

# Is prison the right place for one of Ireland's most dangerous inmates?

Family of Alan Ellis convinced he is not getting the treatment his condition merits

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**Conor Gallagher**

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When Alan Ellis appeared in court in last October to plead guilty to his latest offence he was surrounded by a phalanx of prison guards in full riot gear – a security procedure known as “barrier handling”.

For the last few years Ellis has been subjected to this barrier handling anytime he left his cell to shower, exercise or see his family or lawyer.



Coming to court was no different. As he emerged from a side door into Court Seven's cramped defendant's area in the Criminal Courts of Justice, three guards, including two with riot shields, shuffled along beside him. Usually a fourth officer would walk behind capturing everything on camera – a precaution in case violence breaks out – but on this occasion the judge had refused permission to film in the court.

Ellis is a 26-year-old man who has spent the last six years in prison, most of it in solitary confinement on 23-hour lock-up.

He is regarded by prison staff as one of the two most dangerous inmates in the country, the other being Leon Wright, a young man serving a 13-year term for a series of violent robberies and hijackings.

“It would certainly be between him and Leon,” says a staff member in Mountjoy Prison.

Over the last six years he has attacked at least four prison officers, multiple inmates (including one he stabbed in the eye) and a prison psychiatrist.

For much of that time, Ellis has been held in Mountjoy in a special cell in the Challenging Behaviour Unit. Everything there is constructed to ensure it can't be turned into a weapon. Even the television is behind a plastic screen. Whenever he wanted to change channel he would call to the officer who would come up the landing with the remote.

Christine  
Ellis, with  
her children  
Kyle and  
Rebecca.  
Photograph:  
Dave  
Meehan/The  
Irish Times

The security protocol for Ellis in Mountjoy, a copy of which has been seen by *The Irish Times*, makes for grim reading:

“On every occasion when dealing with this offender, a full Control and Restraint team, appropriately attired in Personal Protective Equipment will be deployed,” reads one directive from the document which was drawn up last August.

Another directive states: “No contact with this offender is permitted unless properly attired with [Personal Protective Equipment].”

The document goes on to advise officers that Ellis must be searched every time he is returned to his cell to make sure he hasn't taken any weapons back with him.

## Riot gear

He's given a "spork" (a mix between a spoon and a fork) to eat with which is removed after every meal. Even his toothbrush is taken away after each use.

And whenever he is out of his cell for exercise, officers must search and examine every part of it "for damage/signs of interference to ensure the prisoner is not attempting to fashion improvised weaponry".

The restrictions extend to his medical treatment: "Due to current risks, medical staff will have to be escorted by prison officers at all times."

Detaining prisoners like Ellis and Leon Wright is an extremely expensive business. Every time the prisoner is moved, even to go to the shower, a five person team in full riot gear must be assembled.

This huge manpower requirement often has two immediate consequences; either Ellis can't be moved from his cell for visits due to a lack of officers or other activities in the prison are suspended while the officers deal with Ellis.

Ellis's sister, Rebecca, says he has been told he is Ireland's most expensive prisoner, costing over €1 million a year to detain. Senior prison service sources said it would be difficult to quantify a specific cost but agreed it is multiples of the cost of detaining the average inmate (about €70,000 per year).

"It would be extremely substantial. And that's not counting the compensation costs for the staff he's injured", said one staff member. "He is certainly on the most elaborate regime in the entire system I'd say."

Why are such extreme measures required to detain Ellis? The answer to that is easy; he has a long history of extreme violence against prison and medical staff as well as other inmates. A tougher question is why Ellis is like this in the first place.

### **Medical reports**

Rebecca and her mother Christina believe his violence is a result of severe schizophrenia, along with several other disorders. The prison's medical service at one point appeared to agree. It has prescribed anti-psychotic medication to Ellis and he has spent several spells in the Central Mental Hospital.

Now its diagnosis has changed. Prison doctors no longer believe he has schizophrenia but that he suffers from a personality disorder, which in legal terms doesn't count as a mental illness.

This is in contrast to a recent medical report from a doctor on the outside which states without question he has severe schizophrenia and that it has been made worse by the solitary confinement regime.

Rebecca says she could see the signs in her brother from an early age. He would kick the walls thinking there were rats on the other side. He couldn't sit still for a moment and was in an almost constant rage.

He was first diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome which caused him to constantly jerk his arms. Then the other diagnoses came – OCD, ADHD and multiple behavioural disorders.

The acronyms flow off Rebecca Ellis's tongue as she sits in her mother's kitchen in Rathfarnham. Despite being a few years younger than him, she knows her brother's medical history better than many of his doctors. These diagnoses were only the start of her brother's struggle with mental illness.

"No one has seen anything like him before. No one understood him," Rebecca says. They tried various types of medication to try control his rage with little success.

"They didn't understand how to stop the rage so they were constantly drugging him with all sorts of medications."

"Thug", "psycho", "deranged". The descriptions of Ellis in the tabloid press bear little resemblance to the man described by Rebecca and Christina.

“He’s misunderstood, he’s just misunderstood,” his sister says.

“He’s actually a wonderful young man. He’s very spiritual,” Christina adds. In one court hearing she told a judge Ellis was like two different people – compassionate one day and behaving like a monster was coming out of him the next.

### **Kidnapping sentence**

Ellis received his first major sentence when he was 21, a six-year term for a horrific kidnapping and assault of a 14-year-old boy.

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He falsely believed the boy had uncovered a stash of ecstasy pills belonging to him. Ellis brought the victim to a flat where he tied him to a radiator before torturing him for almost 90 minutes. He threw boiling water down the boy’s trousers and removed skin from his knees and fingers with a cheese grater.

Before the incident, Ellis’s family had an ominous feeling something was going to happen. He had been going to emergency rooms asking to be hospitalised because of the voices in his head. Then he’d get impatient and aggressive with the medical staff and would be arrested.

A young Alan  
Ellis: he is  
now confined  
to prison and  
has serious  
mental  
health issues.  
Photograph:  
Dave  
Meehan/Irish  
Times

Shortly before the kidnapping a doctor had prescribed medication and referred him to mental health services in Tallaght Rebecca says.

Ellis had the option of pleading not guilty by reason of insanity; in between the offence and his arraignment he had been diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia.

However his family were advised that if they went down that route and were successful, Ellis could spend the rest of his life in the Central Mental Hospital (CMH) instead of receiving a lengthy but finite prison term. In the end he pleaded guilty.

At the judge’s direction, he received psychiatric treatment in prison, interspersed with spells in the CMH. By now his family say he was in the full grip of schizophrenia but had developed a good relationship with Dr Paul O’Connell of the CMH.

“Alan had a good bond with him and he really trusted him and we felt he’s in safe hands now,” Rebecca recalls. “Paul was lovely he was really nice to us.”

He also began receiving anti-psychotic medication via injection once a week which went some way towards relieving the symptoms of his illness. However he continued to display violent and aggressive behaviour and was regularly in solitary confinement – spending at least 21 hours a day confined to his cell in Mountjoy.

With the next attack things got much worse. Dr Ronan Mullaney from the CMH was visiting Ellis in his cell in October 2014 when Ellis mentioned he felt his life was under threat and wondered aloud “if my doctors are involved too”.

He lunged at the doctor with the handle of a paint roller he had sharpened to a point, shouting, "I'm going to f\*\*king kill you."

The incident ended with prison officers restraining Ellis and him dropping the weapon. Dr Mullaney was lucky to escape with a minor puncture wound to his neck, near his adam's apple.

Ellis would later tell garda "a demon" had got into his head: "I've no control over this demon. I was thinking what to do for the day and 'attack the doctor' came into my head."

Again, after consulting his legal team, Ellis and his family decided to plead guilty rather than attempting an insanity defence.

Sentencing Ellis to another three years, the judge directed more psychiatric care in prison: "It is a matter of common sense that he gets treatment otherwise matters could get serious very quickly."

As far as the Irish Prison Service (IPS) was concerned, matters had already gotten serious. By this point he was on the strictest regime possible.

### **'Mission from God'**

Ellis's mental illness has deteriorated significantly during his six years of continuous imprisonment, according to his family. He believes he is on a mission from God to kill a third of the world's population ("And he could do it too," one prison worker commented).

The situation is not helped by the books he is reading from the prison library about esoteric religions.

"They're all about black magic, darkness and light. It's not helping. It's telling him about black vibes and white vibes and if he thinks you're coming down with a bowl of cereal and a black vibe then it could be really bad."

The prison service has no power to prevent him reading such books.

Rebecca says her brother uses his phone allowance every day to call the Samaritans Helpline where many of the staff know him by name.

One of the worst times for his family was Christmas 2016 when Ellis was in the Central Mental Hospital for about 12 weeks during which they couldn't visit him, Rebecca claims.

She says that, according to his medical notes, Ellis was displaying disturbed behaviour while there including walking around his cell for hours at a time.

His deteriorating mental state has been matched by increasingly frequent attacks on staff and inmates. In 2014 Ellis slashed another prisoner in the eye with a shiv. The attack garnered a large amount of press coverage. What wasn't reported, Rebecca says, was Ellis's claims that other prisoners had been goading him in the lead-up to the attack.

His mother Christina can now tell whenever an attack is going to happen by her son's demeanour.

"Every single day he's getting worse," Rebecca says. "We don't even know who he is anymore. That's the sad part."

### **'Not insane'**

In mid-2017 Rebecca and her mother attended a meeting with CMH doctors and senior prison service staff, including then director general Michael Donnellan via video-link.

Rebecca says she could scarcely believe what she was told: "They said Alan's not insane."

Despite several protracted stays in the CMH and evidence heard at several court hearings that Ellis suffered from severe mental illness, his doctors now said, though Ellis continued to have issues, that he was no schizophrenic.

“After 25 years, it’s just gone away. So they said they’re going to take him off his injections and we’re going to release into the community.”

Initially they were going to keep him on his anti-psychotic medication but then decided against it, she says.

From that day on Ellis refused to engage with medical services.

“The last year has been the worst. He’s picked up more P19s (breaches of prison discipline reports) this year since he’s been off the medication than ever before,” Rebecca says.

She says Ellis has lost all trust in the CMH doctors after they said he was no longer mentally ill. Rebecca and her mother share his frustration.

The doctors are similarly frustrated. Even though they believe he doesn’t suffer from schizophrenia, they know Ellis still requires treatment for his many issues yet he refuses to engage. Rebecca and Christina have declined an invitation from the director of the CMH Prof Harry Kennedy to meet him about Ellis’s situation.

In October the Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT) held a conference to launch its report on reform of the prison system. Rebecca was late, having rushed over from the hospital (She’s due to give birth in February and has been put on bed rest).

When she arrived with her mother, she stood up to ask a question of the panel, which included the now director general of the IPS Caron McCaffrey.

Until then participants had been asking well-meaning, dry questions about penal policy. For several minutes an increasingly emotional Rebecca laid out her brother’s case.

“

No one wants Alan Ellis in prison. Not his family, not the prison officers, not the management

“All we’re looking for is help. Alan deserves to live a good life. He’s in solitary confinement, it’s inhumane.”

Eventually the event’s MC gently but firmly took the microphone from her. Rebecca ran from the room in tears.

“This is what’s wrong, nobody listens,” her mother Christina shouted before following her. It wasn’t the first time the two women had turned up to such an event to argue Ellis’s case and it wouldn’t be the last.

For a year they have written to every politician, Minister and prison official they could think of. They have filed multiple complaints with the Inspector of Prisons (the newly appointed Inspector Patricia Gilheaney has agreed to sit down with Rebecca and Christina) and are currently in the process of lodging a legal case against the State over Ellis’s treatment.

They want his illness to be recognised, they want an independent medical team for Ellis and they want him to receive treatment in a secure, non-prison environment. It’s a tall order. The only facility in the country which can provide such secure treatment is the CMH and Ellis refuses to engage with its doctors. And its doctors have determined he is not suitable for the facility.

“They don’t listen to you. I don’t mean to say that in a disrespectful way. But it’s like they don’t listen to the families,” Christina says.

### **The future**

Medical opinion on Ellis is split. One prison doctor who has treated him believes he genuinely suffers from paranoid schizophrenia and delusions. He is supported in this by a medical history, going back to childhood, filled with the warning signs of serious mental illness. Others believe he has some sort of personality disorder such as psychopathy or sociopathy.

Although a condition like psychopathy sounds extremely serious, it does not count as a mental illness for the purposes of Irish criminal law. The main reason for this is that unlike with some delusional disorders, the sufferer is fully aware of their morality and the consequences of their actions. In other words, they believe Ellis knows it's wrong to stab inmates or prison officers; he just doesn't care.

Indeed some Irish psychiatrists, including Prof Kennedy, wonder if it is a medical condition at all.

“

It takes six men to bring him to the shower and they're going to release him to Mam

“Psychopathy is a sort of historical artefact. It's essentially a list of pejorative adjectives for describing people while not using moral terms like 'bad person'. It's an academic debate that goes on and on,” Prof Kennedy told this newspaper earlier this year.

He was speaking in general terms during a tour of the hospital. When contacted for his article, both the Irish Prison Service and the CMH said they could not discuss individuals.

One prison service staff member put it in blunt terms: “The debate with Alan is is he mad or bad. Right now the dominant medical opinion is bad.”

Another officer commented: “No one wants Alan Ellis in prison. Not his family, not the prison officers, not the management. But there's nowhere else for him.”

