

Shame on Israel

Holocaust in Gaza

A mass slaughter of innocents

Also

Homeless world Cup kicks off

"I stand for free speech"
Interview with Arthur Mathews
(co-creator Father Ted)

Hollywood Confidential
Ronald Reagan: The Charmer

And lots more

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Your support, however, will enable us to continue **highlighting under-represented voices & continue bringing you justice-driven journalism.** Proud supporters of Irish Homeless Street Leagues.



Congratulations and best wishes to the players representing Ireland at the Homeless World Cup in Seoul 2024

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Important Contacts

- Homeless Freephone Number
1800 707 707
(10am to 10pm 7 days a week)
- Outreach Team
01 872 0185
7am to 1am Monday to Friday
9am to 1am Saturday and Sunday

Local Authorities

- DCC Central Placement Services
01 222 6944
- Finglas County Council
01 890 5090
- South Dublin County Council
01 890 5090
- Dún Laoghaire - Rathdown County Council
01 205 4804

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- Focus Ireland Coffee Shop
01 671 2555
- Capuchin Day Centre
01 872 0770
- Merchants Quay Ireland
01 524 0923
- PMVT - Berkley Street
087 247 7117
087 434 1668
- Alice Leahy Trust
01 545 3799

Emergency Numbers

If you need the emergency services, including An Garda Síochána, Dublin Fire Brigade or an Ambulance, please call

122 or 999

Micheál
Martin TD

Tánaiste & Uachtarán Fhianna Fáil

*Best Wishes
to the teams
representing
Ireland in the
Homeless World
Cup in Seoul*



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Going Forward: A New Challenge

The Covid-19 pandemic has taken its toll on us, like it has on many other magazines, organisations and businesses globally.

Unfortunately we are faced with a landscape that has irreversibly changed since the Big Issue first hit the streets in 1995. To meet this challenge Ireland's Big Issue must also change.

We have reluctantly decided, albeit with a heavy heart, to host the magazine digitally only for the foreseeable future.

From now on, Ireland's Big Issue will focus our support on the Irish Homeless Street Leagues. This volunteer-driven, non-profit has been using the power of sport to transform the lives of men and women who've found themselves affected by social exclusion all across Ireland - north and south. By continuing to support the magazine online you'll be helping to develop resilient individuals and stronger communities, connecting people and promoting equality and diversity, inspiring and motivating those affected by social issues.

We will also be adjusting the content to reflect the times we live in whilst endeavoring to provide an informative and enjoyable read.

We thank you for your support to date and ask that you continue to help us. As there is no charge for Ireland's Big Issue we do need your support to continue highlighting the issues that impact our lives and bring you a truthful, balanced view of what is happening in our world.

For as little as a cup of coffee (€3) you can subscribe.



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The skyscraper-sized tsunami that vibrated through the entire planet and no one saw Stephen Hicks and Kristian Svennevig report.

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When you think of Ronald Reagan, it is of a political legacy so dominant that criticising him feels almost sacrilegious. Reagan however as a rising movie star, leveraged his position at the helm of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) to betray fellow actors. In many ways, Hollywood prepared him for the ultimate role of a lifetime: President. Shaun Anthony reports.

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The Taliban's harsh new 'vice and virtue' laws are a throwback to the oppression of the 1990s - especially for the women of Afghanistan. Kambaiz Rafi reports.

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Letter to my Younger Self - Chelsea Bieker

Each issue we ask a well-known person to write a letter to their 16-year-old self. This issue Chelsea Bieker (37), whose work has appeared in the likes of *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Cut*, *Granta* and *The Paris Review* takes on the challenge.

Dear 16 year old
Chelsea,

Let me start by saying, wow, you are a miracle! You are amazing! You are inherently worthy and loved! I know that your guardians are worried about saying things like this to you. To show such absolute emotion and warmth, to affirm you so deliberately. Though you think this is because there is something wrong with you, I can assure you, it's not you, it's them. They just don't have a ton of tools in their toolsets. In fact, they might even be afraid that telling you nice things about yourself will in some way put you at risk for failing, for "getting a big head." From where I am now, though, I know this isn't true. I'm 37, and I want to let you know that we make it out. We do all the things you wanted to do. You're a writer now. You're a mother. You



live in a really happy home. And you've done a ton of work on yourself to get there.

