

# THE Herald

CITY FINAL

MONDAY  
9 DECEMBER 2019

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## 'BODEN JOY

DUBS CROWNED KINGS OF LEINSTER SEE SPORT

Striker

ALL THE LATEST FIXTURES P38-42



## HOW GREEN IS DUBLIN?



## COMIC'S WARNING AFTER BURGLARY

# MARIO: MY HOME RAID TERROR



Melanie Finn

EXCLUSIVE

MARIO Rosenstock was left shaken after a four-man gang ransacked his home while he and his family watched TV.

The Today FM broadcaster and Gift Grub star has warned homeowners to be vigilant as burglaries soar

around Christmas. He was speaking for the first time about the raid at his south Dublin home earlier this year, and believes the thieves were watching the place before using a ladder to break in upstairs.

"They took everything. The gardai reckon they were in and out in about eight minutes," he told the Herald.

FULL STORY: PAGE 6

MINISTER'S HOMELESS 'LOW BLOW' P4

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THE HERALD Vol. 128 No. 294



# MARIO'S WARNING AFTER FOUR RAIDERS RANSACKED HOME AS HE WATCHED TV

## EXCLUSIVE

Melanie Finn

MARIO Rosenstock has told of his shock after raiders ransacked his home while he and his family were watching TV downstairs.

Speaking for the first time about the incident, the Today FM broadcaster and Gift Grub impersonator said he was left shaken after his south Dublin home was burgled earlier this year by a four-strong gang of thieves.

Burglaries often soar around Christmas and Mario has now issued a warning for homeowners to be extra vigilant.

"They took everything. The gardai reckon they were probably in and out in about six to eight minutes," he said.

"It does feel like a personal violation. Your family home is the one place you go to get away from everything and when that's violated, you really feel really bad."

Rosenstock and his family were left devastated after the burglary, with one family member spotting one of the raiders as they fled the scene.

He believes the thieves spent some time observing the house before the incident, which happened at approximately 8.15pm.

Investigators believe the gang had a van at the laneway at the back of the property and used a ladder to access the upstairs of the house while a third accomplice kept watch.

It's understood the thieves only ransacked the top of the house and did not go downstairs at any point.

### HEIRLOOM

Mario and his family were watching TV downstairs the entire time while the thieves ransacked their bedrooms, stealing a number of items of jewellery, including some priceless sentimental heirlooms.

He said their home insurance covered the cost of the burglary but his family were badly impacted by the robbery.

They were left devastated in the wake of the break-in, especially given that they were all at home at the time.

The famous funnyman, whose Gift Grub 2020 tour starts in Cork on February 25, has now issued a warning to homeowners to be careful,

particularly over Christmas when burglaries often increase.

He said people should have their alarms on, even when they're at home, in a bid to deter similar incidents.

"This is the new thing apparently, where break-ins are happening when people are in the house because you tend not to have the alarm on and your guard is down.

"So people should have their alarms on the whole time, even when they're there."

Gardai in Cabinteely Garda Station launched an investigation but no arrests have been made so far.

When contacted about the incident, a garda spokesperson said they do not comment on individual cases.

About half of all burglaries

**'When your family home is violated like this you really feel really bad'**

happen while people are in their homes and Dublin is the county with the most break-ins over the past decade.

The capital accounted for 41pc of all burglaries in the country over the past decade, according to home-monitoring company PhoneWatch.

The firm says that the most common time for a burglary is between 5-11pm and people should remember to lock all their doors while they are at home.

### FAKE

Fresh warnings have been issued by gardai in the run-up to the Christmas and New Year periods.

Fake presents should be put under the tree in the run-up to Christmas Eve, especially in place of electronic devices that can be sold quickly.

Garda research has shown that cash and jewellery are the most common objects stolen from homes, followed by computers, phones, TVs and game consoles.

Homeowners should also make sure that they secure all windows and doors if going out and also leave their lights on.



Mario Rosenstock has warned homeowners to be more vigilant

## Motorists told to take care after storm lashes country

Ian Begley

DUBLIN motorists are being urged to take care on roads after "extremely dangerous" gusts in excess of 130kph swept across the country last night.

The ferocious winds of Storm Atiyah whipped across the country yesterday evening, bringing disruption and hazardous conditions to thousands of people, particularly those affected by the status red warning in Co Kerry.

This warning was lifted by Met Eireann at 7pm last night, and the orange and yellow warnings for the rest of the country were set to be removed at 6am today.

While the worst of the storm is now over, AA Roadwatch is warning motorists that roads throughout the country could still be treacherous.

"The day after a storm like

this, you can expect a lot of fallen debris, particularly around secondary and local roads," said Kieran Hanley of AA Roadwatch.

"Our advice would be to be extremely cautious and drive with extra care [today] no matter what part of the country you're in."

### HAILSTORM

Meanwhile, at least six vehicles were involved in two separate incidents on the M1 motorway during a sudden hailstorm yesterday morning.

Gardai confirmed that "nobody was seriously injured".

Due to severe weather warnings, a number of flights at Kerry, Cork and Shannon airports were cancelled.

Thousands of homes were also left without power. In Galway, an outage affected over 1,800 customers in Athenry,

and some 150 customers in the Bantry area of west Cork were left without electricity.

Other ESB outages have been reported in Gurranebane and Dingle in Kerry.

Today will be mainly dry with sunshine developing, apart from in the north-west which will get patchy rain.



Waves lash the coast in Cork as Storm Atiyah hits

# THE Herald

**IRELAND V SCOTLAND**  
Saturday, 4.45pm

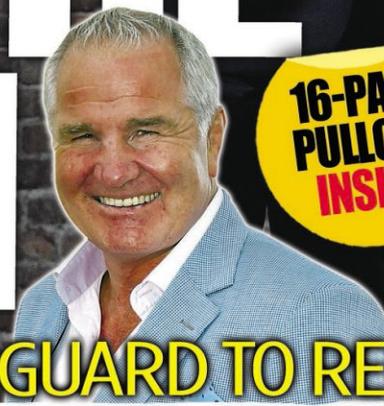
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# KEEP THE FAITH



**16-PAGE PULLOUT INSIDE**



**POPE: FARRELL NEEDS OLD GUARD TO REPAY TRUST**

**PLUS: READ RICHARD DUNNE & CIARAN WHELAN INSIDE**

## €30M FAI BAILOUT DEAL

● **TAXPAYER HIT FOR €5.8M EACH YEAR FOR NEXT 4 YEARS**

● **QUINN HAILS 'GREAT DAY FOR IRISH FOOTBALL'**

**Cormac McQuinn and Aidan Fitzmaurice**

**THE future of Irish soccer is safe after a €30m rescue deal.**

Under the agreement, Sport Ireland funding will be restored and doubled to €5.8m each year until 2023.

There will also be an annual interest-free loan of €2.5m for three years to safeguard the investment in the Aviva Stadium.

Interim deputy CEO Niall Quinn hailed it as a "great day" for Irish football, which can now "thrive and prosper". **SEE PAGES 4-5**



Interim FAI CEO Gary Owens, Sports Minister Shane Ross and interim deputy CEO Niall Quinn

# BACK OF THE DEBT



**EXCLUSIVE**

**TRACY'S SHOCK AT RTE AXE**

SEE PAGE 3



**KEANE SUSPECT SEEN AT CRIME SCENE P8**

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# 'DEVASTATING TO BE SHOWN THE DOOR BY RTE' – TRACY



Tracy Piggott interviews multi-millionaire race horse owner JP McManus for RTE racing. Inset, with her father, the legendary jockey Lester



## EXCLUSIVE

Melanie Finn

RTE racing presenter Tracy Piggott has said she is "devastated" at the station's decision not to renew her annual contract.

She received confirmation this week that the broadcaster will not be using her for its racing coverage this year after 30 years fronting coverage from some of the country's biggest race meetings.

"From what I can gather, I'm no longer part of the RTE team," she told the *Herald*.

"I was told they were not renewing my contract, they were looking to bring in fresh faces, which is fine, but I wasn't expecting it.

"If I had a bit more warning, I could have been able to make other plans. I'm a single parent with a daughter due to start secondary school this September."

Piggott (54) has fronted RTE's racing coverage for the past three decades along with Robert Hall, who will present his final programme this Sunday from Leopardstown, with Hugh Cahill tipped to take over.

Piggott, whose father Lester was one of the world's top flat jockeys, said the writing was on the wall for her towards the end of last year, but she received confirmation from RTE only yesterday.

"It was something I was led to believe could be on the cards, but I was hoping we could come up with a solution," she said.

"I have so enjoyed the time I've had with RTE and obviously it was something I wanted to continue.

"But I'm no longer

with them, which is devastating. I feel very emotional about it.

"It's been such a huge part of my life, and at the same time I just have to accept the decision that's been made.

"I have to keep things in perspective, but I suppose it's just the abruptness of it. It has come out of the blue.

"While I was with RTE I wasn't able to take other work, so I just would have liked a bit more lead-in time to make plans and set up another source of income."

Looking back over her lengthy career with the RTE racing team, she cited numerous highlights such as the Jessica Harrington-trained Our Duke winning the 2017 Irish Grand National at Fairyhouse.

Interviewing her famous father, who was named champion jockey 11 times over his illustrious time in the saddle, was another highlight for her.

She also paid tribute to the Irish racing fraternity for their support over the years, as well as to racing fans.

"The trainers and the owners and the general public have been so fantastic over the years," Piggott said.

"I'll miss all the people – the support was amazing, so there's just a sense of sadness there, but I don't feel any bitterness, I'm just not made that way. Life's too short."

The Kildare-based commentator said she has plenty to keep her busy, including working in Jessica Harrington's yard every day.

She is also involved in the Sensational Kids social enterprise project in Kildare town, which supports children with additional needs. It looked recently at starting equine therapy for its young clients.

RTE would not comment when asked about the decision to let Piggott go.

## Sinead hoping to B\*Witch by dancing to old band's hit



Sinead and her professional partner Ryan McShane

Melanie Finn

IT will be a dance down memory lane for Sinead O'Carroll as she performs to her band's biggest hit on *Dancing With The Stars*.

The former B\*Witched singer, who scored the highest marks from judges in her first week, will be doing the cha-cha-cha to the track *C'est La Vie* in a bid to stay in the Sunday night show.

She revealed she has

devised a unique way of controlling her nerves when it comes to dancing live in front of hundreds of thousands of viewers.

"I use EFT, which is an Emotional Freedom Technique, where you physically tap yourself and put pressure on various points so I do this just before we go live," she said.

"Then I tell myself, 'You're calm and you're confident'.

"Before I go on stage, my heart is beating so fast it feels like it's going to jump out of my chest. But this really works for me.

ANXIETY

"You can see people looking over going, 'What's she doing in the corner, is she talking to herself?' But this really works for me, and sure, it's only dancing at the end of the day.

"Once the music starts,

I go into a space where I'm like, 'OK, I just have to do it now', and each week is different."

Sinead is also encouraging her fellow contestants to find ways to combat their pre-stage anxiety as they gear up to perform for the nation every week.

"Myself and Grainne and Aidan did the haka last week just before we went on stage," she said.

"It's all about getting that

nervous energy out of your body."

Despite being one of the favourites to take home the glitterball trophy, she's trying to keep level-headed.

"You just put the pressure on yourself," she said.

"I'm trying not to think about it. I'm on this journey and I absolutely want to stay in as long as I can.

"I wanted to do this for so long, so obviously I want the full experience."

# THE Herald

## SAM OTHER TIME LADS

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# PURE GOLD



**TOP 10**  
GREATEST  
DUBLIN  
SPORTING  
MOMENTS  
SEE SPORT



**RONNIE'S  
GOLDEN  
MILE**



**DUBS' BID  
FOR SIX IN  
A ROW OFF  
UNTIL OCTOBER  
SEE SPORT**

**NO REASON PUBS CAN'T REOPEN SAFELY PAGES 14-15**

**COVID-19 CRISIS 37 MORE DEATHS & 265 NEW CASES**

**'IT'S HORRIBLE ...  
VIRUS ROBBED  
ME OF CHANCE  
TO GIVE MY DAD  
A GOODBYE HUG'**

**Melanie Finn**

**CHRISTY Dignam has lost his elderly father to Covid-19.**

Christy Snr (89) died yesterday after contracting the virus 10 days ago. The heartbroken Aslan star (59) paid tribute to an "amazing man", but due to his own health issues was unable to give his dad one last hug.

"I just wanted to visit him and hug him and tell him how much I love him, and I couldn't do that. It's horrible," he said. **SEE P2-3**



Christy with his father Christy Snr and daughter Kiera

# CHRISTY'S HEARTBREAK



**URGENT APPEAL**



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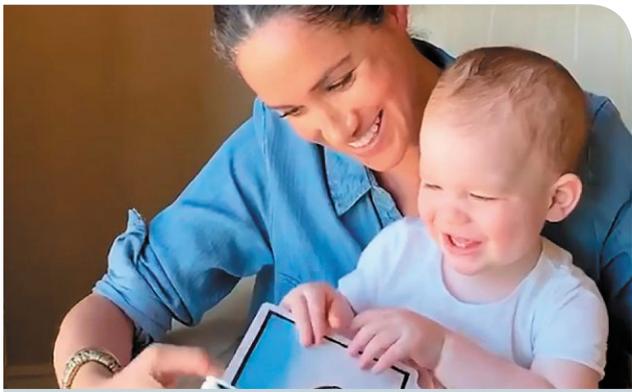
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# Inside today

## NEWS



## Mum's the word as Archie enjoys his first birthday

PRINCE Harry and Meghan Markle have marked their son's first birthday by posting a video of Meghan reading to a beaming Archie. With her son on her lap,

Meghan holds the classic children's tale *Duck! Rabbit!* – one of Archie's favourite books.