Ellis is an extreme example of a problem the prison service deals with every day. About 4 per cent of offenders are psychotic when sent to prison and suffer from either delusions or hallucinations. That's not including prisoners with depression, autism or intellectual disabilities. According to the World Health Organisation, 10-15 per cent of prisoners worldwide suffer from serious, long-term mental illnesses.

The CMH is currently full and has been for some time. At last count there were 22 severely ill prisoners waiting on a bed in the hospital. D2, the landing in Cloverhill for prisoners with psychiatric issues, was so full at one point this year prisoners were sleeping the floor.

Last Thursday, Ellis was back in Court Seven of the Criminal Courts of Justice, along with a team of officers in riot gear, to face sentence for a 2016 attack on a prison guard.

He received a four-year sentence with one suspended after the judge took into account an independent medical report outlining his mental illness.

It's not clear where Ellis will serve this sentence. The plan was to send him along with Leon Wright to the new National Violence Reduction Unit in the Midlands Prison.

The specially built five cell unit, constructed at a cost of €2.7 million, will cater to only the most dangerous prisoners and will be jointly run by a senior psychologist and an assistant prison governor.

Although most of its residents are likely to have severe difficulties, they will not be legally insane under the law. The unit has a twin focus, keeping staff and other prisoners safe and rehabilitating inmates like Ellis at least to the extent that they can return to the normal prison population.

There is also the possibility Ellis will go back to the CMH. At a planning meeting earlier this week, staff in Cloverhill were told he was number two on the waiting list for admission to the hospital, an apparent reversal of the opinion he doesn't suffer from schizophrenia.

"That took us all by surprise. We had been told he was being treated as a security prisoner but now that seems to have changed to a medical prisoner," a staff member said.

No matter where he goes, one day in the near future Ellis will be released, likely into the care of his mother Christina. It's a day she both longs for and fears.

Asked about her biggest concern for the future, Christina pauses for a few moments before answering.

"My fear for the future is if they're protecting themselves so well, what are they protecting themselves against than I can't."

Rebecca interrupts: "It takes six men to bring him to the shower and they're going to release him to Mam?"

"And she's going to stand there with her arms open to him saying: 'Whatever it takes, that's my baby. If he kills me, he kills me.'"

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# 'I thought I was going to die that night': Violence on Irish Rail

Intimidation has doubled, vandalism has tripled and assaults have quadrupled

© Sat, Oct 27, 2018, 06:00

Conor Gallagher Crime Correspondent



May 9th, 2018: Eyewitness footage captures an "unprecedented graffiti attack" on a Dart at the Clongriffin Station in north Dublin. Video: Stephen Curtis

It was already dark as the 6pm Sligo-Dublin train stopped at Dromod Station in Leitrim. The train waited for 10 minutes in accordance with the timetable, and two teenagers used the opportunity to go on to the platform for a cigarette.

They had been in high spirits since getting on two stops earlier, and their mock fighting was beginning to irritate some of the other passengers. While on the platform one started banging the window of a middle-aged female passenger.

She looked exhausted. Asked if she knew the youth, she explained she had caught him trying to steal her purse from her bag the previous week. "I ran at him but now he shouts and curses at me on the train."

As the train gets ready to pull off she looks out the window, trying to see if the two boys are getting back on her carriage. To her relief the teenagers go farther down the train and she goes back to reading her book.

Her experience of fear and discomfort is one shared by a growing number of passengers on Irish Rail.

There is a general consensus, supported by both statistics and the views of passengers and staff, that anti-social behaviour is becoming worse. "Irish trains are no longer safe for passengers or staff," the head of the National Bus and Railworkers' Union, Diarmuid O'Leary, said last June.

Even Irish Rail management agree it is an issue. "While the overwhelming majority of our 45.5 million annual journeys occur without incident, both employee reports and customer feedback do confirm that there has been an increase in the number of anti-social behaviour incidents over the past 18 months," a spokeswoman told *The Irish Times*.



The figures make for stark reading. There were 407 complaints of anti-social behaviour on Irish trains last year, up from 246 the year before. Incidents of intimidation almost doubled to 117, while vandalism complaints more than tripled to 70. Cases of theft and disorderly passengers, however, have fallen since 2015.

Incidents reported to gardaí also give cause for concern, especially regarding assaults and robberies. According to recently released figures there were 43 assaults reported to gardaí in 2017, up from nine in 2016. There were 26 assaults in the first five months of 2018. And the number of robberies reported on trains increased from three last year to 10 to date in 2018.

Dublin-  
Cork: Lucy  
Hyland says  
she sees  
violence on  
the train  
every week,  
and it's  
increasing.  
Photograph:  
Dara Mac  
Dónaill

### A mob in Portmarnock

On June 15th last, Liam Gallagher played to a capacity crowd at Malahide Castle. As is usual for major events, Irish Rail put on extra Dart services to get fans to and from the gig. As one train pulled in to Malahide the driver knew something was wrong when he noticed people on both sides of the platform screaming at each other across the tracks.

"Liam Gallagher had obviously been getting them riled up," the driver, who asks that his name not be used, recalls.

He loaded the train with about 1,000 passengers and set off. The first stop was Portmarnock. A few people got off, and the driver waited for the little blue light to go on in his cab indicating all doors had safely shut and he could set off.

But there was no blue light. "I had to crawl back through the coach. They were like sardines." He fixed the door that was causing the trouble and returned to his cab. "I pressed the button and got a blue light for a second. Then I lost it again. I looked back and they had started opening the doors themselves."

The overheated passengers, tired of waiting in the cramped carriage, decided to take matters into their own hands.

The driver tried to close the doors but every time he did someone opened another one. Some of the passengers started to break windows while others spilled out on to the platform. "They were going bananas because the train wasn't moving," he recalled. "There was probably over a thousand people on that train. I was the only staff member."

The crowd was becoming increasingly aggressive: "I was getting pushed and dragged. The girls were as bad as the boys. I said to myself 'how am I going to get out of this mess?'"

"I knew I had to keep moving or I'd get decked and if I had been decked on the platform they'd all jump in and start kicking. I thought I was going to die that night. That's how scared I was."

Eventually he managed to get back to the cab and call for back-up. Gardaí and Irish Rail staff arrived within five minutes and helped restore order.

"When I got home after 3am I was actually shaking. But I went back in the next day. I thought if I didn't go back in then I never would. But I was white as a sheet."

Sutton Dart  
station  
manager  
John  
Donegan:  
"Most of

the stuff I  
see is  
vandalism  
and damage  
to stations."  
Photograph:  
Tom Honan

## Gang in Clongriffin

The mob violence of that night in Portmarnock is rare, but it has been seen elsewhere. The previous month a gang of teenagers boarded a Dart at Clongriffin and jammed a piece of wood in the door, preventing it from leaving.

Clongriffin Dart Station is one of the most modern and well lit on the line but this did little to deter the gang.

They graffitied much of the carriage with one youth reportedly running up and down the train deploying spray paint either side of him. The terrified passengers were threatened with blocks of wood before the gang started brawling among themselves.

Gardaí arrived quickly but the youths fled up the tracks. No arrests were made.

The violence is by no means confined to Dublin. Two of the most troublesome routes are Dublin-Sligo and Dublin-Cork, according to staff.

Every week we see it, and it's increasing," says Lucy Hyland who works on the Dublin-Cork route. In one recent week she had to call twice for gardaí to come on-board.

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## Have you had a bad experience on Ireland's train network? Tell us your story

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Last name

Location

Email

Share your story

Photo or video (optional)

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The first time involved a woman whom Hyland had spotted walking up and down the carriages. She became suspicious and asked the woman for her ticket.



“It escalated from there. She decided to threaten me. She called me the C-word, an F-ing bitch, at the top of her voice.”

When gardaí got on in Mallow she threatened to smash Hyland’s face in before spitting at her.

The second incident involved two separate families who started brawling, leading to the entire carriage being evacuated. “Glasses were being thrown, and the kids were stuck in between as their parents physically fought.”

When gardaí started to clear the carriage one woman, who had lodged herself under a table, bit a garda’s hand as he tried to remove her.

Customer services: Hannah Fitzpatrick, who worked at Connolly Station last summer, says most customers were absolutely fine but when people were drunk, on drugs or just frustrated, things could turn nasty. Photograph: Nick Bradshaw

## Drugs to Cork

Drugs are another major problem for Hyland, both in terms of consumption and trafficking.

“They’re going into the toilet on the train and injecting there. They might OD (overdose) in there. They might spray their blood around or leave their needles in there. Or they come out like zombies. They’re in the middle of busy commuter carriages, completely out of it.”

Hyland is also convinced drug dealers use addicts, many of whom have free travel cards, to ferry drugs packages from Dublin to Cork. “You actually see the drug dealers outside the station in Cork waiting for them.”

Keeping an eye on passengers as they board the train helps a little, according to Philip Conway, manager of Limerick Station, and some are stopped from boarding if they appear to be very drunk or on drugs.

The problem is when people take something at the start of the journey and are “out of it by the time they reach Limerick junction”, he says. “There’s not much you can do then.”

Intravenous drug use in the station toilets is a particular issue for Conway. At one stage staff were finding needles in their five or six times a week.

However, the situation improved significantly when an extra security guard was hired to keep an eye on things. "The security guards are local; they know the people involved. They can't stop everything but there has been a dramatic turnaround."

The extra guard was hired for a pilot period which has now expired. Conway hopes Irish Rail will provide funding to keep them on.



Security guards help cut down on drug use and public order incidents but they can themselves become a magnet for violence, he says. "They tend to be the focal point of any reaction. One security chap was assaulted a number of weeks ago in an attempt to remove people from the toilets."

Colbert  
Station in  
Limerick:  
security  
guard Piotr,  
from OCS  
Security,  
checks the  
men's  
toilets.  
Photograph:  
Liam  
Burke/Press  
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### Westport stag parties

Such attacks on staff are a growing concern for Irish Rail's 3,800 employees. "I'm not saying we're heroes or anything. We're not firemen but show me another job where you have to deal with 20 or 30 drunken men on a stag party terrorising an entire train," says one staff member who asked not to be named.

"We're on a thin metal tube speeding along just like an aeroplane. If you did half the things on planes that people do on trains every day, you'd be Tasered or shot."

Stag and hen parties bound for Westport and more recently Carrick-on-Shannon can be a major headache for staff and passengers, including Sligo resident Declan Bannon. "They're usually half jarred before they leave Dublin. Most of them come from England so they're drinking on the plane over."

The stag parties are rarely violent, more "really annoying", says Bannon who lives in Dublin during the week. "Especially if you're going home on a Friday." He takes out a pair of noise-cancelling headphones. "These help a lot."

Information released to Shannonside FM last year gives a flavour of the problem. In one incident a group of men started to cause a commotion by shouting a phone had gone on fire. In fact they had set a piece of paper on fire; a stunt the men found highly amusing.

Special trains put on for major events can also be "a nightmare", says Hyland. This year the rugby fans weren't too bad, but the behaviour of some of the GAA fans coming from Cork to Dublin for games was "horrific".

"They were extremely abusive on board. On one train young kids, as young as 15 and 16, were openly doing lines of cocaine off the table," she says.

In response to the problem, Irish Rail this month extended a drinking ban that was already in place on some services to certain trains on the Dublin-Galway and Dublin-Westport routes.

The ban has yet to be extended to the Carrick-on-Shannon route, and according to Irish Rail there are no current plans to do so. "We recognise that the vast majority of people who either purchase or bring alcohol on board our intercity services do so responsibly," a spokeswoman said.

“However, as the new restrictions demonstrate, we will act if we see recurring issues on specific services which are causing problems for other customers.”

Drink isn't just a problem on board the trains, it's also an issue for staff and customers in the stations, particular the major ones.

Hannah Fitzpatrick (19) spent the past summer working for Irish Rail as a customer service representative in Connolly Station in Dublin. The vast majority of customers were absolutely fine, she stresses. But when people were drunk, on drugs or just frustrated, things could turn nasty.

“You would be scared especially when it's a male who is way bigger than me. I'm quite a small person. They stand over you and shout at you and make you feel really small.”

Fitzpatrick says she was never threatened with violence during the short time she worked in the station but one passenger did spit on her when she didn't give him the answer he was looking for.

“Sometimes you don't really know what to do. You can't shout back. It can make you quite upset.”

Philip  
Conway,  
manager of  
Limerick  
Station:  
intravenous  
drug use in  
the station  
toilets is a  
particular  
issue. At  
one stage  
staff were  
finding  
needles five  
other six  
times a  
week.  
Photograph:  
Liam  
Burke/Press  
22

## Bricks at windows

For many station managers, especially those along the Dart line, vandalism is the main issue they face.

“Most of the stuff I see is vandalism and damage to stations,” says John Donegan, the station manager at Sutton. Young people damaging lifts was a major problem a few years ago.

“They were kicking the doors and taking drugs in the lifts. For some people lifts are essential. It affects old ladies, families with buggies. It's really frustrating, especially when we get bad press [in relation to] wheelchair accessibility.”

Donegan and his colleagues are braced for the issue to get worse as it always does when the evenings darken and Halloween approaches.

Sometimes the vandalism is far more than inconvenient. Mark Gleeson, the treasurer of passenger advocacy group Rail Users Ireland, says it has received reports of people throwing bricks at train windows as they pass by.

“Some of the windows shatter but the plastic film holds them together. But the sound is unmerciful; it would make you jump out of the seat. It's just wanton thuggery.”

So what can be done? Banning drink on some routes is a start, says Gleeson but he'd go a step further.

“On a plane you can only drink the alcohol they sell you. If Irish Rail said you can drink only what we sell you, we wouldn't be having these problems. Those trolleys don't have enough beer to get anyone drunk.”

More staff on trains, even just ticket collectors, would also have an impact. On many intercity routes the only staff on board is the driver. Someone from a catering company operates the food trolley.



“

The Garda will have a greater presence on Dublin public transport as part of the capital's Operation Open City

If passengers feel threatened Irish Rail advises them to contact the driver via the intercom system. Gleeson is unimpressed with this advice. “Something kicks off in a carriage, you've got to get up, walk 10 metres and press a button. You might not be in a position to do that. It might aggravate the situation.”

Extra gardaí is also a common suggestion. Earlier this year the National Bus and Rail Union called for the establishment of a dedicated transport police similar to the one in the United Kingdom.

The establishment of a transport police in a small country with a limited rail network is probably not a realistic prospect but there are some signs the authorities are looking at the issue from a policing perspective.

An Irish Rail spokeswoman says “the possibility of a dedicated Garda unit is being assessed, we understand”.

A spokesman for the Garda says gardaí will have a greater presence on Dublin public transport as part of the capital's Operation Open City.

“Other support includes a Garda presence on trains and trams to and from concert venues to prevent public order and crime. Where transport providers identify trends in antisocial behaviour, An Garda Síochána will arrange for an ongoing presence until such activity is resolved.”

Other measures Irish Rail says it plans to take include an increase in security personnel on trains and at stations, enhanced monitoring of CCTV, and the introduction of “customer service officers” on intercity routes.

“While the focus is customer service, it will also ensure that issues are identified and addressed more quickly,” the company says.

Early afternoon on the train to Drogheda and it's quiet. A man with intellectual disabilities is confused and appears lost. An Irish Rail staff member is trying to help him call his mother. Another passenger is comforting the man.

There's no violence, no low-level intimidation and no vandalism. It's quite pleasant. As both Irish Rail and Mark Gleeson of Irish Rail Users say, this is what 99 per cent of journeys are like.

But it's the other 1 per cent that are making passengers think twice about rail transport, and making some staff dread having to go into work in the morning.

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## INTERVIEW FIVE

The interview room at Finglas Garda station, in north Dublin, is not a nice place to be at the best of times.

It is small, stuffy and not designed for more than three people to use comfortably for any length of time.

By 2.30pm on May 25th last year all five of its occupants were feeling stressed. Among them was a 13-year-old boy who had been answering questions for nearly 10 hours over two days.

His mother, who in the first interview had sat beside the boy, holding his hand, had moved her chair farther away. She appeared to become more distressed by every new question put to her son.



The boy's solicitor, who had remained silent for most of the process, had begun to clash with the interviewing gardaí more frequently over their questioning.

For the Garda detectives in the room, Donal Daly and Damien Gannon, the stress came from the knowledge that they had only a few more hours to get the boy, who would later become known to the public as Boy B, to reveal how 14-year-old Ana Kriégel had been murdered, 11 days earlier.

The investigators had a mountain of forensic evidence, but it was all against Boy B's coaccused, and one-time best friend, Boy A. They knew Boy B was present when Ana died, and they knew he had played a role in bringing her to the abandoned house where she was killed. They also knew there was a big difference between knowing something and proving it.

It had been an exhausting process. Slowly but surely the detectives' questioning had caused the boy to revise his account of the day of Ana's murder.

Boy B had started the interview process the day before by repeating what he first told gardaí the previous week: that Boy A had asked him to call to Ana's home, in Leixlip, just outside Dublin in Co Kildare, and bring her to him in St Catherine's Park, so they could talk. And that he left Ana with Boy A before going home to do his homework.

As part of their investigation, gardaí had examined more than 700 hours of CCTV footage from the area around where Ana disappeared. Daly and Gannon put it to Boy B repeatedly that the route he claimed they took that day in no way matched what was captured by the cameras in and around St Catherine's Park, which sits on the Lucan side of Leixlip, on the border between Co Kildare and Co Dublin.

But Boy B stuck to his story, offering alternate explanations to gardaí for the inconsistencies between the CCTV footage and his account.

The first change to his story came the next morning, at the start of interview four. The boy had spent the night in an office on the second floor of the station. Because the Children Act

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‘I’m going to retell the story of what actually happened,’ Boy B said. ‘What I told you yesterday was a lie’

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forbids child suspects from being detained in cells, gardaí had cleared an office for the boy and brought in bedding so he and his mother could sleep there overnight. The station had been closed to all other prisoners to ensure the boy didn’t come into contact with any other adults.

His solicitor told the detectives the boy had reflected on his statement overnight and wanted to make a change. “I’m going to retell the story of what actually happened,” Boy B said. “What I

told you yesterday was a lie.”

He went on to say he and Ana had met Boy A by the BMX track in the park, not by Courtyard Lane as he previously claimed. Despite the dramatic preamble, the boy’s admission of dishonesty did little to advance the case. He claimed he lied because he initially got confused about his movements in the park and felt he couldn’t change his story without arousing suspicion.

Until then Boy B had remained remarkably calm.

A highly intelligent child, he spoke calmly, clearly and in full sentences. When gardaí asked if he knew what words like “detention” or “murder” meant he gave concise, accurate answers. At one point Gannon asked if he knew what the word “arrest” meant. “That you are detaining me for something that I did or might have done,” Boy B replied.

He appeared to have a large vocabulary for his age (he described Ana as wearing “synthetic leather” trousers) and put his answers into context when they might otherwise have been confusing. He sounded more like a young adult at a job interview than a 13-year-old boy accused of murder.

DET GARDA  
DONAL DALY,  
WHO  
INTERVIEWED  
BOY B ABOUT  
THE MURDER  
OF ANA  
KRIÉGEL.  
PHOTOGRAPH:  
COLLINS  
COURTS

In short, up to that point he appeared more than a match for the detectives' gentle interview approach.

But, despite appearing relatively inconsequential, Boy B's concession that he had told lies marked a turning point in the interviews and in the wider case.

It provided the detectives with a valuable tool. Because he had admitted to lying once, Daly and Gannon could cast doubt over everything else the boy had told them. Now, whenever the boy said anything that sounded fishy, they could remind him he had already lied to them and had been found out.

The Garda Síochána interview model was introduced following the Morris tribunal, which heavily criticised the informal and sometimes oppressive interview tactics employed by the force. The model introduced a standardised approach to interviews across the Garda. All operational members are now trained in eliciting information from victims, witnesses and suspects while being careful not to lead them into simply telling them what they want to hear.

After completing an intensive two-week course at the Garda College, in Templemore, Daly had qualified as a level-three interviewer, the second-highest in the four-tier training hierarchy.

Level-three interviewers usually focus on serious crimes such as murder and rape. They're trained to prepare extensively for each interview. If a suspect has an excuse for their actions, it is vital the interviewer immediately be able to cite any evidence that might disprove it.

Although their approach seems natural and fluid, level-three interviewers are actually following a strict formula. The first step is to build rapport. This creates "a non-judgmental, non-coercive atmosphere conducive to disclosure", according to a 2016 study of the model.

Daly spent large parts of the first interview asking Boy B about his interests and hobbies. He asked what video games he liked (Halo and Outlast) and about his favourite Marvel character (Deadpool). There was laughter as Daly told Boy B he'd have to spell the name of his favourite YouTube star, PewDiePie, for him.

"Any outdoor interests?" Daly asked. The boy said sometimes he and his friend used the pull-up bars in the park.

"Can you do a pull-up?" the detective asked.

"Yeah."

"Good man."

There was no problem with the boy taking breaks whenever he wanted, and there were several trips to the vending machine or shop to get him chewing gum or Ribena.

With the suspect put at ease, the next step, in line with Daly's training, was to let the boy tell his story in his own words, without interruptions. Next he began to challenge the boy, gently at first, by highlighting the inconsistencies and improbabilities in his account.

"This is your opportunity," Daly told him in a low voice. "Now is the time for the truth."

DET INSP  
DAMIEN  
GANNON, WHO  
ALSO  
INTERVIEWED  
BOY B ABOUT  
THE  
DISAPPEARANCE  
OF ANA  
KRIÉGEL.  
PHOTOGRAPH:  
COLLINS  
COURTS

Aside from boredom, and sometimes frustration, Boy B had so far displayed little emotion or distress. That changed as Daly and Gannon started to show him evidence from the abandoned house.

When Daly showed him a photograph of the crime scene with Ana's body pixelated out, Boy B held his head in his hands and responded: "Jesus, one of my closest friends." He quickly added he was referring to Boy A, not Ana.

“Wait a minute. Holy shit. Oh my God,” he said when shown a photograph of the insulation tape that had been wrapped around Ana’s neck. He told gardaí he had recently given the tape to Boy A.

Over the years detectives tend to pick up their own techniques for interviewing dishonest suspects. Some will pause suddenly at crucial moments, catching the suspect by surprise and throwing them off guard. Others like to refuse requests for a cigarette or glass of water until the suspect gives them new information. In some cases it makes sense to appeal to a suspect’s conscience. In others, vague insinuations about lengthy prison sentences are more effective.

In this case the boy’s age meant Daly was highly constrained, and had to be particularly careful not to use any tactics that a court might later view as oppressive or intimidating.

But, although it remained gentler than most murder interviews, by the fifth session the atmosphere in the room had changed drastically. Frustration was starting to creep into Daly’s voice; his tone suggested he was getting tired of the boy’s lies.

He never lost his temper, however. Instead he continued to urge the boy to come clean: “You owe it to everyone to start telling the truth here. You owe it to your mam, to yourself, to tell the truth, because unfortunately a girl has been brutally murdered.”

Although he had changed several important aspects of his story by that point, Boy B continued to deny any knowledge of what happened to Ana in the abandoned house.

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The scream was, like,  
really loud. Just before  
it ended it got muffled,  
like someone covered  
her mouth

The most important breakthrough came in the late afternoon of May 25th, about halfway through interview five. Daly had just informed the boy that they had a witness who saw a teenager they believed to be him walking through a field and towards the abandoned house. The boy admitted to going into the field to look around but insisted he went no farther.

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Daly sighed. “You’re making this up as you go along, [Boy B,] I have to say. I’m presenting facts and evidence to you, and you’re changing your story to suit. You can’t keep doing this.”

There was a long pause before Boy B asked his mother to leave the room. Daly said this was not possible, as he was a minor and required a guardian at all times. His solicitor suggested they take a break, but Daly wanted to keep going. “I think we’re at a crucial point here. The truth, that’s all we want.”

Boy B took a deep breath before telling gardaí that Boy A went into the house with Ana. “I left, and that’s when I heard the scream, and then I ran,” he said. “It was a really strong scream. I knew that it was Ana, but since [Boy A] was there she’d be fine. He’d protect her. The scream was, like, really loud. Just before it ended it got muffled, like someone covered her mouth.”

After dozens of lies the boy had admitted for the first time to knowing something had happened to Ana. He started to weep, as did his mother. When the moment was played back in court, exactly a year later, Ana’s mother, Geraldine, would also weep. Much worse was to come.

## ANA’S LAST DAY

Ana wasn’t very good at geography. One of the several ailments afflicting the young girl was a short-term memory problem, which made it difficult for her to recall all the terms she needed. In general Ana wasn’t academically inclined, her mother later said. Part of this was down to her having been adopted from Russia at the age of two, leaving her playing catch-up with her peers in English-language skills. Problems with her hearing compounded the issue.

There were exams the following week, so on the morning of Sunday, May 13th, 2018, Geraldine Kriégel planned to sit down with her daughter to help her study.

“No, Mam, you must be exhausted. We can do it later,” Ana told her mother. Geraldine agreed. There was to be a small family gathering later, but now they had a few hours to relax beforehand.

In the meantime Ana did one of her favourite things: watching movies with her mother and eating popcorn.

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Ana would make videos about dancing, clothes and make-up for her 100 or so subscribers. Although they attracted many pleasant comments, one viewer told Ana to ‘go die’. Another said they would have her executed

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Later Geraldine ordered pizza for the party. Ana didn’t like pizza, so she walked into Leixlip and brought home a spice bag from a Chinese takeaway. Back at the house the children played while the adults had a drink in the conservatory.

At one stage Ana and her cousin went up to her room to make a YouTube video, another of her favourite hobbies. Like nearly every other teenager, Ana used a staggering number of social-media apps, including Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and Houseparty. Her favourite was YouTube.

She would make videos about dancing, clothes and make-up for her 100 or so subscribers.

Although the videos attracted many pleasant comments, they also brought poisonous barbs and even threats. One viewer told Ana to “go die”. Another said they would have her executed.

A short time later the family gathering ended; there was school the next day. Ana’s cousins were collected, and she went to bed at about 10.30pm.

Before going to sleep Ana asked her mother to wake her the next morning in time to say goodbye before she left for work. Like most teenagers, Ana liked to sleep in, but she had promised her parents she would try to get up earlier in the morning.

Geraldine Kriégel is a senior manager in the legal department of CIÉ, the State public-transport company. She was usually first up in the morning; her husband, Patric Kriégel, had retired from teaching French at Dublin Institute of Technology.

That morning Ana reminded her mother that she needed a note to get out of school at 2.30pm; she had a counselling appointment with Kildare Youth Services, which she attended once a week. Geraldine wrote the note, kissed Ana goodbye and left to get the train to Dublin, where she had a meeting.

Her daughter put on her school uniform, had a little breakfast and left sometime later.

The plan was for Ana to eat lunch at school before walking to counselling. But she decided to return home to eat before going to her appointment.

After counselling she came home, had a snack of some oven chips and went to her room. It was around this time she tried to phone her mother. The two frequently called or texted each other during the day. When Ana rang at 4.02pm, Geraldine was in a meeting and couldn't answer. She texted her daughter to tell her she'd call shortly.

Patric was relaxing outside, taking in the May sunshine, when, at 4.55pm, he heard the doorbell. It was Boy B. He asked for Ana. When her father told her who was at the door, Ana was confused. She knew who the boy was, but they were by no means friends. Nonetheless she went down and spoke to him.

Patric saw Ana standing in the doorway, whispering to the boy. He didn't find this unusual, he would later recall. "I think a lot of teens do it."

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Ana's hoody was distinctive: black with writing down the

She then ran back upstairs to get her hoody before telling Patric she was going out. Ana's mother had bought the hoody for her online, from China. It was distinctive: black with writing down the sleeves. Within days most of



sleeves. Within days most of Ireland would see photographs in newspapers and on television of Ana wearing it

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Ireland would see photographs in newspapers and on television of Ana wearing it.

Patric reminded Ana about her exams and told her she was supposed to study that evening. Ana responded that nobody had told her this and that she wouldn't be long.

“I believe she meant it. I knew from the way she was saying it that she meant exactly that,” Patric would later say.

Seconds after Ana left, Patric realised he had forgotten to ask where she was going. He went to the door and saw Ana walking towards St Catherine's Park. The boy, who was carrying a small backpack, walked ahead of her. The two didn't appear to be talking.

Although it was unusual for this boy to call for Ana, Patric was not overly concerned. “She was happy when she left. She gave me a big smile.”

Geraldine was on the train home at the time. She had been chatting to a friend who got off at Coolmine, in north Dublin, about 10 minutes before Geraldine's stop, at about 5.10pm, finally giving her a chance to return Ana's call from earlier. It went to voicemail. Geraldine didn't leave a message, as she knew she would see Ana when she got home.

Normally she wouldn't get home so early, but that day she had taken the train because of her meeting in Dublin. She found her husband in the back garden. He told her Ana had gone out with Boy B. “I became immediately concerned, because he has nothing to do with her,” Geraldine recalled later. “Nobody calls for Ana.”

## **‘ENDLESSLY BULLIED’**

To understand why Geraldine Kriégel was so concerned when she learned Ana had left the house with Boy B, it's necessary to understand recent events in the teenager's life.

Ana was savagely bullied inside and outside school. Above all she wanted friends her own age, friends who weren't her cousins. But she had few.

Born in February 2004 in Novokuznetsk, an industrial city in western Siberia, Ana was adopted and brought to Ireland by Geraldine and Patric in 2006. She was their first child.

Despite having no link to Russia themselves, Ana's parents made sure she retained some connection to her native culture. They kept her name, Anastasia, although everyone would shorten it to Ana. On the day she died her social-media profile picture was a Siberian wolf.

For most of primary school Ana was a happy pupil despite struggling with a variety of health issues.

PATRIC AND  
GERALDINE  
KRIÉGEL,  
ANA'S  
PARENTS.  
PHOTOGRAPH:  
COLLINS  
COURTS

Doctors found a tumour in her right ear that required a 5½-hour operation to remove. She could barely hear from that ear afterwards and would always walk or stand on people's left side as a result. She had poor eyesight and a scar on the back of her head from the surgery, along with another on her chin from a time when she fell as a young child.

As she entered her teens she also suffered from a painful condition, sometimes seen in adolescents, that occurs when the bones grow faster than the muscles.

Emotional problems began to appear as primary school came to an end. On one occasion her parents were alerted that Ana had told a teacher she was feeling suicidal.

She was excited about going to secondary school, but her parents and teachers were worried. Ana's resource teacher told Geraldine and Patric she was terrified for her, because she was so innocent. She feared other students would take advantage of this.

The parents met early with the management of the secondary school to highlight their concerns about Ana being a potential target for bullies.

In fact, the bullies didn't even wait for her to start school. During the summer after sixth class Ana was bullied online by third-year students who sent her sexually suggestive messages.

Much of the bullying was about her height. Ana was "a typical Siberian", her mother would later say in court, strong and tall. By the time she was 13 she was 173cm, or 5ft 8in, tall. "She looked much older than her years," her mother said. "She could have passed for an 18-year-old."

"She was taller than me," Patric recalled with a smile.

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The bullies mocked the fact that Ana was adopted, telling her she had a 'fake mam and dad'. Geraldine and Patric took screenshots of some of the messages and showed them to her school

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The bullies also mocked the fact that she was adopted, telling her she had a "fake mam and dad". Geraldine and Patric took screenshots of some of the messages and showed them to the school.

But the situation did not improve after she started secondary school. "She was endlessly bullied," Geraldine said.

That Halloween Ana came home hysterical and terrified. She had been walking back after supervising a disco for young children ("she volunteered for everything," Geraldine said)

when four boys approached. One asked her repeatedly for sex before hitting her on the backside. A complaint was made to the Garda, and the boy received a caution.

Ana would walk for hours at a time, usually while listening to music on her distinctive blue headphones. She almost always walked alone. "You would see other girls walking in

groups, and Ana would be walking alone,” Geraldine would tell the court.

Her parents painted a picture of a kind-hearted, innocent girl who craved friendship. She loved spending time at home with her family but longed for someone her own age to hang around with.

“People didn’t understand her. She was unique and full of fun,” Patric said. “She couldn’t hate anyone even though some of the people were bullying her. She was disappointed with people. That happened quite regularly. She tried to make friends but might say the wrong thing. She was a teenager.”

He said Ana started to act out in worrying ways. There were fights at school, one of which resulted in a suspension. One day she painted a black eye on herself before going into school.

“It was attention seeking. For me it was an expression of pain she suffered on the inside,” Geraldine said.

“She said she felt invisible,” said Patric.

At one point it was discovered that Ana had set up fake social-media accounts that she was using to send bullying messages to herself. From then on she had to give all the passwords to her apps to Geraldine, who would check her phone every night.

“She didn’t like it, but she knew if she didn’t I would take the phone,” her mother said. Shortly before Ana’s death Geraldine found a photograph on the phone of her blindfolded and tied to a chair. Ana told her mother it was part of a prank. She and another girl were pretending she was in trouble, to see if another boy would come and rescue her.

As Ana’s emotional problems grew, her parents felt she needed some outside support. They approached Kildare Youth Services, which initially said it couldn’t see Ana, because

she had self-harmed. Ana had recently cut her arm with a scissors; her parents believed she did it in imitation of a boy she knew.

She was referred to Pieta House, the charity that helps people who self-harm or are in suicidal distress, where she did well. Staff there judged her as being at a very low risk of suicide. They had to ring Patric and get him to pick her up from the sessions, as the prospect of being bullied made her scared to walk home alone.

After six sessions at Pieta House she was accepted by Kildare Youth Services, the volunteer-supported organisation she was attending at the time of her murder.

Ana did have a handful of friends, including a girl who would call over for sleepovers and to watch films. But she was certainly not friends with Boy B, something Geraldine was well aware of when she returned home on Monday, May 14th.

## THE SEARCH

Shortly after 5.30pm Geraldine texted her daughter a two-word message: “Home now”. There was no response. She talked it over with Patric before sending another message a few minutes later: “Answer me now or I’m calling the police.” The part about the police was just to get Ana’s attention, Geraldine later explained.

She was conflicted. She knew Ana had only been gone for half an hour, and felt like a “paranoid mother”, but she was extremely worried.

Geraldine walked to the park. She could see children playing and adults walking their dogs, but she saw no sign of Ana.

After dinner she went out looking for her in the car, driving around local estates. Ana loved to go for long walks, so she could have been anywhere in the area.

Once she got home, Geraldine and Patric went on Facebook to find out Boy B's surname. They knew him vaguely but had no idea where he lived or who his parents were. Geraldine rang around, trying to find out his address, but without success.

She and Patric went to the house of John Cribbin, a friend who is a retired detective, for advice. He told them to go straight to the Garda. At that point Ana had been gone for four hours.

The parents went to Leixlip Garda station, where Geraldine explained it was highly unusual for Ana not to get in touch. She told gardaí her daughter was a communicator. "She would always respond. Even if she said she was not talking to you she would respond, to tell you she wasn't talking to you." Ana's Irish and Russian passports were still at home, and she hadn't eaten since lunch, Geraldine added.

Gardaí took her seriously, but there was no reason to be immediately concerned. Every week the Garda receives dozens of reports of missing children; the vast majority turn up within a few hours.

The first job for gardaí was to visit the house of Boy B after locating his address on their Pulse computer system.

Garda Conor Muldoon went to the house that evening. Boy B told him that he had called for Ana that day, that they had walked in the park and that he had left her company there at 5.40pm. It was the first of dozens of lies he would tell investigators.

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Ana's family walked the local area and spoke to anyone they could think of who might know where she was. By now

The next day Ana's family got up early to resume the search. Joined by friends and family, they walked the local area and spoke to anyone they could think of who might know where Ana was. By now gardaí were also worried, and a missing-person investigation began in earnest. Sgt John Dunne was tasked with returning to Boy B's house to question him further. This time Boy B

gardaí were also worried, and a missing-person investigation began in earnest

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told the garda he had called for Ana the previous day on behalf of his friend Boy A.

Ana had a crush on Boy A, but he wasn't interested, and he wanted to meet up with her to tell her, Boy B said. He said he brought Ana to the park, where she met Boy A, before leaving

them and returning to his house to do his homework.

Dunne brought Boy B to the park, so the teenager could show him exactly where he went with Ana. Boy B showed the garda where they had entered the park, where they had met Boy A and where he had left the two of them to talk. The garda marked all of these locations using the GPS function on his Tetra radio before dropping the boy home.

Meanwhile a Garda family-liaison officer was appointed to keep Ana's family informed about the search. Standard procedure at this stage was to issue a media appeal. Ana's parents provided some photographs of their daughter, including one of her wearing the distinctive black-and-white hoody.

It was in the late afternoon of Tuesday, May 15th, when the wider public first learned Ana Kriégel's name.

"Gardaí are seeking the public's help in tracing 14-year-old Anastasia Kriegel, who was last seen at her home in Leixlip, Co Kildare, at 5pm on Monday the 14th of May 2018," the press release said. "Anastasia is described as 5'8", black shoulder length hair, sallow skin and slim build."

The Garda sends out missing-person alerts almost daily. The week before Ana's death it issued three, all relating to teenagers. All three of those young people were later found safe and well.

After the appeal about Ana went out potential leads began to pour in, all of which the Garda had to follow up.

One caller said he had seen her in Dundrum, in south Dublin. Another told gardaí they had seen her in the departure area of Dublin Airport. One of the more promising leads came from a local woman who said her daughter had seen Ana on the morning of May 15th by a nearby cul-de-sac. Gardaí followed up and discovered that a school friend lived on the cul-de-sac and that he hadn't attended school that day. But a search of the boy's house revealed nothing, and the lead turned out to be a dead end.

Back in Lucan, Dunne and his colleagues continued to comb the area. After walking the park with Boy B the garda decided to search the railway line, but he found nothing. As Dunne was walking back he was stopped by a man and his son. The man had heard about Ana going missing and suggested the garda check the back of the local sewage-treatment plant, as teenagers tended to hang around there.

It was only later that day Dunne realised this man was Boy A's father and the teen with him was Boy A.

At that stage both boys were being treated as witnesses, not suspects. Gardaí had no reason to believe they had hurt Ana or even that Ana had been hurt at all. But, because they were the last ones to have seen her, any information they could provide was vital.

On Tuesday afternoon a decision was taken to bring Boy B back to the park, this time with Boy A.

The boys led the way as Dunne and Sgt Aonghus Hussey followed with Boy A's father. As they walked Dunne noticed Boy B was leading them on a different route from one he showed them earlier.

The boys came to a stop on a path near the BMX track in the park. Dunne and Hussey both saw them exchange what they would later describe as a glance or look. It was the first indication the boys weren't telling the Garda everything. It was decided formal statements should be taken, so they could clarify their exact movements.

THE ROUTE  
THE



PROSECUTION  
SAID BOY B  
AND ANA  
TOOK AS  
THEY  
WALKED  
TOWARDS  
GLENWOOD  
HOUSE  
BEFORE HER  
MURDER

Both boys were taken to Lucan Garda station with their parents.

Boy B told gardaí the same story he gave earlier. “I have no clue what happened to her,” he said, adding that the first time he heard something was wrong was when gardaí called to his door the night before.

Boy A gave a detailed statement about his movements. He said Boy B was one of his best friends and had called to his house after school. Boy A was doing his chores, so they arranged to meet in the park in a while. When Boy B arrived there he was with Ana, a girl he knew from school, but “not that well”.

He told gardaí: “At one stage Ana said to me, ‘I have something to ask you. I was wondering if you wanted to go out with me.’ I was surprised. It came out of nowhere. I kind of knew she liked me, because she kind of asked me out [before].”

He said he wanted to tell her “gently” that he didn’t want to go out with her. “I said, ‘I’m sorry, but I’m not interested’. She didn’t answer. She said nothing. She walked off. She looked annoyed and sad at the same time.”

By this stage Boy B had also left, Boy A said. He walked on alone until he was attacked by “two males”. One grabbed him by the shoulder and pulled him to the ground; then both started kicking him, he claimed.

The attack ended when Boy A “got up and kicked one of them in the head”, causing both to flee. Gardaí were somewhat sceptical of the story. The boy did have injuries consistent

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Boy A did have injuries consistent with an assault, but something didn't feel right. His description of defeating his attacker with a kick to the head sounded more like teenage fantasy than reality

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with an assault – his arm and leg were injured, and his face was cut – but his account didn't feel right.

In particular, his description of defeating his attacker with a kick to the head sounded more like teenage fantasy than reality.

Nevertheless gardaí were assigned to investigate the alleged assault. Boy A was taken to Garda headquarters, in Phoenix Park in Dublin, where he helped investigators compile a photofit of the attackers. None of the witnesses in the park that day saw anybody matching the photofit. CCTV

cameras also failed to pick up anyone matching the description.

The following day, Wednesday, May 16th, the search was kicked up a gear. There were now serious concerns that Ana may have been harmed or even killed.

Insp Mark O'Neill of Lucan Garda station was assigned to lead the missing-person investigation, and all members coming on duty in stations in north Dublin and Kildare were briefed. Specialist search teams were brought in, including the Garda subaqua unit, which searched the River Liffey and other bodies of water in the area. The Civil Defence provided 60 members to aid in the operation. The Garda crime and security branch was asked to analyse mobile-phone traffic, to try to track Ana's movements.

## A MANNEQUIN OR 'SOMETHING TERRIBLE'

Her body was found in an abandoned farmhouse on May 17th, 2018.

Glenwood House was built around 1800; some say it was designed by James Gandon, the architect of the Custom House and the Four Courts, on the Liffey in Dublin. The handsome

farmhouse sits on just over 40 hectares, or 100 acres, of farmland at the edge of St Catherine's Park, on the Lucan-Clonee road, in an area known locally as Coldblow.

It was home to the Colgan family until the last decades of the 20th century, before being abandoned entirely.

The subsequent years were not kind to Glenwood. Despite being a protected structure because of its architectural significance, the house was effectively a ruin by May 2018. Bottles and cans littered the floors, the result of the house's popularity with local teenagers looking to avoid the prying eyes of parents and gardaí. The roof had collapsed in several places, and several rooms had been gutted by fire.

The house continued its decline even after it was bought, in the early 2000s, by a company linked to the hotelier Noel O'Callaghan, for €10.5 million. In recent years the company has been trying to get planning permission to turn it into a 62-bed nursing home, a plan welcomed by most locals, who despaired that the once-fine structure had become an eyesore.\*

GLENWOOD  
HOUSE,  
WHERE ANA  
KRIÉGEL'S  
BODY WAS  
FOUND.  
PHOTOGRAPH:  
TOM HONAN

One group, Old Lucan, appealed to locals in January 2018 to contact Fingal County Council and ask it to enforce the building's protected-structure status. There has been no update on the campaign or the owner's attempts to repurpose Glenwood since April 2018.

"We all know what happened there," one member of the Old Lucan group wrote on its Facebook page recently. "Once the trial is over it should be knocked down and so should

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the adjacent buildings.”

On the morning of Thursday, May 17th, 2018, Sgt Declan Birchall and his specially trained four-person search team were deployed to an area of Lucan that included part of St Catherine’s Park and Glenwood House.

Working from maps, and using a grid system, the team methodically searched the park, including all its hedgerows and ditches. Once they got to the large field beside the park they used slash hooks to clear the way.

Glenwood House stood at the end of the field. Birchall, like most local gardaí, was familiar with the building, having responded to reports of teenagers messing there over the years.

Birchall searched the outbuildings while his colleague Garda Sean White went into the main house through the rear porch. At the end of one of the corridors, at the front of the house, White looked into what would later be designated as Room 1.

It was dark inside. The windows were boarded up, and the only light came from a hole in one of the planks over the glass. In the gloom White thought he could make out a figure. He could definitely smell dried blood. The garda would later tell a colleague he believed he was looking at either a mannequin “or something terrible”.

He called out but got no response. In line with his training, he stepped into the room to confirm what he thought he had seen, then left and called for assistance.

Birchall rushed into the house when he heard White shout “Find”, to indicate he had located something of significance.

As the search team leader he entered Room 1 to confirm what White believed he had seen. Inside was Ana Kriégel’s body, naked except for her black socks.

At first Birchall believed something was covering Ana's face. When he leaned closer he realised it was her hair, which he said was stuck to her face as if she had been "thrashing" it around.

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During the trial Prof Marie Cassidy, the State pathologist, would spend about 40 minutes just listing the 50 injury sites on Ana's body

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Her clothing and pieces of her iPhone were scattered around the room. Nearby were a cement block and a large stick, both of which were bloodstained. There was also blood staining on the walls and on the carpeted floor. The blood had clearly come from the many wounds on the girl's body.

A long length of Tescon insulation tape was partially wrapped around her neck. She had three fingers inside the tape, as if she was trying to get it off.

Gardaí quickly established a crime scene while they awaited the arrival of Supt John Gordon, from Lucan Garda station. A local GP was called to formally pronounce death, and within an hour the Kriégel family had been told by their Garda liaison officer that Ana's body had been found. They were told they would have to go to the morgue that evening, to make a formal identification.

The missing-person investigation immediately became a murder investigation, and Insp O'Neill was appointed senior investigating officer, with 20 gardaí working under him. For now his job would be to marshal the many forensic and technical experts who would file in and out of Glenwood House for the next several days.

Every inch of Room 1 would be examined and catalogued, along with every beer can, cigarette butt and piece of debris it contained.

The most pressing task was the pathology exam. The State pathologist, Prof Marie Cassidy (she has since retired), visited the location before overseeing the transport of the body by

hearse to the State Laboratory, in Whitehall in north Dublin, for a full autopsy that evening.

Ana had a staggering number of injuries. During the trial Cassidy would spend about 40 minutes just listing the 50 injury sites. There were bruises and lacerations all over the body, the most serious to Ana's head, face and neck.

PROF MARIE  
CASSIDY.  
PHOTOGRAPH:  
COLLINS  
COURTS

Cassidy concluded Ana had died from blunt-force trauma to the head and neck. There were also signs of compression to her neck, but there was no evidence the tape had caused this.

Other injuries suggested there had been penetration, or attempted penetration, of the vagina with something, but Cassidy could not determine what that something was. She also couldn't tell if Ana had been conscious at the time.

On the basis of the pathology and forensic evidence, the Garda suspected Ana had been beaten to the ground with a heavy stick shortly after entering the room, then hit four times with a heavy object such as a concrete block.

Next she was pulled towards the window, where there was more light. It was likely here she was sexually assaulted. Her false nails scattered around the room indicated she had fought her attacker fiercely.

Despite the huge amount of forensic material at the scene nothing immediately pointed towards a suspect. All the fingerprints and blood belonged to Ana. But scientists from Forensic Science Ireland made a grim breakthrough when they examined Ana's top and discovered semen stains.

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Boy A's phone included a result for Jeff the Killer, a widely shared short story about a teenager who murders his family

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The focus of the investigation immediately returned to the two boys. The discrepancies in their accounts meant gardaí already had enough reason to suspect them, but they wanted to wait for forensic proof that at least one of them was at the scene. That came a few days later, when Forensic Science Ireland reported that Ana's blood was found on Boy A's boots, which had already been taken by gardaí investigating the allegation that he had been assaulted by two men in the park.

As part of the assault investigation gardaí had also taken the boy's phone. On it they found more cause to suspect he was behind Ana's death. The phone contained a screenshot of a list of Youtube videos, including "The 15 most gruesome torture methods in history", "Horror films that will blow everything away" and "Until Dawn – Get Jessica's clothes off"; Until Dawn seemed to be a reference to a popular horror video game. There was also a result for Jeff the Killer, a widely shared short story about a teenager who murders his family.

On their own these results could have been interpreted as reflecting the macabre but not entirely unexpected interests of a young teenage boy. But for gardaí the presence of another search result, for "abandoned places in Lucan", put things in a different light.

## ARREST, INTERVIEW AND CHARGE

A week after Ana's body was found gardaí were granted a warrant to arrest both boys.

From the very beginning of the investigation concessions were made for their age; some were required by law, others were at the discretion of the Garda, lawyers and judges.

Both boys' parents were informed on the evening of May 23rd their sons would be arrested the following day. The parents were asked to bring them to the Garda station in the

morning. But they were not told their homes would be searched immediately after the arrests.

Insp O'Neill told his team they were to carry these out with the utmost discretion. Gardaí used rental cars instead of patrol cars to get there. They wore plain clothes and put their evidence bags in black sacks before they were taken out of the houses.

After he was arrested Boy A was interviewed at Clondalkin Garda station, in west Dublin, in the company of his father and their solicitor Donough Molloy. As they had done with Boy B, gardaí started by asking him if he knew the difference between right and wrong.

“Leaving the door open for somebody” is right; “tripping somebody up” or stealing a chocolate bar is wrong, Boy A told Det Gardaí Marcus Roantree and Tomas Doyle.

He explained the difference between truth and lies by saying: “Truth is if you tell somebody what happened. A lie is if you don't tell somebody what happened.”

Asked about his interests, Boy A said he liked “anatomy, the human body” and “inner life, the skeleton”. He said he liked anatomical drawing. The detectives asked if he liked drawing live people. “No, more evolutionary”, he responded.

During interview two Boy A gave gardaí much the same story they had heard from Boy B, that he had met Ana in the park that day but was not with her in the lead-up to the time she was reported missing.

DET GARDA  
MARCUS  
ROANTREE,  
WHO  
QUESTIONED  
BOY A.  
PHOTOGRAPH:  
COLLINS  
COURTS

When he was shown CCTV footage, he said at one point that two people caught on camera could have been the ones who beat him up. “That might be good news,” he said. “Is there any more footage?” Those figures were actually Boy B and Ana.

Det Garda Doyle then told the boy that Ana's blood was found on his boots. “Are you joking me?” Boy A asked. “You can't be serious.”



The interview paused after Boy A asked for some air. His solicitor asked if he was going to be sick, and one of the gardaí got him a glass of water.

When questioning resumed Doyle said: “What I’m saying to you is the only place you could have got the blood on your boots was in that room, so were you in that room?” “No,” he replied.

The detectives showed Boy A a photograph of the tape around Ana’s neck. Boy A said he had never had any tape like that.

Asked about the search results on his phone, Boy A said the torture-methods result came up when he was searching for horror films online. He said he wasn’t interested in torture films.

Despite being presented with strong forensic evidence, Boy A did not admit any involvement in the murder. Most of his responses were of the “no comment” or “I don’t know” type.

Detectives were disappointed. The forensics were strong, but without admissions Boy A might be able to claim that he acted in self-defence or that he never meant to kill Ana.

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The detectives wondered if Boy B’s account could be used to get Boy A talking. Perhaps Boy A would realise all the blame was being put on him and want to defend himself

Nine kilometres away in Finglas the interviews with Boy B were going much better for gardaí. After eventually telling them during his fifth interview that he heard Ana scream, the boy gradually admitted more and more.

This culminated in Boy B telling Daly and Gannon that Ana had gone into Room 1 with Boy A. Despite being told to leave by Boy A, Boy B decided to explore the rest of the house. Then the sound of “shuffling” made him run to Room

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1, where he saw Boy A “kind of flip” Ana. He described a judo-type move to the detectives.

Boy A started to choke her and pull off her clothes, he said. Ana was crying and saying: “No, no. Don’t do this.”

He said at this point both Boy A and Ana turned to look at him in the doorway, which made him run away. Boy A had a “blank look on his face”, he said.

It still wasn’t the truth, but it was as close as the detectives could get in the limited time for which they could detain Boy B.

The detectives, who were being advised by a specialist from the Garda national bureau of criminal investigation, wondered if Boy B’s account could be used to get Boy A talking over in Clondalkin. Perhaps Boy A would realise all the blame was being put on him and want to defend himself.

A few of the most relevant pages of Boy B’s fifth interview were copied and printed before being sent across town to Roantree and Doyle.

In their sixth and final interview, the detectives read the pages to Boy A before asking if there was anything he wanted to add.

“[Boy B] is lying. That is all,” the boy replied.

On the afternoon of Thursday, May 25th, 10 days after Ana’s murder, an official from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions called Insp O’Neill and gave permission for Boy A to be charged with murder.

The charge was put to him at 4.01pm at Clondalkin Garda station, just before the 24-hour limit for questioning expired. Neither he nor his father, who was also present, made any reply.

An hour later he was brought in a Garda van, in the company of his parents, to the Children Court, in Smithfield in Dublin, his first court appearance of many.

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The Garda said it was concerned about vigilante behaviour against the boys' families. Local gardaí would later mount discreet extra patrols to ensure the families' safety

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Gardaí normally announce arrests in murder investigations shortly after they occur, particularly in high-profile cases. But here they made an exception. The arrest of the boys was not made public until just before Boy A was due in court. At the time gardaí said they were concerned about vigilante behaviour against the boys' families. Local gardaí would later mount discreet extra patrols to ensure the families' safety.

The Children Court is a bleak grey-and-brown stone building on the corner of Smithfield Square. Inside and up the stairs are two cramped courtrooms, although usually only one is in use. Every day a stream of children pass through the court, usually on relatively minor charges to do with public order, drug possession and theft.

Jail terms are rare, and the vast majority of defendants enter early guilty pleas. The Children Court is effectively a District Court, the lowest tier of the criminal-justice system. As at a District Court, there is no jury, and a judge may impose a maximum 12-month sentence for any one offence.

So Boy A's case was never going to stay there. The legislation requires Children Court judges to transfer murder and rape cases to the Central Criminal Court, where children accused of such crimes are effectively tried as adults. A full jury hears the case, and the judge has a much wider array of sentencing powers.

Fifteen minutes after the Garda van arrived at Smithfield, Boy A appeared in the courtroom with his parents. Also packed into the room were two solicitors, two detectives, three journalists and Judge John O'Connor.

The judge told the boy's mother she could sit beside him if she wished. His grandfather entered a short time later and was granted permission to stay.

Asked by Judge O'Connor if it was his first time in court, the boy replied "yes".

At that early stage the priority for the boy's family was getting bail. Oberstown Children Detention Campus, in Lusk in north Co Dublin, is the only facility in the State for holding underage detainees. It is not a particularly pleasant place for anyone, but a sheltered 13-year-old with no criminal record was likely to find it especially tough.

As a District Court judge, O'Connor had no power to grant bail in murder cases. The boy would have to apply to the High Court at a later date. The judge remanded Boy A to Oberstown, allowing him a few moments with his parents before departing. The boy looked confused as he was ushered out of the courtroom. He walked with a pronounced limp.

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The evidence against Boy A accumulated quickly. Gardaí found a backpack in his bedroom containing gloves, knee pads, shinguards, a scarf-like 'snood' and a home-made mask

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pads, gloves and backpack.

The evidence against Boy A accumulated quickly once he was charged. During the search of his house gardaí found a backpack in his bedroom containing gloves, knee pads, shinguards, a scarf-like "snood" and a home-made mask. This would soon become known among investigators as the "murder kit".

The skull-like mask would become one of the most striking pieces of evidence in the case. Skin coloured, it covered only the top half of the face. Eye and nose holes had been cut out, and sharp teeth had been cut into the upper jaw and painted red. Ana's blood was found on the inside and outside of the mask, as well as on the knee

The gloves were particularly important to the Garda case, as they explained why no fingerprints were found at the scene.

An examination of two phones found in Boy A's bedroom revealed almost 12,500 images, the vast majority of which were pornographic. One featured a man in a balaclava looking at a semi-naked woman; another showed a man choke a woman as a second man watched.

The phones' memories showed several pornographic videos had been accessed online, including one with a title referring to a woman called Anastasia. Another referred to Russian teens.

Perhaps even more concerning was evidence of searches for "child porn", "horse porn" and "dead boy prank in abandoned haunted school". When the trial started, the following year, none of these details would be heard by the jury.

Gardaí also found witnesses to bolster their case against Boy A. A dog walker had said he saw a boy roughly matching his description "making a beeline" for the abandoned house on May 14th. A school friend told them Boy A appeared agitated and fidgety in the days after Ana went missing.

When the analysis of the semen on Ana's top showed it matched Boy A's DNA, the Garda got permission to charge him with aggravated sexual assault; the aggravated part referred to the extreme violence involved. The new evidence also allowed them to rearrest Boy B for further questioning.

Boy B was arrested again by appointment on July 8th and brought to Lucan Garda station, where he was interviewed another three times by Daly and Gannon. Daly went through the same procedure as before, gently coaxing the boy to reveal more about what happened that day.

This time Boy B said his coaccused wore the mask, which he described as a zombie mask, when he attacked Ana. He described it as a "really cool" mask that Boy A had made the previous Halloween.

Boy B gave gardaí some more details about what he did and saw, including that he had entered the house alone first and picked up a stick there. But he continued to deny any involvement in the attack.

He also told gardaí of a conversation he had with Boy A the month before Ana's murder. He described the conversation as going like this:

Boy A: "Hey, want to kill somebody?"

Boy B: "No".

Boy A: "Ah here, why not?"

Boy B: "Because it's retarded."

Boy A: "Oh, come on."

Boy B: "Who are you planning on killing?"

Boy A: "Ana Kriégel".

Boy B: "In your dreams".

Boy B said he presumed that his friend was messing and that he always said things like that. He repeated that he had no idea what his friend was planning on May 14th.

"Why didn't you do anything in the room?" Daly asked.

"Because I was scared. I was shocked. I didn't know what to do, because my brain was frozen, frozen in place. I didn't know what to do."

He lied to gardaí the day after Ana went missing because he was "just trying to forget about it and pretend nothing happened".

"Did you not think you owed it to Ana and her family?" Daly asked.

The boy replied he was scared of being framed by Boy A.

He said he was ashamed of not helping Ana that day.

“But you could have saved her,” the detective said.

“I know.”

“Why didn’t you try and save her?”

“I don’t know.”

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You lie to everybody.  
Lie, lie, lie. You’re in a  
corner and you try to  
wriggle out of it by  
telling a story to suit.  
Do you see how this  
looks for you?

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Daly accused the boy of telling “lie after lie after lie”, telling him: “You go and collect a girl that [Boy A] wants to kill, and you bring her to an abandoned house and you, in your words, ‘hand over’ that girl to [Boy A], the girl he said he wanted to kill.

“And then you were deceptive afterwards. You lie to everybody. Lie, lie, lie. You’re in a corner and you try to wriggle out of it by telling a story to suit. Do you see how this looks for you?”

Boy B said that he did. Det Garda Daly put it to Boy B that he let “a charade” play out in the days after Ana went missing, as people searched for her while he knew she was in the abandoned house.

“I didn’t know he would murder her,” Boy B said. “I kept thinking to myself, This isn’t real, this isn’t happening. I kept thinking, Boy A wouldn’t do this, it’s not like him.”

The detectives suspected that Boy B still wasn’t telling the whole truth, but they had to either charge or release him. He was released while the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions considered the matter. Four days later Boy B was rearrested and charged with Ana’s murder. He made no reply.

## BAIL

In the Children Court that day he addressed the hearing twice, once to confirm he had never been in court before and once to ask if he could go to the bathroom. Like his coaccused, he would have to apply to the High Court for bail.

Proceedings moved remarkably quickly once the accused were charged. There is usually a delay of between 18 and 24 months between the point of charge and the beginning of a murder trial. Legal issues can mean it takes much longer.

The speed in this case was almost unheard of, especially for a trial involving a long list of witnesses and a huge amount of forensic and CCTV evidence. In the back offices of Garda stations orders came down that work on the Kriégel case was to be prioritised. Analysis took days rather than weeks, and restrictions on overtime were eased. Forensic Science Ireland staff came in on evenings and at weekends to work on the case.

Later the Central Criminal Court would be asked to clear a non-negotiable four weeks for the trial in the first half of 2019.

Part of the reason for the speed of proceedings is that, at first, it looked as if the accused might not be granted bail before the trial. The authorities did not want to keep such young children, who like everybody else enjoyed the presumption of innocence, locked up for longer than necessary.

Boy A would spend more than two months in custody before being granted bail, in the High Court, on August 2nd.

The social-justice charity Extern, which the courts often use in complex cases, was asked to support and supervise the boy, to ensure he complied with the bail conditions.

Boy B spent just over a month in custody before being granted bail, on August 21st.



Both children would be free, albeit heavily supervised, until the start of their trial, in April this year.

## TRIAL PREPARATIONS

The legal age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12, but this drops to 10 when rape or murder is alleged. At 13, Boys A and B became the youngest people in the history of the State to be charged with murder.

Planning for the trial began at an early stage, with Mr Justice Paul McDermott assigned to hear it. Brendan Grehan SC, a criminal barrister with huge experience in high-profile trials such as those of the former Anglo Irish Bank chief executive David Drumm and the serial killer Mark Nash, would lead the case for the State.

The judge and barristers would wear neither wigs nor robes, and the accused would be allowed to sit beside their parents in the public gallery. The boys and their families would also be allowed to enter and exit the Criminal Courts of Justice, on Parkgate Street in central Dublin, through side entrances, and separate rooms would be provided for each of them where they could unwind and consult with lawyers during court downtime.

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The prosecution feared the court would be packed with reporters, negating any efforts to minimise the intimidating atmosphere

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In accordance with the Children Act the general public would not be permitted at the trial, to protect the accuseds' identities and to make the courtroom less intimidating.

Bona-fide journalists would be permitted in court. The murder and the investigation had attracted huge public interest, and the prosecution feared the court would be packed with reporters, negating any efforts to minimise the intimidating atmosphere.

They considered asking for a cap on the number of journalists permitted in court. Allowing them to view proceedings via video link, from another room, was also considered. In the end, the media would be asked to keep their numbers down, with the implication that the court would intervene if necessary.

Guilty pleas are extremely rare in murder trials, as the offence carries an automatic life sentence, no matter what approach the accused takes. As there is no sentencing discount for a guilty plea, defendants reason that they have little to lose by taking a chance on a trial. Even if the evidence is damning they may be acquitted on a technicality or because of an investigative deficiency.

The dynamic changes if the accused is a minor. The Children Act is silent on whether the automatic life sentence applies to children convicted of murder, but the prevailing legal opinion is that it does not and that judges may impose a lesser sentence if appropriate.

Before the trial Boy A's lawyers concentrated on applying to have the indictment severed, which is to say having Boy A tried separately from Boy B. They reasoned that the jury was bound to be prejudiced against their client by hearing Boy B repeatedly accuse him, during his interviews, of attacking Ana.

The interviews of one defendant cannot be used against a coaccused. Boy A's defence team argued that the jurors could not help but be influenced by the content of the interviews, even if they were warned it was irrelevant to the case against their client.

Their application before McDermott failed. "It would be a distortion of the factual background if the entire factual matrix of what happened in the lead-up to the death of Ms Kriégel was not set out in full to the jury," the judge ruled, on April 12th. He said he would give jurors strong warnings about not relying on Boy B's interviews when considering the case against Boy A.

Compared with Boy A, Boy B's defence was much easier to predict. No forensic evidence linked him to the murder scene. In fact, the vast majority of the evidence against him came

from his own mouth during his eight Garda interviews. If he had remained silent he would probably never have been charged.

The priority for Boy B's defence was to minimise the damage done in those interviews, particularly by the many lies he had told detectives. Gardaí had stuck rigidly to the rules when questioning the boy, meaning there was little chance of getting the interviews excluded from the trial for the officers' having been in any way coercive or oppressive.

In early 2019 his legal team asked Dr Colm Humphries, an experienced psychologist specialising in childhood trauma, to examine Boy B and the interview tapes. Having done so, Humphries diagnosed the boy with post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, as a result of witnessing the attack on Ana.

This PTSD contributed to the boy telling the gardaí untruths in an effort to protect himself, he wrote. The doctor said it was his opinion that Boy B had no knowledge of what was going to happen to Ana that day. He said the boy was sexually naive and had gone to the house with Ana and Boy A in the hope of watching them "snogging".

The defence planned to call Humphries as a witness to explain that Boy B's lies were the result of trauma rather than an effort to hide his guilt.

Calling him as a witness carried a risk, however. During Boy B's sessions with the doctor he had given him information about what he saw in the abandoned house that day, information he had failed to give the Garda.

The boy told the doctor he saw Boy A standing over Ana with his trousers open during the attack. And that he saw Ana gasping before going silent.

If Humphries gave defence evidence he would likely be open to cross-examination on these matters, reinforcing the notion that Boy B continued to lie to gardaí up to his final interview.

## THE TRIAL

It is not unusual for families of murder victims to sit through the trial of the accused. Often at least one family member remains in court for nearly all of the case, perhaps taking breaks during some of the more abstruse legal argument.

Few spend as much time in court as Geraldine and Patric Kriégel. Ana's parents, accompanied by a victim-support volunteer, were present for every moment of the trial, from the swearing of the first juror to the final verdict.

When they wanted some water they would ask someone else to get it for them from the nearby canteen rather than leave court themselves. Geraldine took notes constantly, except when she held her husband's hand during some of the more distressing evidence.

Pathology evidence can often be the most upsetting evidence for families to hear. But Geraldine and Patric remained throughout the testimony of Prof Marie Cassidy as she dispassionately described the autopsy process and the injuries inflicted on Ana. (Boys A and B were both excused from court that day because of the graphic nature of the evidence.)

There were several moments when emotion was visible.

A portion of Boy B's interview during which he made a series of childish but nasty comments about Ana visibly distressed her parents. He said Ana was an outcast. She didn't have a boyfriend and dressed in "slutty" clothes, he said. "I thought of Ana like a weirdo. Someone I should not be around."

His description of seeing Boy A attack Ana in the house also upset her parents a great deal.

The accused sat beside one or both of their parents during the seven weeks of evidence. But they sat in different parts of the courtroom from each other and were never seen interacting.

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In court Boy A often rested his head on his father's shoulder. Boy B held his mother's hand almost constantly

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During the lunch break they would go to the consultation rooms on either side of the entrance to court 9 while a family member fetched their lunch from the canteen.

In court Boy A often rested his head on his father's shoulder. Boy B held his mother's hand almost constantly.

The judge insisted on 15-minute breaks every hour or so. These were for the boys' benefit but were probably just as appreciated by everyone else in court, especially on stuffy late-May afternoons.

The only major interruption came on the afternoon of day 15 of the trial, when a note was handed to the lawyers saying Boy B was having a panic attack. An ambulance was called, and court was adjourned for the day.

Boy B was treated at the scene and seen by his GP that evening. The incident occurred as the jury watched videos of Boy B's Garda interviews during which he admitted lying to gardaí. No reason was given for the panic attack.

There was another interruption earlier in the day, when the defence had complained about someone in court staring at Boy B's family at length and said it was distressing them.

From then on, the court day concluded at 2pm rather than 4.15pm. The new timetable would add at least a week to the trial but avoided the even lengthier delays that would have resulted from repeat medical issues.

It was decided at an early stage that the jurors would not come from the general panel that is called in the Criminal Courts of Justice every Monday to hear the week's rape and murder trials. Instead a specially convened panel was brought in on Tuesday, April 29th.

The judge gave the jurors the usual warnings, such as not serving if they knew the parties in the case. Reading from a carefully prepared script, he also warned them the evidence was likely to be distressing.

Jurors were also advised they would be subject to criminal sanction if they disclosed the accused's identities outside of court. This warning applied to everyone else as well, the judge said.

The warnings seemed to do their job; it appears the identities of the boys have to date not been shared publicly online.

During jury selection each side is allowed to object to seven jurors without explaining why. All three legal teams used this right liberally. The result was a jury of eight men and four women, all of them in at least middle age.

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Geraldine and Patric clearly found giving evidence emotional, but neither sought to make speeches or cast blame while in the witness box

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Ana's parents were among the first witnesses to be called by Brendan Grehan, the prosecution counsel. As well as taking the jury through Ana's last two days, Geraldine and Patric humanised her. Their descriptions of Ana's personality and hobbies made her a real presence in the courtroom rather than an abstract piece of evidence. The jurors would never see any photographs of Ana alive, but they would have a clear picture of her in their minds.

Grehan also elicited detailed evidence of the bullying Ana suffered and the distress it caused her. The point was to show she was vulnerable and easily taken advantage of by the accused, he said.

Geraldine and Patric clearly found giving evidence emotional, but neither sought to make speeches or cast blame while in the witness box.

Their testimony was clear and calm. There was little hint of anger. The same was true for all four of the accused boys' parents. All gave evidence of their interactions with the accused before and after Ana's death, but none sought to use the witness box to proclaim the boys' innocence. The furthest any of them went was Boy B's father, who said his son was not capable of a crime like this.

Slowly but surely technology is becoming an intrinsic part of running a trial, and the trial of Boys A and B used it more than most. The seven child witnesses in the case gave evidence via video link from another room in the building, sparing them the distress and distraction of facing a live courtroom.

In the past the use of video link has been plagued by technical problems, with technicians often struggling to get the picture or sound working while a bemused jury looks on. It would seem those days are gone; all the children were able to give their evidence without interruption.

A significant amount of CCTV was played to the jury by Garda Seamus Timmins. Nothing new there, except in this trial the location of CCTV cameras was shown concurrently on a digital map of the area, making it easy for jurors to determine where exactly the accused were when captured on film. Grehan would play this footage again when making his closing speech.

Also helpful was the use of a computer-generated 3D model of Glenwood House, which was created by Forensic Science Ireland and the Garda photography and mapping units.

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The location of the suspected murder weapons, the blood spatters and Ana's clothes were shown in a model beside their

The locations of objects such as the suspected murder weapons and Ana's clothes, as well as of the blood spatters, were shown in the model beside their photographs. It gave the jury the closest possible sense of being at the scene without having to visit the house.

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The 3D modelling programme has been used just once before, in the 2017 prosecution of two brothers for murder. Ironically, during that trial Grehan, who was defending one of the accused, objected to the use of the 3D model on the basis of its being untested.

For such a complex case, involving so many strains of evidence, the trial was conducted with remarkable efficiency.

Defence concessions in several aspects in the case, including the lawfulness of the boys' custody and the gathering of evidence, meant many potential Garda witnesses were not required to give evidence.

Those Garda witnesses who were called often spent only a few minutes in the box. Early in the trial, five or six witnesses were sometimes called in a single day.

Part of the reason for the pace was the lack of cross-examination from the defence. More often than not, Patrick Gageby, for Boy A, and Damien Colgan, for Boy B, declined to ask the witnesses any questions.

This made it difficult to discern the nature of the boys' defence until very late in the case, but some of the few questions counsel posed gave a little insight into their strategy.

Gageby asked Geraldine Kriégel if her daughter was sexually active. She replied that she wasn't, a point confirmed by later medical evidence.

Colgan asked Prof Cassidy if someone who witnessed that attack on Ana would be traumatised. She agreed that they would be.

Det Gardaí Daly and Gannon were questioned at length by Colgan about the way they interviewed Boy B. Gardaí didn't bring in specialist interviewers or give the boy regular



breaks, counsel said. The detectives replied that they stuck to the rules and that the boy's mother was with him at all times.

## IN THE ABSENCE OF THE JURY

Much of the defence work focused on persuading the judge to include evidence that was favourable to the accused while excluding evidence that painted them in a negative light.

For Boy A, the most important evidence to exclude was the forensics. Gageby argued that the testing of his client's boots, on which Ana's blood was found, was inadmissible, as gardaí had taken the boots under false pretenses. He submitted that gardaí had pretended to take the boots to investigate his claim of being assaulted by two men but were actually taking them to investigate Ana's disappearance. He made the same argument for Boy A's phone.

Det Garda Gabriel Newton said she took the boots and phone solely because they might help her to find Boy A's attackers. She said she didn't even know Ana was dead at that stage.

The judge agreed with Newton, and the defence application failed.

Next Gageby argued the DNA evidence against Boy A was inadmissible because Supt Gordon had filled out the wrong form to authorise the taking of samples from the boy.

Called to give evidence, Gordon conceded that, instead of filling in an authorisation form under the 2014 DNA Act, he filled in one concerning the 1990 Act. The prosecution said it was a record-keeping error but no more. The detectives who took the samples gave evidence that they were correctly instructed under the 2014 Act. Again the defence application failed.

One of the main objectives of Boy B's defence team was to have the jury hear the evidence of Dr Humphries, the psychologist who examined the teen at the start of the year and determined he had been traumatised by witnessing the attack on Ana.

In the absence of the jury, Humphries repeated what he said in his report, that the trauma caused Boy B to tell the gardaí “untruths”. The doctor said he didn’t like to use the word “lie” because he didn’t want to seem judgmental.

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The psychologist said Boy B was bright but naive and immature. He said that, at Oberstown, Boy B had asked for Lego to play with – a request the staff had never had before

He told Colgan the boy was bright but naive and immature. By way of illustration, he said that, during his stay in Oberstown, Boy B had asked for Lego to play with – a request the staff had never had before.

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Grehan’s cross-examination of Humphries for the prosecution was easily the most combative of the entire trial. Counsel took particular issue with the doctor’s assertion that Boy B had “no knowledge of a plan for murder”.

Grehan said this was a matter for the jury. He said the doctor’s report contained a lot of jargon but there “doesn’t appear to be any engagement with the facts of the interviews”.

He submitted that allowing the doctor’s evidence into the trial would trespass on the function of the jury as the judges of fact and effectively make Humphries a “13th juror”. After taking the night to think about it, McDermott excluded the doctor’s evidence entirely.

But the prosecution did not enjoy an unbroken record of success in their legal applications. In fact a significant number of the judge’s other decisions ended up going against them, including one concerning a novel attempt to introduce photographs of a mannequin into evidence.

## HORROR MOVIES AND HEAVY METAL

There is a long history of prosecutors deploying unusual exhibits in criminal trials. In 2010 a bodhrán was presented in the Special Criminal Court to prove the accused was a member

of the IRA. During the Troubles a packet of digestive biscuits was presented in the same court; prosecutors argued it was a component of a home-made mortar.

Striking exhibits can be especially helpful in murder trials. Juries have been shown swords, spades, guns, bats and, in the 2008 trial of Brian Kearney, for strangling his wife, a vacuum-cleaner flex. Such exhibits can help juries visualise how a crime may have been committed far better than any description from a witness.

That was the idea behind the prosecution's plan in this case to dress a mannequin up in the clothes worn by Boy A during Ana's murder and present photographs of it to the jury. Pictures of the mannequin, fitted with the mask, gloves, snood, shin-guards and knee pads found in the boy's backpack, would be shown to jurors.

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Presenting a mannequin dressed in the clothes worn by Boy A during the murder would essentially be showing the jury the last thing Ana saw before her death

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It was, to say the least, an unusual request. The prosecution knew McDermott would need to be convinced of the merits of bringing such an unusual exhibit into a courtroom. It would essentially be showing the jury the last thing Ana saw before her death.

At the midpoint of the trial, in the absence of the jury, Grehan handed the judge three photographs of the mannequin, which had been dressed by a Forensic Science Ireland expert, John Hoade.

The barrister said it would be nothing more than a "visual aid" to show the jury how items from the backpack were intended to be worn. He said the mannequin was "no more than a representation of what the jury has already seen, in a different format".

Gageby, for Boy A, objected on the basis that the mannequin was speculative and there was no evidence it accurately portrayed what was worn at the time. For example, there was no evidence to show Boy A had his hood up during the attack.

Mr Justice McDermott tends to look at barristers over the top of his spectacles when he is sceptical of their argument. This is what he did as the prosecution tried to get the mannequin photographs admitted.

“Whatever limited probative value is outweighed by the disproportionate prejudicial effects. I’m not satisfied that this photo should go in,” he ruled.

McDermott would use the same reasoning, combined with the quizzical over-the-glasses look, throughout the trial when denying the prosecution permission to admit other evidence.

Most of the legal wrangling was over the items obtained during the search of Boy A’s home after his arrest, including a copybook whose drawings and scribbles included a sketch titled Nightcrawler, showing an emaciated figure with a bandaged skull for a head. The words “just kill them” and “just f\*\*king do it” were also written in the book.

This showed an interest in violent imagery, the prosecution said.

The copybook also contained instructions for constructing a “shell mask”, proof the mask found in the backpack was made by Boy A, they said.

The judge allowed the mask-making instructions but excluded the other items. “I’m trying to tie it in with the case, but I don’t see it,” he told Grehan. “He had a portfolio of material. That seems to be, on its face, the height of it.”

Next up was a completed questionnaire, signed by Boy A, that appeared to form a part of a school assignment. It read:

Where do you like to hang out? Abandoned places.

What are your favourite books? Horror.

What are your favourite sports? Combat.

What are your favourite movies? Horror and comedy.

What are your favourite music? Rap and heavy metal.

Single or taken? Single.

I would describe myself as: Crazy, funny, adventurous.

I am: strange

I think: differently

I feel: not much

I hope to: do well in life

I feel: angry when someone tries to annoy me or hits me

I love: steak and drawing.

I hate: homework.

Aside from the obvious relevance of liking to hang out in abandoned places, the prosecution said the answers gave an insight into how the accused viewed himself, as someone who is “strange”, thinks “differently” and doesn’t feel much.

“These are teenage documents,” McDermott said. “Lots of teenagers watch horror movies and listen to heavy metal.”

Gageby called them “juvenile jottings of a juvenile written in a juvenile fashion as part of some class of a school questionnaire”.

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Among the most contested evidence was the huge amount of pornography found on Boy A’s electronic devices

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He continued: “The fact he feels himself strange or doesn’t feel much is likely to be taken out of context and in some way demonstrate that it is more likely that the author of this planned and killed a young girl. In my opinion it just isn’t there.”

The judge ruled out every part of the questionnaire except for the reference to hanging out in abandoned places.

Among the most contested evidence was the huge amount of pornography found on Boy A's electronic devices.

The prosecution sought to introduce as evidence 10 of the images that depicted sexual violence, as well as the pornographic video mentioning "Anastasia" (not Anastasia Kriégel) in its title. The violent material could be relevant to the boy's attitude towards consent, he said.

"It is general background evidence. That's as far as we go with it. It is potentially relevant in that regard," Grehan said.

Gageby countered that the probative value of the pornography evidence "is so slight as to be imperceptible" while its "prejudicial value is extremely high". If the prosecution wanted to introduce the violent images, they might have to put them in context by introducing the thousands of other nonviolent images, he suggested.

It was also inadmissible because of the six-month gap between the material being accessed and the murder, Gageby argued.

McDermott agreed, ruling that admission of any of the pornographic material would be unfair.

FLOWERS  
LEFT AT  
GLENWOOD  
HOUSE,  
WHERE ANA  
KRIÉGEL WAS  
MURDERED.  
PHOTOGRAPH:  
DARA MAC  
DÓNAILL

Also ruled out was a video found on Boy A's phone that appeared to show Boy B hitting a stone block with a steel-reinforced stick. "Holy shit. That's f\*\*ked," Boy A could be heard saying as he zoomed in on the damage caused to the block.

“I don’t see any relevance other than attempting to draw an inference which could not be justified,” McDermott ruled.

He made the same ruling about evidence of internet searches by Boy B for various types of knives and for a Youtube video entitled My Girlfriend Tortured, Stabbed and Starved Me.

Among the vast amount of evidence collected by gardaí were several references to satanism. In Boy B’s room gardaí found a copybook laying out the rules of a “satanic cult” he had set up. There was a list of the group’s members, including both accused, as well as the cult rules:

“Only pledge hosts can give pledges.

“Don’t talk about it.

“Act normally like nothing happened.

“No talking about Jesus or God, only Satan.”

Unprompted, Boy B had told gardaí during his sixth interview that the “cult” was actually a homework club. Participants would share their homework with each other if they had forgotten to do it, he explained. The reference to satanism was to dissuade other classmates from wanting to join.

Satanism arose again when, during one interview, Daly asked Boy B if May 14th, the day Ana was murdered, had any relevance. “That’s doomsday, isn’t it?” the detective asked.

Before the interview Daly had put the date into Google and was brought to a website called Satan’s Rapture, which featured a calendar stating the world would end on May 14th. The boy said the date held no significance for him and he was not familiar with the satanic calendar.

At another point in his interviews, Boy B described seeing a “pentagram”, a symbol associated with satanism, in Glenwood House.

Before the start of the case prosecutors and investigators debated the relevance of the references to satanism. Detectives had discovered little to no evidence of motivation for Ana's murder; perhaps an interest in the occult might provide an explanation. In the United States in the 1980s a series of violent crimes was linked to satanism, leading to what became known as "satanic panic" among the public. (It was later established that many of the crimes had little or no link to satanism.) Closer to home, the murder of a seven-year-old boy in 1973 in Palmerstown, in west Dublin, was suspected by some investigators as having a satanic link.

There were several drawbacks to the satanism theory, however. Pentagrams, like crudely drawn swastikas, are commonly used to deface derelict buildings, and Boy B's homework-club explanation for the "cult" was corroborated by several classmates.

In the end the prosecution decided not to place significant relevance on the satanism material. The jury would hear most of it in passing during the run of evidence, but it would not form a central plank of the prosecution case.

## **THE CASE BEFORE THE JURY**

Even without much of the mobile-phone evidence the prosecution had built an extremely strong case against Boy A. It consisted of three main elements: the CCTV of him in the park, the forensic evidence linking him to the scene, and the lies he told gardaí, especially about being beaten up by two unidentified assailants.

The case against Boy B also had its strengths but was less clear cut. The prosecution were relying almost completely on his Garda questioning, to the extent that they made the unusual decision to show the jury almost the entirety of the videos of his interviews, 16 hours' worth.

Jurors normally receive only written transcripts of interviews, but the prosecution believed it was vital for them to see Boy B's demeanour and the evolution of his story over the eight sessions. (Only snippets of Boy A's interviews were read out, as he declined to answer most of the detectives' questions.)



Nevertheless, it got them only so far. Boy B was shown repeatedly lying to gardaí, but there was zero forensic evidence linking him to the killing. In order to prove murder the prosecution needed to prove he knew the plan that day was to kill Ana. To do this they relied heavily on Boy B's admission that Boy A had asked him a month earlier if he wanted to kill the girl.

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The case against Boy B would essentially boil down to one issue: Did he believe Boy A when he asked if he wanted to kill the girl, or did he think he was joking?

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The entire case against Boy B would essentially boil down to one issue: Did he believe Boy A when he said this or did he think he was joking? If the former was true Boy B was guilty, if it was the latter he was innocent.

Being at the scene of a murder is not a crime, the jury would be repeatedly told. Nor is failing to intervene to stop a murder.

After more than six weeks of evidence the prosecution closed their case. Neither Boy A or B gave evidence. Nor did they call any witnesses in their defence. This was their right, the jury would be reminded. The onus was on the prosecution to prove their guilt, not the defence to prove their innocence.

Before closing speeches began there was some legal argument about the possibility of alternative verdicts being put before the jury. There had been some speculation that lawyers for one or both of the boys would ask that the jury be allowed to consider a manslaughter verdict as well as a murder verdict. But there was no such application from either party.

After the jury began its deliberations, however, Gageby asked the judge to tell the jurors that the option of manslaughter was still open to them. McDermott refused after objections from the prosecution.

This left only the question of whether the jury would be allowed to consider an alternative verdict against Boy B of impeding the prosecution of Boy A through his lies in interview. After considering the matter the judge ruled that the offence did not apply, as Boy B's interviews could not be used against Boy A in evidence anyway. No alternative verdicts would be put before the jury.

The boys' defences would finally become clear when their lawyers delivered their closing speeches.

In a speech lasting less than an hour, Gageby focused on what he said was a lack of evidence that Boy A planned to kill Ana. He never overtly said his client was connected to the girl's death, but he conceded that the jury might decide Boy A was present when the injuries were inflicted on Ana. "But is there any real evidence that he planned any of this?" he asked.

The barrister also alluded to the idea that Boy A and Ana engaged in consensual sexual activity. Glenwood House was probably used by young people for "romantic trysts", given the presence of condom wrappers on the ground, he said. Pathology evidence showed injuries to Ana's genitals, but it couldn't be established if these occurred through nonconsensual activity.

Gageby added that it "can't be ruled out" that a neck swab taken from Ana showing male DNA did not result from "casual intimacy".

He said the case was based almost entirely on circumstantial evidence. "This has to be very carefully weighed."

The barrister said Boy A came from a "decent, hard-working family". This is not a defence, he said, but is highly relevant to determining if Boy A planned to kill.

He also warned the jury against overinterpreting the material found on his client's phone.

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There was no way Boy B would be stupid enough to call for Ana and walk her through a park full of CCTV cameras if he knew the plan was to murder her, counsel argued

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“We know young people have many devices and interests and frequently have unlimited ability to look for and find things of interest. If you took any 13- or 14-year-old-boy and did a complete trawl through their devices, what are the chances that you find something, one or two small things, that are unpleasant?”

Referring to Boy B’s claim that Boy A said he wanted to kill Ana, counsel said there is nothing to suggest this was anything more than a joke. Irish people tend to use “extravagant” language, Gageby said. “Have your parents never told you they’d kill you if you come home late again?”

In any event, jurors couldn’t consider it as evidence against his client, because it had come from Boy B’s interview.

Colgan, in his closing speech for Boy B, repeated his criticisms of the nature of the Garda interviews. He also suggested blame for Ana’s death lay squarely with Boy A.

There was no way Boy B would be stupid enough to call for Ana and walk her through a park full of CCTV cameras if he knew the plan was to murder her. Boy B lied to gardaí, counsel conceded, but he did so because he was traumatised by what he saw in Glenwood House.

He was also scared of Boy A, who was bigger and stronger than him and knew martial arts.

Colgan dismissed the references to the satanic club as “sensationalist” evidence. He concluded by telling the jury they must find Boy B not guilty if they believed he had no knowledge of a plan to kill Ana.

## JURY DELIBERATIONS AND VERDICT

Jurors began deliberating on the afternoon of Wednesday, June 12th. They would remain out for 14 hours and 24 minutes over the course of five days.

During deliberations there were few clues about which direction jurors were leaning in. Unusually, they did not come back with any questions about the law. The only requests were to re-examine some exhibits, such as the bloodied stick, Boy A's gloves and the Tescon tape. They also asked for DVDs of seven of Boy B's Garda interviews.

Jurors had been asked to consider the cases against the boys separately, but as time wore on it became clear that the verdicts would come together. At 2.02pm on Tuesday, June 18th, word went around the second floor of the Criminal Courts of Justice that jurors had reached a verdict. Gardaí and journalists rushed back to the court, which, despite being closed to the public, seemed to fill up instantly.

Boy B sat with his eyes shut while clutching his mother's arm. He appeared to be doing breathing exercises. Boy A's father put his arm around his son.

"Have you reached a verdict on any of the counts?" the registrar asked the forewoman. She replied that they had. Her hand appeared to shake as she handed over the verdict paper.

Boy A was guilty of the murder and aggravated sexual assault of Anastasia Kriégel, the registrar announced. Boy B was guilty of her murder. The forewoman confirmed these were unanimous verdicts.

The courtroom was silent for about 30 seconds. Boy A appeared to cry while Boy B held his head in his hands.

Boy B's father began shouting. A prison officer told his wife: "He's too high. He has to go out." The father slammed the courtroom door as he left, before returning a few seconds later and embracing his wife and son. Boy A's parents also wept and hugged their son but remained silent.

“You bunch of scumbags, you bunch of pricks... innocent boy,” Boy B’s father said. He clapped sarcastically at the court as the two teens were led away.

Geraldine Kriégel sat with her eyes closed as the verdict was read out. She and Patric remained calm and composed. They stood and nodded to the jurors as they left the room. Some members appeared to smile and nod back.

The parents then embraced their friends before turning and hugging some of the gardaí. Patric even kissed one of the nearby journalists on the cheek. They thanked the prosecution team before being led upstairs to join family in the victim-support area.

Mr Justice McDermott thanked the jurors and excused them from further service for life. “This has been a very difficult trial,” he said. “I can’t offer you anything apart from, of course, sincere gratitude.” He told jurors they were free to go and “get on with their lives”. He reminded them that restrictions on them discussing the case or revealing the boys’ identities continued. The restrictions on naming the boys also continued for everyone else, he said.

Boy A and Boy B were remanded in custody to Oberstown until sentencing on July 15th, 2019.

OBERSTOWN  
IS THE ONLY  
FACILITY IN  
THE STATE  
FOR HOLDING  
UNDERAGE  
DETAINEES.  
PHOTOGRAPH:  
FENNELL

In criminal trials there is a lot of talk about facts and the truth, but such trials are often not very good at finding either. Instead they are effective at determining one very narrow question: Is there enough evidence to show beyond a reasonable doubt an accused committed an offence? The jury in the trial of Boys A and B determined that there was.

But it could not determine why Ana was murdered. And it could not determine why Ana was lured to an abandoned house and beaten to death. It wasn't the job of the jury to decide on the boys' motivations. That's a job for any probation and psychological experts whom the judge may ask to assess the boys before he sentences them.

## **'ANA LOVED TO DANCE'**

Throughout the trial there was widespread public anger, much of it expressed on social media, that some of the most intimate details of Ana Kriégel's life were being put on display while Boys A and B had complete anonymity.

Many wondered if the boys would be named on conviction. They won't be. It will remain a criminal offence ever to identify them as Ana's murderers. The teens will continue to be known publicly as Boy A and Boy B, the terms journalists settled on just before the trial began.

We know from the evidence that, although Boy A is an unusual child, he had never been in trouble with the Garda and did not drink or take drugs. He was tall for his age and skilled in martial arts.

He spent a lot of time online and liked horror movies, special effects and drawing. He also played a lot of video games.

His coaccused described him to gardaí as "strange", "weird" and "not a rational thinker".

As for Boy B, several witnesses gave evidence that he was unusually bright. He excelled at primary school, despite a lack of focus on academics in his home. His marks started to drop at secondary school as he struggled with the increased homework.

He loved to make things with his hands and was regarded as particularly skilled with technology. Like Boy A, he liked computer games but showed little interest in social media. Twice his father had bought him a smartphone, and twice he had lost it.

Dr Humphries testified that Boy B prefers the company of younger children, as he finds them less demanding. He described this as “unusual but not deviant in any way”.

Despite his father’s best efforts, Boy B did not like sport. He preferred Pokémon and Japanese cartoons.

His father described him as someone who was “hungry for friendship” and believed everything his friends told him.

Humphries said he was friends with Boy A because it gave him “kudos”. He said, “Doing things with [Boy A] made him a bigger presence.”

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We can say Ana loved her family dearly and was loved dearly in return. We can say she was never happier than when curled up with her mother, ‘watching some beautiful fairy-tale-princess movie while munching popcorn’

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After his arrest Boy A called Boy B one of his best friends, a sentiment that was not mutual. Boy B told gardaí the two were not close friends, following a recent falling-out over a set of keys. The court heard evidence that he didn’t trust Boy A. He told one friend he feared Boy A might “snake him” or set him up after the murder. Before Ana’s body was found he cast doubt on Boy A’s claim that two unidentified men had caused his injuries. Boy B told gardaí he believed Ana caused the injuries.

The murder, or perhaps the investigation, seems to have been the end of any friendship between the two. During the trial the boys appeared to make a point of not interacting; they sat separately and filed out of court every day in separate groups.

We can say a lot more about Ana Kriégel. Her mother said she was a girl who loved to dance. She was part of the Leixlip-based troupe Dance LA, whose members, decked in red

headscarves and silver sequins, formed a guard of honour at her funeral. Ana “spent hours in our front room, listening to music, practising her moves”, her mother said.

ANA  
KRIÉGEL

We can say Ana was a great singer and wanted to learn how to play guitar. We can say her Siberian strength and height made her an incredible swimmer.

We can say she loved to volunteer for things and, shortly before her death, agreed to model in a fashion show organised by older classmates to raise money for charity.

Ana never lost touch with her Russian roots. A Russian flag and a matryoshka doll were placed on her coffin. Geraldine and Patric had announced their adoption of Ana in 2006 by handing their friends a similar doll containing her picture.

We can say she also loved her holidays to France, symbolised by the presence of a miniature Eiffel Tower on her coffin.

And we can say Ana loved her family dearly and was loved dearly in return. We can say she was someone who, as her funeral heard, was never happier than when she was curled up with her mother on a Sunday, “watching some beautiful fairy-tale-princess movie while munching her favourite food, popcorn”.

*\* An earlier version of this article stated incorrectly that Glenwood House was owned by O’Callaghan Properties*



**CONOR GALLAGHER**

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Conor Gallagher is The Irish Times’s Crime Correspondent

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