I know you're counting the days until you become an official adult. You've wanted this for so long because once you are eighteen you won't have to worry about who has custody of you, or where

you will live next, or if you are a burden to anyone. You want independence. You've just started dating your first boyfriend, and we both know he's boring and not

right for you, but he is cute. Have fun, why not? Fun is Fundamental in life. And sometimes not-fun things are also

fundamental. I can tell you that you have a few

**once you are eighteen you
won't have to worry about who has
custody of you**

very tumultuous years coming where the trauma of this time and the years before this will hit you like a ton of bricks. You're going to officially quit gymnastics soon, your one outlet for your pain, and when that's gone, you have some tough lessons to learn about using substances to numb. I don't know how exactly—luck, universal purpose, God, if you're so inclined—we make it though this time alive. After 20, your story doesn't include alcohol or drugs. That's when the real magic starts.



I know some days you allow yourself to fantasize, what if, what if. What if she got better and finally chose you. You don't get this now, but she lost the power of choice long ago. And not everything in life resolves. You will write a lot about this. It seems like others want to read about this, have felt it too. Your hunch is correct that you are not alone even when it feels like it.

Listen, the past will keep revealing itself in new ways and that will be hard, but there will still be a lot of good

Right now you love Blink 182 and warm summer nights. I think you're about to try a cigarette for the first time and I really wish you wouldn't. I think of you now as my daughter and sometimes I do visualizations where I sit with you, talk to you, tell you how much I love you. When I look at my own daughter, I can't believe the childhood you're having. I honestly can't even believe it. She has never lived a day like ours and she never will. Even at sixteen, I know you've dreamed about one day becoming a mother and doing it the way you wish it had been done for you. But right now you're bored in that town, and pretty sure you should lose your virginity already and you're pretty sure you won't ever get caught shoplifting, and you're really pretty resilient all things considered.

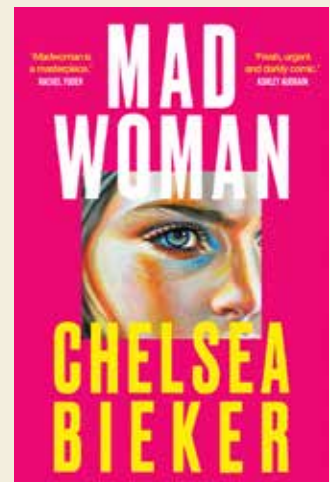
Truth is the anecdote to shame.

times. Right now, despite the badness, you're still bewitched by youth. You have best friendships (yep, those last!) and you laugh so hard with those friends you can't breathe, and you are a good friend back. You're capable of a lot, and you're really smart, I don't care what that asshole biology teacher told you. One day, women will start to be believed more often. Not all the time, but things will shift. You will be unafraid to tell the truth and you'll be surrounded by women who hold your hand through it all. Truth is the anecdote to shame.

On the worst of days, it will feel like nothing you do matters. But I'm here to tell you it all matters. It all adds up. Keep going. There's beauty everywhere.

Hey. I know you miss your mom more than anything in the world. I know you don't understand why she never came back for you. The tough thing is that I have to deliver the bad news. You probably already know because you're quite intuitive. But she isn't going to come back. Like, ever. I know you sit in the driveway waiting.

Chelsea Bieker's new novel **MADWOMAN** (Oneworld) is currently available in all good bookshops, online and on Audible.



Shame on Israel: Holocaust in Gaza

A mass slaughter of innocents

With over 40,000 Palestinian casualties in Gaza, the West Bank under attack and terror bombings in Lebanon the escalating genocidal actions of Benjamin Netanyahu’s Israel sees world opinion view Israel as a terrorist state guilty of creating its own Holocaust. Shaun Anthony reports.

The word Holocaust is defined as – a mass slaughter of innocents

- What Israel has done to the population of Gaza is exactly that. It is not a war, since the population of Gaza have no army to defend them.

Its origins

Before 1948 Palestine was home to a diverse population of Arabs, Jews, and Christians, all groups had religious ties to the area, especially the city of Jerusalem. In 1947, the United Nations proposed the partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem as an internationally



Photo by Ali Jadallah

administered city. On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was established, marking the end of British rule in Palestine. Between 1947 and 1949, Zionist (a movement that believed in securing a national home for Jewish people) military forces attacked major Palestinian

More than 700,000 Palestinians fled, or were forcibly displaced, from their homes during the creation of Israel in 1948.

cities and destroyed some 530 villages. About 15,000 Palestinians were killed in a series of mass atrocities, including dozens of massacres. More than 700,000 Palestinians fled, or were forcibly displaced, from their homes during the creation of Israel

in 1948.

Every year on May 15, Palestinians around the world mark the Nakba, or catastrophe, referring to the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948.

1967

The Six-Day War broke out between Israel and a coalition of Arab countries, including Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. Israel with the help of superior firepower supplied by America captured the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, changing the landscape of Palestine, with the Gaza Strip and the West Bank becoming occupied territories, leading to a deterioration of the humanitarian circumstances in those areas from that point on.

When there is no hope and your land is illegally occupied with Israeli settlements built upon them, when your future is sublimation to a people who see you as worthless there is bound to be a fightback, hence the origins of a terrorist campaign be it the PLO -Palestinian Liberation Army or Hamas.

Two state solution

In answer to the growing conflict The Oslo Accords an historical agreement was brokered by USA between Israel Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin & Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat it was a pathway to a two state solution. However there were those within Israel who did not want a peaceful solution that accommodated both sides.

Oslo's Collapse, 1996–2000

In November 1995, Israel's Prime Minister Rabin was assassinated SUPPOSELY by Yigal Amir, an Israeli who opposed the Oslo Accords on religious grounds and that would have been the end of the story if secret film footage of the assassination had not come to light revealing Rabin was not shot by this patsy Amir BUT was bundled unhurt into his limousine where he was MURDERED BY HIS OWN SECRET SERVICE on his way to hospital.

The Oslo accords however was dead and following elections New Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who hailed from the Likud Party, which had historically opposed Palestinian statehood and withdrawal from the occupied territories took over.

2023/24

Anyone who was following the Palestinian conflict in Gaza in recent times, knew it was a powder keg as Ireland's Big issue highlighted many times. Netanyahu's policies were designed to make life intolerable for the Palestinian people who had little global political influence to fight injustice. By backing people into a corner, with little hope of a better future, something had to give.

October 7

No student of Palestine or indeed anyone who had even rudimentary knowledge of what was going on in Gaza, could have been surprised that something would happen. While the horror of that day cannot be forgotten it has to be asked, given the renown capabilities of the Israeli intelligence service Mossad, how could they not know in advance about the attack on October 7. Why was their response on the day so inadequate?

The word Holocaust is defined as – A mass slaughter of innocents

Many believe Israel -knowing they were coming under worldwide scrutiny for their policies in Gaza - had the intel re Oct 7 but choose to ignore it, they knew their repression in Gaza would eventually provoke Hamas into action. Knowing this action would turn the tide of public opinion and provide Israel with the excuse to invade Gaza with impunity. Let's be clear Netanyahu's government never wanted a two state solution, by their actions they do not recognise Palestinians right to exist -which is ironic-and they certainly do not want them recognised as a state.

So here we are. Israel continues with their genocidal policies which has recently expanded into Lebanon and the West bank, knowing their political influence in American politics leaves them free to carry on with impunity committing the savage murder of Innocents creating another Holocaust and shaming those survivors of the Auschwitz, Birkenau and the rest, a holocaust we thought would never happen again.

Arthur Mathews - “I Stand for Free Speech.”

Samantha McMurdock had a chat recently with writer Arthur Mathews, best-known for co-writing *Father Ted* with Graham Linehan. His new book *‘Walled in By Hate’* examines the life and death of politician Kevin O’Higgins.

For those unfamiliar with Arthur Mathews, its very likely you’ve enjoyed his work as he co-created and co-wrote *Father Ted* and *Big Train* with Graham Linehan and has also written for *The Fast Show*, *Harry Enfield and Chums*, *Brass Eye* and countless others well-known TV shows.

Mathews was born in Co. Meath in 1959 and attended Castleknock College, a secondary school for boys run by Vincentian priests. A timid boy who “always sat at the back trying, trying not to be prominent”, he had “a few close friends and I just kept my head down to get through the school day.”

I imagined you’d have been the class clown.

“I suppose I could be funny,” he recalls, but I was certainly never Mr. Centre of Attention. I could make friends laugh but as a young fellow I wouldn’t have been comfortable interacting outside my few close pals.”

Ironic then that making people laugh became your bread and butter. You’ll be telling me

next you didn’t write either.

“[Laughs].... Seriously, I didn’t write.... I’d no interest in writing whatsoever. The school essays were as far as that went.”



Then how did you get involved in it?

“Do you remember *Viz* magazine? I did a comic piece for them with a friend and then I did funny little strips for *Hot Press* magazine. I just accidentally drifted into writing.”

Speaking of writing, your latest project, a book on the pro-Treaty politician Kevin O’Higgins is receiving great reviews; what interested you about him.

he had his best man from his wedding assassinated...

“The drama of his life. He was executed at the age of 35, he had his best man from his wedding assassinated, the Civil War was underway... I was

intrigued.”

I imagine non-fiction writing is more stressful because facts need to be verified whereas creating your own characters and

stories, you're the author of those facts.

"Immensely so [laughs]... when you're writing fiction nothing is researched, you can if you want of course but I never bothered [laughs] but yes, the O'Higgins book, that was a mammoth task, there were literally hundreds of pages of information. When I finished I just thought how lucky I'd been in the past making stuff up."

You make fiction sound so simple but let's face it - every screen writer would love to create a Father Ted-esque piece of writing - but it's not easy.

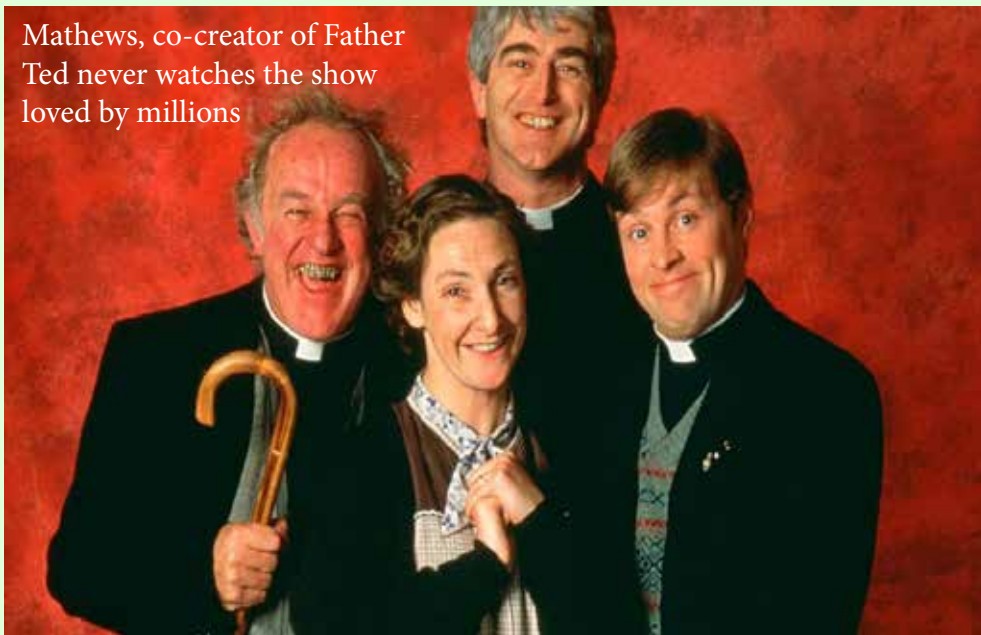
"To be honest I just write what comes into my head... There's something very freeing about poking about in your mind for funny things..."

I take it you're a history buff choosing to undertake an examination of O'Higgins.

"No, not at all. Do you know what? This might sound weird but I love things from the past, like old Top of the Pops from the 70s on BBC4. Everything recedes into the past. You see the people and think 'they were there 50 years ago'. I don't know why I'm drawn to things like that but there's something really nice about seeing things from yesteryear. I also love the 1920s and watch all the Charlie Chaplin movies on Sky Arts. The 1920s fascinate me - TV and radio started, so it was the first modern decade."

Did you get through the lockdowns by watching old re-runs?

Mathews, co-creator of Father Ted never watches the show loved by millions



"Just prior to the first lockdown I was doing a painting course at the RSA in Dublin so that naturally continued at home during that first year and that's how I filled my spare moments, but at the beginning of 2021 I felt very very isolated. Something hit me, I really felt the need to engage with people. It was a strange time and I was very glad when we could go out again. I didn't expect it to affect me that way at all."

Do you ever relax with a take-away and binge-watch Father Ted or anything from you own back catalogue?

"Noooo. NOOOOOO! I never do that. I'm 65, that's retirement age and it makes you think a lot. Add onto that the fact we just sold our family home in Louth and it's a sombre mix. The house was just always there and my sister would go and stay or I would and now it's sold and there's something unsettling about change like that. All these boxes appeared as we cleared stuff up - things

...[Linehan] is very talented and cancelling him is a huge loss to writing and to directing too...

I hadn't seen in years. I've been spending a lot of time going through it, finding old football programs, autographs and stuff that meant so much to me at the time. It's strange being at a season of life where you find yourself living in the past so much....."

Football has always been a great love for you and I know from chatting to players from the Irish Street League that getting onto the pitch is great for lifting the mood.

"You're right about getting out there and playing but I was never going to be a great player or anything. But speaking of football, I must tell you a funny story. I remember when me and a friend were young

guys we'd apply for these top jobs we had no hope of merchandise."

getting and one time I applied for the post of manager of Man United and I actually got a reply on Old Trafford headed notepaper [laughs] stating, 'after very careful consideration we regret to inform you that you haven't been successful on this occasion.' I wish I could find it, it was hilarious."

I imagined you'd be a rugby man because of the school you attended.

"Rugby was the big thing, but I think despite being timid, I had this quiet rebelliousness within me and I was determined I wasn't getting involved. I remember not being into football at all during the 1970 World Cup but after that I started collecting football stickers and got very into it. I still have the stickers, I've been looking through them ... really brings back old memories. I have so much football memorabilia that I've no idea what to do with I can't bring myself to get rid of it.... My daughter will not want any of this and I know it's just going to lie there but..... [laughs]... here I go again.... I'm down memory lane."

What team do you support?

"Drogheda... I was at the 1971 Cup Final. I used to be a huge Leeds fan and again, I have so much



Not more boxes?

"Yes, I'm afraid there's loads.... I've 3D photos of the players and I used to write to the Leeds gift shop and buy photos and merchandise of the players. I tend to hang on to stuff as you can tell."

You're just sentimental.

"Too much. Thing is, I can throw things out that I've done myself, like I had vast amounts of art I created at art school and I had it all

destroyed yet I can't part with old Shoot magazines."

When we get stuck thinking about the past, I sometimes think that planning something exciting in the future can help recalibrate.

I wasn't about to get myself involved in his stand on trans issues...

"Do you know, I actually did that. I'm going to Majorca tomorrow on holiday and I've been thinking of taking more time and dedicating it to painting when I come back."

If we may go back to Father Ted again, how amazing is it that it's still one of the most streamed TV shows?

"It's great but let's face it I've done many other things that aren't very well remembered. You never really know when you write something if it's going to go down well. I think the success really goes down to the casting."

That's incredibly self-effacing.

“Do you think? No, I think it's great if people enjoy something I've been a part of, but in my mind, it's a very long time ago and it seems like another life now.”

Your old pal Graham Linehan has been cancelled.

How do you feel about that?

“I don't agree with cancel culture. I stand for free speech.”

How do you feel about Graham?

“He is very talented and cancelling him is a huge loss to writing and to directing too but....”

But?

“I was not going to stand with him on this trans crusade.”

Are you against 'wokeness'?

“Well, yes, it destroys creativity because there's an ever-present fear of offending.”

Some would ask how you could oppose wokeness' and be a free speech advocate yet didn't fight Linehan being offered £200k to walk away from Father Ted the Musical.

“I understand what you're saying but I wasn't about to get myself involved in his stand on trans issues that is his fight.”

I would suggest comedy is suffering and will continue to if writers fear the wrath of the woke brigade.

“And I would agree. We don't have that nineties laugh out loud comedy anymore because we are all frightened we'll never work again. That's how things are now. