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Bagpiping can produce deadly tune

I'VE always known that the bagpipes were lethal to the ears but now it has been confirmed they can actually kill.

Apparently deadly fungi and mould spores are often lurking inside this musical instrument... instrument of torture more like.

Experts warn these cause a respiratory condition known as "bagpipe lung" which killed one player in 2014.

The American comedian Denis Leary has claimed the Irish invented the bagpipes as a joke and gave them to the Scottish, who still haven't found out.

The pipes have been called many things but the Brazilians "gaita de foies" probably describes them best - it's Portuguese for "screams of the tortured monkey".

THE strangest story of the week has to be the disclosure that Finglas wants to form a friendship with North Korea.

The Finglas Village Renewal Partnership (FVRP) has written to officials in the impoverished despotic state asking if they want to twin with the North Dublin district.

While Kim Jong-un would like nothing better than to wipe South Korea and the US off the map, the FVRP think the move will actually put Finglas "on the map".

Unfortunately, there has been no reply yet so they are either too busy eating dogs or are worried about what they'd be letting themselves in for.

Going through the Grindr

THE Catholic Church has been through the mill in the last couple of decades but now it's being put through the er... the Grindr.

The bishops are concerned young men at Maynooth seminary are using the gay hook-up app to meet other men for sex and now some trainee priests are being sent to Rome to get over this little problem. Moving priests around, haven't we heard that one before?

If there were gay and straight men and women priests and they were all allowed to marry and have children, there would be no problem.

Someone should tell the bishops sending someone to Rome won't make a priest less human than he would be if he was in Kildare.

Outrage over arrest that couldn't happen in Ireland

THE airwaves were thick with outrage this week over the manner of Pat Hickey's arrest in Rio and the thrust of the complaints was that such stuff could not happen here.

You bet it wouldn't - and that is the reason why the little people are enjoying the spectacle of one of the big boys finding themselves in a prison cell.

RTE's Ryan Tubridy didn't like the manner of the OCI president's arrest, particularly the way it was filmed and broadcast to the world.

On the other hand it's not

every day the Olympic Games' top man in Europe is arrested in connection with an alleged ticket touting scandal. So if that's not news, what is?

What's the big deal, a savvy Brazilian hack got a tip-off from a cop that an Olympic bigwig was going to be lifted and he showed up with a video camera. It's called journalism, Tubs.

Funny, I can't remember him expressing the same concern when Socialist TD Paul Murphy was arrested in his pyjamas by six gardai during a pre-dawn raid on his home in February last year.

And where was the outrage when officers tipped off the media that Deputy Clare Daly had been arrested for suspected drink driving.

Although the Independent TD was totally innocent, a GSOC investigation found a call had been made from a Garda station to a national newspaper but there was not enough evidence to nail anyone. Is there ever?

Sonia O'Sullivan had been jogging along nicely until yesterday when she put in a late sprint and hop, skipped and jumped aboard the outrage bandwagon.

The athletics legend, who is also an OCI committee member, believes the alleged Rio ticket touting scandal has been "sensationalised".

When three of Ireland's top Olympic officials have been barred from leaving Brazil and one of them is banged up in hellhole Bangu prison what is that if not sensational?

Sonia believes that the full Rio ticketing tale will only be told in time. We all do and if we leave it to the



ARREST Former OCI president Hickey

Brazilians that should be in 10 weeks. Had it been here we're talking 10 years, if ever.

There are huge differences in the way the justice system operates in Brazil compared to the way it does in Ireland.

We're only too aware how this country deals with alleged white collar crime.

After almost two decades our Sherlock Holmes brigade still haven't to grips with Moriarty, so maybe it's time we hired a few of those cops from Rio to speed up the process.

Among the ordinary people there is a perception that the State takes a much dimmer view of heinous crimes like obstructing the installation of water meters outside their homes compared to trivial matters like fraud on an industrial scale involving billions of euro.

The public know that eight years after one of the biggest banking scandals in world history only a handful of those involved have been held to account so what's the chances of anyone getting to the bottom of a ticket touting scandal? The people are not stupid, they

see the wagons being circled and they know the reasons for the establishment going on the defensive.

A good proportion of the public believe there is a certain degree of separation between the rich and the forces of law and order regardless of the alleged crime.

They have heard all the excuses about good names and due process and watched in despair as toothless inquiries run into the dust. While they listen to the great and good champion the right of Pat Hickey, who we must remember is innocent until proven guilty, to privacy their Government has brought in laws allowing private companies to rifle their personal bank accounts to go after unpaid bills.

Will an inquiry get access to Pat Hickey's bank account? That's a different type of privacy, you see.

Meanwhile out in the favelas of Dublin, Drogheda, Dundalk and other towns across the country, the inhabitants are less than sympathetic to Mr Hickey's predicament.

They also believe the inquiry into the scandal will be like the others and no one will be held to account, this is not Brazil, that's the way we do things here.

Let's be honest, there's an "us and them" factor to the former OCI president's arrest and it's split along the lines of wealth and privilege and those who believe the law is weighted in favour of the rich.

They also know Tubs is spot on when he says it would never happen here, that's why they'll enjoy the spectacle of a powerful Irishman in jail for they know they might never see the likes again.

There's an 'us and them' factor to the arrest



Greedy Lohan told nyet

LINDSAY Lohan had them spluttering into their vodka in Moscow after demanding a whopping fee of €760,000 to appear on Russia's top talkshow.

The Mean Girls star also wanted a "fully paid suite at the Ritz Carlton" luxury hotel and a meeting with Kremlin resident, President Vladimir Putin.

Needless to say her demands were turned down with a very firm "nyet".

But if she still wants to meet Mr Putin, I know a man who can get her a ticket, but she'll have to wait for a month or six.

We're not laughing at Brown Boys vote win

IT'S a bit sad that the nation which gave us Monty Python, Fawlty Towers, Fr Ted and Little Britain has voted Mrs Brown's Boys as the best sitcom of the 21st century.

Whatever happened to the Great British sense of humour which saw them see off Hitler and laugh their way through the Blitz?

It's as if the age of austerity has even stripped comedy bare,

leaving the public with nothing but bare slapstick and jokes your granny would have heard at school.

But then again when you see millions of people taking clowns like Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage

seriously, you can understand why they think almost anything is funny.

