the area. Extra resources may be provided to the health service to deal with the threat posed by Covid-19.

The Cabinet also discussed the possible economic consequences of the outbreak. A spokesman for Minister for Finance Paschal Donohoe said a global slowdown in growth was likely to have negative consequences for Ireland but at this stage it is "too early to say what that may look like."

"The outbreak of the coronavirus underlines the importance of maintaining prudent fiscal and economic policies in order to support resilience to economic and broader geopolitical shocks," he added.

→ **Reports, reaction, analysis and advice: pages 2, 3**
Opinion: Kathy Sheridan, page 12
Markets, interest rates and news: Business +



The prince and the president Duke and Duchess of Cambridge begin three-day visit to Ireland

■ Prince William signs a visitors' book next to his wife, Kate Middleton, with President Michael D Higgins and his wife, Sabina Coyne, at Áras an Uachtaráin yesterday. Royal visit goes down a treat: *Miriam Lord, page 5*. PHOTOGRAPH: PHIL NOBLE, WPA POOL/GETTY IMAGES

EU pledges €700m to Greece as 'shield'

NAOMIO O'LEARY
Europe Correspondent

The European Union has pledged aid for Greece to help it hold back thousands of migrants who have amassed at its borders in the hope of crossing from Turkey.

Thousands of people began trying to cross the border after Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced his country would no longer hold them back and it was time for Europe to take its "share", reneging on a deal struck with the EU to curb the last crisis in 2016.

"The situation at our border is not only an issue for Greece to manage, it is the responsibility of Europe as a whole," European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen said as she visited the border area accompanied by the Greek prime minister. "We will hold the line and our unity will prevail."

'EU's shield'

Ms Von der Leyen described Greece as the EU's "shield", and pledged €700 million in aid to the country. Border agency Frontex announced it would send officers and equipment in

a "rapid border intervention" in response to an appeal from Athens for help in managing the EU's frontier.

Greece accused Turkey of "trafficking" and announced it would not accept any requests for asylum, as its border guards fired tear gas into the crowds of men, women, and children, and pushed back boats.

The United Nations migration agency called on parties to protect migrants' safety, but the leaders of the EU institutions said their priority was to support Greece.

Brussels is determined to pre-

vent a repeat of the last migration crisis, in which more than a million people entered the EU.

The EU's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell visited Ankara to appeal to Mr Erdogan to hold to the deal to keep migrants on Turkish soil in return for financial aid. Europe's foreign ministers are to hold an extraordinary meeting next week to discuss the issue. The movement of people is being fuelled by a

worsening conflict in Syria, particularly in Idlib close to the Turkish border, where Ankara is locked in conflict with the Russian-backed regime of Bashar al-Assad and a spiralling humanitarian disaster is forcing hundreds of thousands of families to seek safety.

→ **Reports: page 8**
Editorial comment: page 13

Former garda sacked in 1982 for being gay sues State

CONOR LALLY
Security and Crime Editor

A former garda who was dismissed from the force in 1982 for being gay is suing the State.

The former garda, who went public in *The Irish Times* last year using the pseudonym "Liam", is suing on grounds including the manner of his treatment, the distress it caused and the impact on his life.

Earnings forgone, including his salary and the Garda pension he would have been entitled to, all form part of the legal papers he has served, via his solicitors, on the Garda Commissioner, Department of Justice and Attorney General's office.

The action states the former garda was never charged with any disciplinary issue or criminal offence and that no negative findings were arrived at in relation to him within the Garda.

It further states that at the time of his dismissal he was not informed of any reason he was being "summarily dismissed", which occurred despite internal performance reviews stating his work was "excellent".

Despite beginning a search for information about his dismissal in 1987, he received nothing until after going public.

In reply to queries, Garda Headquarters said: "An Garda Síochána does not comment on matters that are before the

courts or in the process of being before the courts." The Department of Justice also declined to comment on an individual case.

Last year, Garda Commissioner Drew Harris made documents from 1982 available to him confirming his services were "dispensed of" due to "suspicions of your alleged involvement in homosexual activity".

Days before his two-year probation in the Garda was to expire, "Liam" was ordered out of a briefing one evening at the Dublin Garda station where he was based, told to take off his uniform and ordered to leave.

→ **Background: Conor Lally, page 6**

Weather

Patchy rain in the south with bright spells and showers later. Highs of 4-8 degrees in light northeasterly breezes.

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L'Arche controversy: Mary McAleese has written to Pope Francis threatening to leave the Catholic Church: page 6

World News

Israel: Prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu won Monday's general election, but does not yet know if he will have enough support to form a government: page 8

Business + Property

Exchequer returns: Spending was lower than forecast in the first two months of the year, but income tax receipts, at €3.97bn, were 3.3% below expectations.

Revenue: Radio presenter Neil Prendeville and David Hall's ambulance company are included in a new list of defaulters.

Sports Wednesday

Soccer: Ireland will play Wales, Finland and Bulgaria in the Nations League games that start in September with the team's new manager Stephen Kenny in place.

Rugby: Newbridge beat reigning champions St Michael's to set up an all-Kildare Senior Cup final against Clongowes.



“I thought about the priceless nature of the friendships that sustain us”
Róisín Ingle
Life, page 11



“The climate is a very big enemy. People's vulnerability is still very high”
Sally Hayden in Mozambique, page 9



True pioneer
Eilís Dillon raised the prestige of a neglected area of literary endeavour
Arts, page 10

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Council will not seek judicial review over St Anne's plan

More than 650 apartments to be built 'immediately' beside Dublin park

'No valid reason' to take court action over Bord Pleanála decision, says council

OLIVIA KELLY
Dublin Correspondent

Dublin City Council will not pursue a judicial review of An Bord Pleanála's decision to grant permission for more than 650 apartments beside St Anne's Park in Raheny, despite councillors having voted for the legal action.

The council's head of planning, Richard Shakespeare, said he could see "no valid reason" to pursue the board in the courts in relation to its decision last month to grant permission to Crekav, a subsidiary of developer Pat Crean's Marlet Property Group, for the large apartment development.

Councillors on Monday night voted unanimously for the council to apply to the High Court for a judicial review of "the validity of the decision" on a number of grounds, including "a lack of consideration of Dublin City Council's reasons for recommendation of refusal" that it was "contrary to development plan zoning objectives", and "on lack of

consideration of scientific evidence, including national and EU protected species and EU habitats directive".

The board approved the development of 657 apartments in blocks up to nine storeys, along with almost 500 parking spaces, on former playing fields east of St Paul's College beside the park despite opposition from Dublin City Council and locals.

The controversial apartment-only scheme replaced earlier plans for houses and apartments on the site, which had been the subject of a judicial review, not by the council but by local residents and environmentalists.

While the council had recommended the board refuse permission for the 657 apartments, Mr Shakespeare said he could see no basis for the council to seek a judicial review of the decision.

"Initiating legal proceedings is an executive function, and I can see no valid reason to do so. Yes, the council and the board had a difference of opin-

ion – we gave our opinion and made our recommendation and we also sent the board the councillors' opinions and recommendations, but that is not a reason to seek a judicial review."

Green Party councillor Donna Cooney, who proposed the motion to take the legal action, said she expected the council management to give "good consideration" to the prospect of taking a judicial review.

"The council has already taken a case against the board and won; this would be similar in that the council recommended refusal, but permission was given by An Bord Pleanála."

Proceedings

Last month the High Court quashed An Bord Pleanála's decision to approve developer Johnny Ronan's 13-storey tower beside Salesforce's Dublin docklands headquarters. Dublin City Council had taken judicial review proceedings in what was its first legal challenge to a grant of planning permission by the board.

Mr Crean said he hoped the challenges to the Raheny development were now at an end, and said he intended to "immediately" start work on the apartment development.

"This land has been zoned for housing for 15 years. I would never have bought the land if it wasn't zoned," he said.

He said opposition to the development had ranged from the land not being appropriately zoned, to the displacement of a sports club, to environmental concerns, to claims the development was being built inside the park.

"I think I have been fairly tested over numerous issues over several years, and I have answered every question that's been asked of me. It seems to be popular to say you oppose housing. When is it going to be popular to support housing?"



■ Bord Pleanála granted permission for the 650-apartments scheme. PHOTOGRAPH: CGI BY MURRAY CONSULTANTS



McAleese threatens to leave Catholic Church

PATSY MCGARRY
Religious Affairs Correspondent

Former president Mary McAleese has written to Pope Francis saying she will leave the Catholic Church "if it transpires that the Holy See failed to act to protect members of the L'Arche Community".

She said people should have been alerted to "the known predatory activities" of the community's founder Jean Vanier and his mentor, Dominican priest Fr Thomas Philippe.

"I have to say that this will be my final line of least resistance. I could not in conscience continue to support an institution capable of such gross negligence," Mrs McAleese said in the letter.

Vanier founded L'Arche International in 1964 to assist people with intellectual disabilities. It caters for 10,000 people in 39 countries and has four communities in Ireland at Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Kilkenny, where up to 60 people are cared for and about 100 others are provided with day services.

L'Arche International announced on February 22nd that an inquiry it commissioned last June into allegations of sex abuse by Vanier had "received credible and consistent testimonies from six... women without disabilities, covering the period from 1970 to 2005". Vanier died last May.

Fr Philippe, who died in 1993, was found by a Catholic Church investigation in 2015 to have sexually abused 14 women, many of them associated with the L'Arche Community, in incidents dating back to the 1970s. It is understood that no people with disabilities were abused by him.

In 1956, Fr Philippe was removed from ministry by the Vatican because of his abuse of women. Last month's L'Arche report also found that by 1956 "there was no



■ Dr Mary McAleese said she will leave the church if it transpires that the Holy See failed to act to protect members of the L'Arche Community

longer any doubt that Jean Vanier was informed of the reasons for the condemnation" of Fr Philippe.

It found too that, against the advice of the church, between 1952 and 1964 Fr Philippe and Vanier maintained a deep bond and that Vanier "shared sexual practices similar to those of Father Thomas Philippe with several women, none of whom seem to have declared themselves as victims".

In her letter to Pope Francis, Mrs McAleese said "it is essential that the Holy See now explains how it came to so publicly commend a man whose predatory proclivities it was aware of".

She said: "Vanier was consistently lauded by the Church at the highest level without the remotest suggestion that there was anything worrying in his character".

She asked "what steps if any did the Holy See take to interrupt the growth of the powerful cult of Vanier by warning the many good men and women who trusted him in good faith that he had an alarming past?"

"I am one of those who regarded Vanier as inspirational for decades," she said. "Hearing last week the awful story of his sexually and spiritually abusive conduct was devastating. Even worse was learning the Holy See had been aware since the 1950s of his malevolent proclivities and those of his colleague Pere Thomas Philippe."

Mrs McAleese said she was confident that the great work done by L'Arche would allow it to recover but that she was "not so sure about whether trust in the Holy See will recover so easily".

"Many times in recent years I have had reason to despair at the failures at papal, episcopal and Curial level regarding the protection of vulnerable children and the vindication of victims," she said.

Garda dismissed when spotted on gay scene dismayed by lack of action



Conor Lally Background

Former garda says support following his interview not followed up

A former Garda member who was dismissed from the force in 1982 after senior management learned he was gay has said the public support for him when he first spoke out last July had not been followed up by the response he expected from the Garda or Government.

While Garda Commissioner Drew Harris had made available to him documentation that proved his sexuality was at the centre of his dismissal, and to which he had never been granted access before, he had not met Mr Harris since then despite repeated requests for such a meeting.

Furthermore, though Minister for Justice Charlie Flanagan had said "the standards and indeed the laws that applied in 1982 were wrong and would be completely unacceptable today", there had also been no meeting with Mr Flanagan.

The former garda added there had also been no apology to him, something he said he would have expected.

And while he had been offered a meeting with a senior civil servant, he believed this was not sufficient given the nature of his case.

Frustrating

"It is been very frustrating," he said of the period since speaking out and having now decided to sue the Garda, Department of Justice and Attorney General.

"When I first told my story there was a lot of support; people who were public figures

went on the radio and spoke at length about my story and about how shocking it was.

"And Fianna Fáil took it up and they called for a public apology. But then none of the things I would have expected to happen have happened. It was frustrating and disheartening and the whole thing has been very difficult."

In reply to queries, a Garda spokesperson said: "An Garda Síochána does not comment on matters that are before the courts or in the process of being before the courts."

Scarred

Now in his 60s, the former Garda member has opted not to reveal his identity but was interviewed using the pseudonym "Liam" by The Irish Times last year.

He said he has never come out as gay because he felt so scarred by his treatment at the hands of An Garda Síochána almost four decades ago.

He joined the force in 1980 and all of his professional appraisals were positive as his

two-year probationary period progressed, with commendations for his work rate and professionalism.

But then, in January 1982, RTE set designer and gay man Charles Self was stabbed to death in a house in Monkstown, south Dublin.

The Garda became convinced the key to his murder, which has never been solved, lay within the gay community in Dublin.

Liam was spotted frequenting the Hirschfield Centre, a gay venue in Dublin's Temple Bar, by detectives working on the Self murder inquiry, and in other areas frequented by gay men.

While he was interviewed about his movements several times within the Garda, he was never formally charged with

any criminal or disciplinary offence and no findings against him were arrived at.

One evening in 1982, as he was at a briefing in his Dublin Garda station before going out on night shift, senior Garda officers came into the station and ordered him out of the room.

They demanded he take off his uniform and surrender it to them and that he leave. A short time later other Garda members called to his house to take his second uniform and other items issued to him as a garda.

That effectively completed his dismissal from the force, though he received no correspondence confirming his dismissal or the reasons for it.

Illegal

Back in 1982, homosexual acts were illegal, though it was not against the law to be gay. Liam said he felt unable to fight his dismissal because nobody around him knew he was gay and he did not feel he could come out.

The personnel file he obtained about a year ago from the Garda, after years of correspondence, stopped with the glowing performance appraisals, with no reference to his dismissal.

However, after he was interviewed at length by The Irish Times last July, Mr Harris furnished "Liam" with further documentation from 1982 which confirmed he had been dismissed because of his sexuality.

That document, signed by then Garda commissioner Patrick McLaughlin, details places where Liam was seen and where gay men in Dublin frequented at the time.

It added that, apart from being seen in these places, Liam was "an excellent worker, good timekeeper and maintains a high level of cleanliness".

McLaughlin then added: "I intend to dispense with his services at an early date."

Nine months after signing off on Liam's dismissal, McLaughlin resigned after the tapping of the telephones of two journalists, Geraldine Kennedy and Bruce Arnold.

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Weekend Review



The bomb squad

A day with the crime-fighting, anti-terrorist team.

Page 4



Michael Viney

It's going to be another stormy winter in the west.

Page 7

Saturday, October 12, 2019 Editor Conor Goodman Phone 01-6758000 email weekend@irishtimes.com

THE CRIME KINGPINS OF BALLYFERMOT

Derek O'Driscoll and David Reilly were exposed this week in the High Court for running a protection racket involving building companies and Dublin City Council. But they are responsible for far more serious crimes, and control large areas of Ballyfermot through violence and fear



Conor Lally
Security and Crime Editor

When the Criminal Assets Bureau (Cab) kicked in doors in Dublin's Ballyfermot, Ballyboughal and Finglas and in the Wexford seaside town of Courtown one morning in August 2017, they were targeting David Reilly.

The 36-year-old from Croftwood Grove, Ballyfermot, had been on the Garda radar for more than a decade and his gangland boss, Derek O'Driscoll (46), Meagans Lane, Crooksling, Saggart, Co Dublin, has a criminal record stretching back more than three decades. Together, with O'Driscoll as leader of a drugs distribution network and Reilly his loyal enforcer, they run crime on the disadvantaged streets of their native Ballyfermot.

Some of their modus operandi was unmasked in the High Court this week when the Cab confiscated cash and other assets with a combined value of almost €300,000. But, unusually for a Cab case, the money – and a mobile home and horse box – is only one part of this gruesome story.

The Irish Times has pieced together many of the other details of O'Driscoll's and Reilly's lives of crime. What emerges is a textbook study in how tough law is enforced on the streets of Dublin.

O'Driscoll and Reilly have used an insidious brand of intimidation and control, all underpinned by lengthy criminal records and reputations for ultra violence, to rule Ballyfermot.

They control the drugs trade in the area, dealing cannabis, cocaine and heroin into the community. Rather than hold drugs themselves, they force others to do it for them. Anyone who loses a consignment – to the Garda or other criminals – is severely beaten by the men they control and then too fearful to report the attacks.

Larger consignments of drugs and guns are also held for the men by others in their gang, the Cab told the High Court. This included a recent seizure made up of €134,000 in cash, €1,750,000 of cocaine, €110,000 of heroin and a PM-63 RAK sub-machine gun. Another gang member recently had €109,000 of the group's money seized from him.

They have also clashed, in incidents of very extreme violence, with their gangland rivals in disputes that have resulted in death.

O'Driscoll was once found holding two big cats – a female jaguar and an African serval – in a garage at his home in Ballyfermot in 1997. He was jailed for three months for animal cruelty after the animals were found in wire pens and with no evidence of food or water save for a half eaten pig's head in the jaguar's pen.

Back in August 2017, when the Cab raided the properties in Dublin and Wexford linked to O'Driscoll's underling Reilly, then 34-year-old Reilly was being investigated by Garda's Special Crime Task Force over his role in directing rural burglaries.

The Cab came in to try to find his money and other assets and take them from him as the proceeds of crime.

They discovered €60,000 on the day of their raids in Dublin and Wexford as well as jewellery, including a Michael Kors watch. An expensive horse box and horse passport were also found. It was a run-of-the-mill gangland haul for the bureau aside from one thing: financial documents.

These were taken away and analysed and what detectives and forensic accountants uncovered was that Ballyfermot drug dealer and enforcer Reilly was moving vast sums of money through two bank accounts. A stream of that cash was going to his gangland boss O'Driscoll.

What's more, the money was clearly coming from some of the biggest construction companies in the country; all working on community housing projects for Dublin City Council in the Cherry Orchard area of Ballyfermot.

What began as a raid aimed at taking pos-



session of a mobile home and whatever money Reilly had tucked away from burglaries or drug dealing had gone nuclear. This week, more than two years later, the High Court heard evidence that three companies had paid the two criminals just over €553,000.

MDY Construction paid €232,000. Adston Ltd paid €136,200. ABM Design and Build, which is still building housing in Cherry Orchard, paid €185,114.

The court was also told that two officials from Dublin City Council had recommended to construction companies working in Cherry Orchard that they pay fees to O'Driscoll and Reilly – for the fictitious service of "fence maintenance" – to ensure attacks and anti-social behaviour targeting their sites would stop.

In one case, a staff member with one contractor said he was advised by one of the council officials to pay €1,200 in cash per week to Reilly and O'Driscoll and then claim it back from the council, which is exactly what happened. The council official took eight payments from the company in an envelope and passed them on to Reilly, the court was told.

O'Driscoll and Reilly directed the campaign of attacks on the sites and then demanded money for "fence maintenance". If the cash was paid the attacks stopped. If not, the violence continued.

In one case, when one company declined to pay, a digger was petrol-bombed while a man was working on it. When he jumped off and tried to run to safety he was hit with a brick and broke his ribs. Workers on the site were so fearful they downed tools. The company felt it had no option but to pay O'Driscoll and Reilly the fees demanded or else keep the site closed and face huge financial losses. When they paid the money, the attacks never occurred again.

Other attacks saw stolen cars rammed into the construction sites' perimeter fencing and sheds petrol-bombed. When the Cab moved in and froze the accounts of O'Driscoll and Reilly after realising the cash piling up in the bank was protection money, the two men simply opened new accounts and the flow of cash from the companies started again.

Even when Reilly was in prison for a time during the period, the payments to him, and then on to O'Driscoll, continued uninterrupted.

O'Driscoll and Reilly tried to claim in the High Court this week that the money they received was for a genuine fence maintenance service and that was why the cash was so openly lodged in the bank. Ms Justice Carmel Stewart preferred the Cab's evidence and granted the bureau an order that effectively saw cash, a mobile home and horsebox confiscated from the men.

The council has denied it paid protection money to the two men. Minister for Justice

Charlie Flanagan, Minister for Housing Eoghan Murphy and Garda Commissioner Drew Harris were among those expressing concern this week. The council, which has known for three years about concerns at the sites, has promised an investigation, as has Mr Murphy.

Benedict Ó Floinn SC, on behalf of the Cab, told the High Court this week that "the court could ask itself what is going on in this city when not only construction companies but Dublin City Council" was paying men like O'Driscoll and Reilly so that "desperately-needed housing could be built".

He added of the attacks on the sites that there was "sudden calming of a destructive situation as soon as the defendants became involved". "This was not happenstance. It's a reflection of the standing the defendants have in this disadvantaged area of Dublin."

So who are Derek O'Driscoll and David Reilly?

The leader Derek O'Driscoll

Born on June 12th, 1973, Derek "Dee Dee" O'Driscoll grew up in Croftwood Park, a local authority housing estate in Ballyfermot. According to the Cab he has 20 previous convictions and is married to Lorraine Stephens, a criminal aid solicitor, and against whom no allegations of wrongdoing are made.

He was described during Cab evidence presented to the High Court as the leader of



■ Main image: Montage of David Reilly and Derek O'Driscoll. Above, clockwise from top left: A younger Derek O'Driscoll; David Reilly and the horse named Ants in His Pants; the MDY site in March 2018; and joyriding at the Adston site at the junction of Cherry Orchard Avenue and Drive. PHOTOGRAPHS: PADRAIG O'REILLY AND BALLYFERMOT ECHO

a drugs gang involved in the "large-scale distribution" of heroin, cocaine and cannabis. His criminal organisation was "hierarchical in structure" and was split into two sections, each working a different area of Ballyfermot.

One of the group's crime territories is the lower end of Ballyfermot, comprising the housing estates around Kylemore Road, Ballyfermot Road and Sarsfield Road. The other is the Cherry Orchard area comprising the estates behind Cherry Orchard Hospital and around Le Fanu Park.

His first custodial sentence, 12 months for larceny, was imposed at the Children's Court in 1988. In 1996 he was close by as another man dug up a bag of heroin valued at €200,000 concealed on a railway line in west Dublin. However, because O'Driscoll was not in possession of the drugs he was not charged.

He first came to public prominence back in 1997 when he was one of seven men, including John Gilligan gang members Brian Meehan and Paul Ward, convicted for paying a total of £16,100 in bribes to a detective garda. O'Driscoll secretly recorded one of the cash handovers so the footage could be used to pressure the garda at a later date.

In tandem with running his main drugs business, there have been bursts of extreme violence from O'Driscoll that have ensured he is feared by the public in Ballyfermot and the criminal fraternity across Dublin who know him.

In 2004, for example, he and a criminal associate dragged a woman from her car



and then stole it by towing it away. Both the woman and her husband were too fearful to make a complaint to gardai. Also in 2004, when O'Driscoll was refused entry to Club Diva off the Naas Road the door of the club was shot at from a car minutes later.

In 2005 O'Driscoll and an associate were caught as they attempted to abduct a man from Thomas Street, Dublin 8, after they had beaten him. They bundled him into an SUV and drove off only to be pursued by Garda cars and stopped; the badly beaten and disorientated victim was rescued.

Gardaí searched the SUV and found cable ties, a hockey stick, a baseball bat, a rod and sticks. However, the victim would not give incriminating evidence.

In 2006 gardai received intelligence that O'Driscoll was keeping drugs in an area beside the Seventh Lock at Killeen Road in Ballyfermot. Heroin valued at €50,000 was found but there was insufficient evidence to link O'Driscoll to the haul, and he was not charged.

In September 2009, he was involved in what became known as "the Ballyfermot bloodbath" outside Hennigans Public House at Park West Plaza, during which he bit a rival's face. The fight involved 30 men from rival drugs gangs. One man was fatally injured though O'Driscoll did not wound the deceased: Briton Jason Lee Martin.

In January 2010, O'Driscoll and Reilly were involved in an altercation with other men while attending a court, including brothers Paul and Kenneth Corbally. The Corballys were members of the group that had fought with O'Driscoll and his associates outside Hennigans public house at Park West Plaza four months earlier.

Some six months after the row in the court house, the Cab said in its evidence this week, Paul and Kenneth Corbally were shot dead. The murders are unsolved.

In April 2010, O'Driscoll and Reilly were involved in another gang fight, this time in Barnville Park, Ballyfermot, during which Reilly was stabbed but survived. Neither would co-operate with gardai.

O'Driscoll has now moved out of Ballyfermot and though he has children from a previous relationship who are now in their 20s, he has recently become a father again with his wife; the family home is now at Crooksling, Saggart, Co Dublin.

The enforcer David Reilly

Born in March 20th, 1983, Reilly grew up on Croftwood Grove, Ballyfermot, and currently resides on the same street. Engaged in anti-social behaviour in his late teens, he developed as a criminal over a period of about a decade into a trusted member of O'Driscoll's crime group. He is O'Driscoll's enforcer and runs crime in the Cherry Or-

chard area on his behalf.

It was his role as O'Driscoll's gangland manager in that area that resulted in his moving in to extort the construction companies building social housing for the council there.

The High Court was told this week that O'Driscoll, through Reilly, controls groups of impressionable young men in Ballyfermot who do his bidding, attacking people violently and at short notice.

Gardaí believe Reilly effectively directed an assault on gardai in Ballyfermot in 2015. Reilly was known in his early 20s as a low-level criminal who was involved in recreational, rather than for-profit, anti-social behaviour. But he was taken under O'Driscoll's wing and moved up the food chain.

In 2007 he threatened members of the Traveller community with a shotgun in a dispute at a halting site. Over a period of a decade gardai gleaned information about attacks meted out by Reilly in Ballyfermot over drugs going missing and drug debts. However, the victims never made complaints, a common scenario among those who fall foul of the duo.

Reilly was also involved, on the same side as O'Driscoll, in the gang fight between 30 criminals outside Hennigans Public House at Park West Plaza in September 2009. When gardai moved in to break up the dispute, Reilly encouraged those present to resist the officers.

However, the High Court was also told that, while he was very vocal and aggressive when being arrested or challenged by gardai in front of the men he runs, he was known to be more co-operative when he did not have an audience.

In 2012 convicted drug dealer John Wilson (35) was shot dead at a house on Cloverhill Road, Ballyfermot. One man was convicted of the murder. The Cab told the High Court the investigating gardai also believed they had sufficient evidence to charge Reilly with his role in the killing. However, the Director of Public Prosecutions would not agree to charge him.

He has been a suspect in a number of organised burglaries in the counties surrounding Dublin for which he has selected the target properties. However, other men have been sent to carry out the crimes, with Reilly often close by in a car.

In some of the robberies, vehicles were stolen from outside victims' homes by gang members towing away the cars, for later sale, using a tow truck.

Reilly has 59 previous convictions and is married to Tara Kershaw, against whom no allegations of wrongdoing are made. He has a number of children from a previous relationship with Celine Hunt, the daughter of Sean Hunt who is described by the Cab as a significant player in crime in the illegal tobacco and fireworks trade.

While his gang leader O'Driscoll has now moved out of Ballyfermot and has outsourced to other men much of the risk involved in his drug-dealing operation, Reilly does not appear to have been quite as astute. Not only was he the public face of the extortion in Cherry Orchard, meeting with contractors and being identified to them by name, but details of his lavish lifestyle were not concealed very well.

The Cab was able to trace evidence of the purchase of 14 vehicles since 2013 registered under his or his wife's name. Also found was evidence of holidays booked to Ibiza, Amsterdam, Orlando, Las Vegas and Malaga. Some of the locations, including Ibiza and Amsterdam, were visited more than once during the four-year period to May 2017, for which records were available. Some of the bookings were for 10 people.

In September 2015 a sulky racing horse named Ants in his Pants, was bought from Australia and transported to Ireland for an importation fee of almost €20,000. The horse was bought in auction for a record price, and investigations revealed Reilly as co-owner of the animal.

The High Court ruling this week effectively resulted in the confiscation by the Cab of €145,000 in Reilly's bank accounts and €114,000 in O'Driscoll's accounts. These are the sums that remained of the €277,000 Reilly received and €275,000 O'Driscoll received from the construction companies they extorted in Cherry Orchard from 2016 to 2018.

Neither man paid any tax on the monies, and the next issue on the horizon for them is a very significant tax bill. On the basis of the evidence thus far, a tax bill is unlikely to faze them.

Low-level criminals switch to drug dealing as burglaries get harder

Sophisticated home security systems and Garda Operation Thor lower burglary rates

Increased prosperity leading to higher drug consumption and a rise in assaults

CONOR LALLY
Security and Crime Editor

Many low-level criminals are switching from burglary to street drug dealing as burglaries become harder and the drugs trade has strongly rebounded, gardaí believe.

In the 12 months to the end of June, drug crime surged by 17 per cent while burglary rates remained at record lows.

Garda sources view Operation Thor – established four years ago to tackle burglary gangs – as the single biggest influence in the falling burglary rates.

With the impact of Operation Thor and improved home security combining to make burglaries harder and more high risk, gardaí believe many low-level criminals are switching from burglaries to street

drug dealing.

“There is money again in drugs, even for the people on the lowest level,” said one source. “The cocaine trade in particular is booming again and when there’s more money [in one crime type] criminals will drift towards it.”

Other sources agreed, adding that increased prosperity was also impacting other crime types, with higher alcohol and drug consumption leading to increased assaults and public order crimes.

Lucrative

They also suggest some drugs gangs, which saw their incomes plummet during the recession and so moved into burglaries on commercial premises, have

now reverted to the drugs trade as it has become more lucrative again.

Garda Commissioner Drew Harris told the Policing Authority in a report submitted last

28,451

The peak number of burglaries which was reached in 2012

week that residential burglaries had increased by 1 per cent in the 12 months to the end of October, while non-residential burglaries were down by 9 per cent. That small increase is not a source of huge concern to the Garda as it is based off record

low burglary rates in recent years.

Last year, for example, saw the lowest rate of burglaries recorded since the Central Statistics Office began publishing national crime data in 2003.

In the boom years, the burglary rate was relatively static; between 23,000 and 24,800 offences recorded per year from 2003 to 2008.

There was then a noticeable shift in 2009 with burglaries increasing by 9 per cent to what was then a record high of 27,513.

The trend remained high for a number of years, peaking at 28,451 burglaries in 2012, with the first noticeable decline occurring in 2016.

Burglary rates decreased by

a significant 29 per cent in that year, to 18,555 crimes. Since then the number of burglaries has dropped to the record low of 16,968 last year.

The decline from 2016 coincides with the establishment of Operation Thor in November 2015, which is continuing. It saw local Garda officers nationwide identify the most prolific known burglars in their areas with local resources and Garda national units targeting them.

Garda sources view Operation Thor as the single biggest influence in the falling burglary rates. However, they also believe rapidly improving home security, as technology has become more sophisticated and affordable, has also made burglaries harder to execute.

‘Say if you were in for shoplifting, another fella was in for house burglaries and another fella was in for robbing cars, you were learning off each other’



Frankie's story
‘I’ve gotten thousands, hidden in socks’

“A lot of the houses I would hit weren’t in Dublin, they’d be rural. The next neighbour would be three fields away. But if they’re farmers and they catch you, some of them would shoot you, you know?”

So begins Frankie’s account of life as a burglar in Ireland.

“I’d only really hit houses for certain things that I’d be interested in, jewellery and money. I’ve gone into houses and gotten thousands, hidden in socks even.”

While he would monitor families coming and going from houses he was considering breaking into, he said instinct played a huge part when making a final decision.

However, that gut instinct did not always work as a



There was then a noticeable shift in 2009 with burglaries increasing by 9 per cent to what was then a record high of 27,513

homeowner confronted him once as he crept around a house one night, hitting him with a pole off a Hoover. Frankie “warned him to stay back” by brandishing a hammer before running out.

When he was in the worst of his drug addiction he broke into houses owned by people he knew; at times gaining access with a key he knew was concealed in the back garden, netting more than €10,000 in cash on one occasion.

“On one of those jobs I brought a runner [sports shoe] with me and left a print from that on the window and broke

the glass to make it look like a real break-in.

“You say to yourself ‘I’m doing this for money for drugs’ but the burglaries themselves become an addiction. And you also get addicted to the money.”

“I used to love creeping in the rooms and being so close to the person, especially if they were asleep. They’d be in the bed and I’ve been crawling around on the floor pulling their trousers over to me [looking for money]. I loved that.”

Dublin homes in general were better secured and were now much harder to burgle.

“For a start there’s no way I’d break into any houses in Sheriff [Sheriff Street] or Summerhill [both in north inner-city Dublin] because you don’t rob your own people. And you won’t rob houses in, say, Dalkey [on Dublin’s southside] or any of them places. The security is too good now, it’s all digital; cameras on the doorbell even. But if lads know how to cut wires and that, you can get around it.”

He added he had set off alarms deliberately and then hidden away waiting for gardaí to arrive to check the property and leave, often repeating it several times. The responding gardaí then decided the alarm sounding was “due to a fault” before leaving for the final time and not returning, thus creating the break-in opportunity even on a heavily-alarmed house.

“It’s sad to say it, but if I’m in your house and you wake up and hit me with a hammer or whatever, you’ll get done [prosecuted] more than me.”

“My first sentence was when I was 13. I got caught carrying a f***king telly out of a house. I got sent to St Laurence’s [industrial school] in Finglas. I learned more there than anywhere.

“Say if you were in for shoplifting, another fella was in for house burglaries and another fella was in for robbing cars, you were learning off each other. And then you’d find what you were good at.”

He believed it was no coincidence burglary rates were falling while drug dealing was now strongly increasing.

The Garda’s anti-burglary drive, Operation Thor, in focusing on repeat offenders and putting more resources into solving burglaries, had since 2015 made the crime higher risk for burglars. Furthermore, Frankie said, the improvement in home security, especially in Dublin, had made burglaries much more difficult.

Meanwhile, drug dealing was becoming easier and more lucrative as the economy recovered and increasing disposable incomes were driving a much higher demand. Frankie believed those changes were resulting in more burglars moving into low-level street dealing, further accelerating the drop in burglaries and the resurgence in the drugs trade.

“It’s like everything in life, people will take the easier route. If it’s getting harder to rob houses they’ll move to selling drugs. If you’re selling drugs on the corner, on the streets, that’s easier than breaking into houses.”

CONOR LALLY



Jock's story
‘I do have morals. I wouldn’t rob from my own’

Jock, a Dubliner in his late 30s, says his most lucrative burglaries were organised “robbing-to-order” crimes. These involved people in the criminal fraternity monitoring auctions to identify expensive antiques. Their address would then be established and that information, along with a request to steal a specific piece, would be relayed to Jock.

“Then it would be down to me to scope the house out, see what time it was empty. I’d go back [at] the same times every day for a while to check it, especially if they have kids. Oh, I’d have my homework done. But I’d only need a few minutes to actually do the job.”

Jock said if the house was in a rural area, burglaries were less stressful “because you have at least five minutes” before gardaí could respond to an alert.

“You know what, I do have morals. I wouldn’t rob from my own. It’s against my religion and my brothers would kill me anyway. And I’d always try to do as little damage as possible breaking into a house.”

“I know someone who specifically goes on his nightly prowls and checks people’s back doors. There are people who forget to lock their back door when they are rushing around. And the gaff is there for easy pickings.”

“I don’t do it any more since I got clean of heroin and cocaine and that. Now I do still take a few tablets, and I’m like anyone else, I enjoy me few doobies [marijuana cigarettes].”

Aside from being commissioned to steal antiques, cars were always in demand. He would break into a house with the specific goal of securing the car keys and driving away in the vehicle parked outside.

The vehicle would be provided to another, more senior criminal, and usually “cut and shut” – stripped of its parts to wipe out any trace of the stolen vehicle they came from.

“You’d do a cut and shut on a car in minutes, I saw it being done on a halting site once. I drove the car in, I got my €3,000 off the boys and in minutes they had every bit of the car cut off, doors, windows, interior, everything, out. They put it on to another car, something that was crashed and is not supposed to be on the road. The chassis number is often on the car rather than the engine but nail varnish remover can take it off windows or bodywork.”

He said he once stole Nike sports clothing valued at about €15,000 from a warehouse and sold it in one batch for €5,000. “I wouldn’t even keep a tracksuit for myself from a robbery like that. I’d sell every last item and then go in and buy something and get a receipt.”

On another occasion he broke into a cash-and-carry wholesaler and filled duvet covers with thousands of boxes of cigarettes and “just walked out the door with these two duvet covers as sacks full of smokes”.

When driving away from one robbery in rural Ireland, Jock said that he and his accomplice became convinced they were being pursued at a distance by the gardaí. Their priority was to “cook up” and inject the heroin in their possession before the gardaí caught and arrested them.

“You didn’t want to be locked up for 12 hours or whatever and not have any gear in you. So the other fella cooked up in the gear in the back and we took it in the car,” he explained.

However, on that occasion he soon realised the pursuing vehicle was a lorry being driven at speed rather than a patrol car.

“I know it sounds mad, an electric fence even caught me on the balls as we were trying to get away from that house. But when we eventually pulled in by the side of the road I have to say I broke my b*****ks laughing. I’m not going to lie to you.”

CONOR LALLY



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THE IRISH TIMES

Foster backs councillor in housing row

Woman chooses not to move into house daubed with anti-Catholic graffiti

FREYA McCLEMENTS
Northern Correspondent

DUP leader Arlene Foster has given her backing to a North Belfast councillor at the centre of a controversy over the allocation of housing.

Representatives from the SDLP and Sinn Féin had said the DUP’s Dale Pankhurst had questions to answer over a “concern” he raised with a housing association over the safety of a woman who had been allocated a house in a new development in the predominantly unionist Ballysillan area.

She later chose not to move into the house after the windows were smashed and anti-Catholic graffiti scrawled on the wall.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) is investigating three incidents of criminal damage to three residential properties in the Tyndale Gardens area of north Belfast between November 25th and 29th. These are being treated as sectarian hate crimes.

In a statement, Mr Pankhurst said that as a public representative he “raised a concern to Choice Housing which came to my attention. This centred on the safety of the woman in question.”

‘Danger to life’

“I wished to raise this matter in confidence with the organisation.”

“I have a duty of care to all residents when I receive any form of information that may indicate danger to life or property,” he said.

In a separate statement, a spokesperson for the DUP said the party and Mr Pankhurst “condemn all forms of intimidation and attacks and therefore condemn

[sic] those responsible for this incident”.

The party said it had spoken to the police in connection with the matter, and encouraged anyone with information to contact the PSNI.

Mrs Foster told The Irish Times she had not spoken to Mr Pankhurst personally, but said there was no suggestion he had any involvement in, or knowledge of, any intimidation or attacks. “He denies those allegations... and he will be following that up through the appropriate channels,” she said.

‘Peaceable life’

Asked if she felt the party should carry out an investigation, she replied that “He denies the allegation. He does not accept that that is the case.” She added that it was “important that we condemn any intimidation that goes on in any housing development”.

“People have the right to homes, they have the right to live a peaceable life, and I think it’s something that we need to sort out,” she said.

“Again it points to the need to have stability in Northern Ireland and to send a very strong message about reconciliation as well.”

Sinn Féin MLA Carol Ní Chuilín said there should be a full investigation into the “organised campaign of intimidation by criminal and paramilitary elements to prevent Catholics from accessing housing in North Belfast”.

In a statement, a spokeswoman from Choice Housing said the association “allocates all properties in accordance with the Housing Selection Scheme”, and the body could not comment on individual cases due to tenant confidentiality.

Judge refuses to lift driving ban for woman involved in fatal crash

BARRY ROCHE
Southern Correspondent

A judge has refused to lift a four-year driving disqualification imposed on a 53-year-old woman who killed a motorcyclist in a traffic collision after hearing the victim’s family did not want it lifted.

Jennifer Connelly had been given a one-year suspended sentence by Judge Seán Ó Donnabhain in April 2016 for careless driving causing the death of TJ Sweetnam at Ballinrush, Kilmurphy, Co Cork, on August 22nd, 2015.

At sentencing in 2016, Judge Ó Donnabhain paid tribute to the family of the late Mr Sweetnam for their generosity and understanding when they told him they did not want to see Ms Connelly jailed for causing the death of their son and brother.

“Even in their own grief, in an extremely Christian and humane way, they have reached out and understood her position. Not everyone could do that,” he added as he imposed the four-year driving disqualification at Cork Circuit Criminal Court.

However, at an appeal hearing at Fermoy Circuit Court last week, State Solicitor for North Cork, Jerry Healy told Judge Ó Donnabhain the

Sweetnam family had felt very hurt over Ms Connelly’s decision to seek to have the driving disqualification lifted.

The Sweetnams believed Ms Connelly should serve the disqualification in full, not from any sense of bitterness, but simply because they felt she should have reciprocated the generosity they had shown to her at sentencing, he said.

Sgt John McNamara said gardaí were also opposed to the lifting of the ban on the basis Ms Connelly had been living in the UK and it had no impact on her from May 2016 until March 2018 when she returned to Ireland.

Ms Connelly took the stand to ask for the disqualification to be lifted, telling her barrister, Patrick Ó Riordan she needed her licence back to keep her new job.

“I totally understand the position of the family – I want to say to them that I don’t come here on a whim – I think about it every day and I am truly sorry but I need to move on,” said Ms Connelly who broke down in the witness box.

Refusing the application the judge said: “You know you are upsetting the deceased family very much and for the sake of five months, you are pushing this on,” he said.

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