PAGE 11

## LIFESTYLE



## DIY drama may not be the answer

FILMED entirely in the featured actors' homes, *Isolation Stories* is an interesting idea but ultimately a gimmicky technical exercise, writes *Pat Stacey*.

PAGE 23

## SPORT



## Villa latest club to say no to neutral

ASTON Villa chief Christian Purslow has warned Premier League clubs will not support measures that increased the risk of the "£200m catastrophe" that is relegation.

PAGES 36-37

## WEATHER

### TODAY



17C

It looks set to be bright with hazy sun and scattered showers, mostly later. Moderate south-easterly winds.

### TOMORROW



17C

Fine weather, as it is set to be dry and bright with variable amounts of sunshine. Gentle south-easterly winds.

### LOCAL WEATHER UPDATES

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## 2 CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

# HEARTACHE FOR 'AMAZING' DAD

## EXCLUSIVE

Melanie Finn

CHRISTY Dignam has been left heartbroken after his beloved father Christy Snr lost his battle with Covid-19.

The former CIE employee (89) sadly passed away yesterday afternoon after contracting the virus while in a Finglas nursing home.

A dementia sufferer, he was diagnosed with Covid-19 10 days ago but in a cruel twist, Christy was unable to visit him due to his own battle with Amyloidosis, a rare form of blood cancer.

The Aslan frontman (59) has paid tribute to him as an "amazing man" who was his biggest influence in life.

However, he said his one regret is that he was never able to give him a final hug before he passed away and to tell him how much he loved him.

## HORROR

He said that the impact of the virus, which has already claimed nearly 1,400 lives in Ireland, is "like something out of a horror movie; it's surreal what's happening".

"It's a lottery what kind of parents you have; we were obviously very lucky. It's just in these circumstances, I wanted to go up and visit him and hug him and tell him how much I love him and I just couldn't do that. It's horrible," he told the *Herald*.

A father of eight with 11 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren, the entire family went up to the nursing home last Saturday to see him through the window for one final time.

Christy said his father's

## Aslan singer misses chance for 'one last hug' with his father



## FEED THE HEROES FUND HAS TOPPED €1M

A GROUP set up to help raise funds to feed frontline workers has raised more than €1m in donations. Feed The Heroes said 140,000 meals had been delivered nationwide since it began fundraising seven weeks ago.

"To date, we have spent over €800,000 of the fund," said Feed The Heroes founder Cian O'Flaherty. "We are grateful to every single person who has powered Feed The Heroes this far, enabling us to support the people at the heart of Covid-19. If you can support us further, please do so to enable us to continue fuelling the frontline."

More than 18,500 donations have been made to the campaign over the last three weeks. Among those to have received meals are the National Ambulance Service, pharmacies, hospital staff and medical scientists.

health went rapidly downhill following the visit as he seemed to accept that the end was near.

"We all stood outside the window and we all waved at him but when the nurses were bringing him down, they were all in the suits with the masks.

"It was like something out of a bleeding horror movie, it's surreal. Two hours later, he went to bed and when he woke the next day, the nurse said that it was like he'd given up or something."

His family was contacted last

Monday and said the nursing home would allow three visitors to see him as he was "at the end now".

Christy said he bitterly regrets that the pandemic has robbed him of the chance to be with his dad as he died.

A former CIE employee as an upholsterer on the buses, his dad worked six days a week just to give them the best life he could.

"When he first went into this home, I was hoping he would just close his eyes and pass away because the type of man he was, if I had shown him that was where he was going to end up, he would have said, 'Shoot me now. Don't let me f\*\*king go there,'" he said.

## DEMENTIA

Six months ago, Christy Snr contracted pneumonia and ended up in hospital, but he subsequently developed dementia and he had to go into a nursing home.

"I was talking to him on the phone the other day and he was saying, 'Why are none of you coming up to visit me?' I was trying to explain but he couldn't understand. I think he thought that we had abandoned him."

Christy said it's "so hard" that they won't be able to give him a proper send-off due to the restrictions on funerals, which limits nine mourners in the church. "It's just really messed up. It's horrible but everybody's going through it at the moment," he said.

## Jimmy to the rescue as Fungie the



Jimmy Flannery and Fungie the Dolphin (also inset right)

## Ralph Riegel

A KIND-HEARTED Kerry fisherman was so moved by Fungie the dolphin being lonely he now takes daily trips to keep him company.

Jimmy Flannery, from Dingle, Co Kerry, is a hugely experienced fisherman and helped found the local fishermen's group.

However, he was taken aback by the realisation that Fungie, a famous dolphin who has been living off the west Kerry coast since 1983, had become lonely without human interaction over the past two months because of

# CHRISTY AFTER DIES OF COVID

Christy Dignam with his father Christy Snr and brother Brian on his dad's 89th birthday. Left, with Christy Snr and his daughter Kiera



Miriam O'Callaghan with her 'stoic' mother Miriam Snr

## 'My mum is incredibly resilient', says Miriam

**Melanie Finn**

RTE presenter Miriam O'Callaghan has said that her mother is coping admirably with being locked up during the Covid-19 crisis.

The Prime Time anchor, who is named after her schoolteacher mother, said that her mum (90) is doing well coping with the challenges of cocooning.

"She's normally very busy and is missing going out, but she's incredibly resilient and stoic. This hasn't disturbed her at all," she said.

**WINE**

"She has a big family of children and grandchildren and they all drop food out to her. Mum was a school principal in a big school in south county Dublin. She has a sharper mind than I have.

"She's a massive reader, loves radio and television and knows more about current affairs than I do.

"I'll ring her on my way home from Prime Time and she'll have views on everything."

When it comes to her own way of coping with the crisis, Miriam said she sees so harm in having a tippie now and again and enjoying the sunshine.

"I don't drink every night but certainly I do love a glass of wine," she told VIP Magazine.

"When the sun is shining, I'll pour myself a glass and sit out in the sun with a

good book. No one should be knocking back bottles obviously, but it's a pandemic.

"People are stuck at home and life really has turned on its head so really, a glass or two of wine? I don't see a problem with that."

She also believes that the crisis will make people "think differently" about society and the value that we put on frontline workers.

"I am very conscious of the fact that many people have lost loved ones and that this has been a terrible time for them," she said.

"Also, for all those that are still ill and suffering, I am so grateful to our healthcare workers.

"One of my boys was very ill last year and was taken care of so well.

"So massive thanks to the nurses, doctors, frontline healthcare workers, to all the people in the shops and to the postwoman who comes to my door every day.

"I think this pandemic will make people think very differently about who we value in our society."

Her family has already planned where they will go once the crisis is over - down to Kerry, where her dad hails from.

"We've already planned it. The whole family are going to Dingle, my favourite place on Earth. The Dingle Skellig is where we stay and it looks out over Dingle Bay," she said.

## dolphin misses mates in lockdown

the Covid-19 lockdown.

"Fungie was lonely alright," he said. "He follows the commercial fishing boats out but they don't have time for him. They are too busy heading to the fishing grounds."

Fungie's loneliness stemmed from the fact that the entire leisure craft industry - which sprang up around the dolphin's stamping ground off Dingle - has been suspended in the lockdown.

Without his normal array of admirers and photographers, Fungie had become lonely. Jimmy noticed that Fungie wasn't his normal

self - and other Dingle fishermen agreed.

Now, Jimmy heads out of Dingle harbour twice a day just to undertake odd fishing chores but, in reality, he just wants to give Fungie company.

Jimmy said that Fungie had got used to human company - and, like most stars, loved an audience and missed it when his fans weren't around.

The fisherman joked that

he hopes the dolphin appreciates the company - and doesn't forget Jimmy when his legions of admirers return.



**SENSATION**

Also known as the Dingle dolphin, Fungie is a male common bottlenose dolphin.

First spotted off Dingle in the summer of 1983, Fungie

became a tourist sensation with his antics near leisure craft and his clear love of being watched.

Marine biologists were astounded at the manner in which he appeared to actively seek out human contact.

The dolphin routinely interacts with people on boats as well as swimmers, surfers and kayakers.

Fungie's age is unknown but males generally live for between eight and 17 years.

However, some dolphins have been known to live to almost 70.

Fungie has also contributed to marine science - with his taste for garfish being the first recorded instance of dolphins eating the sleek fish known as the sea needle.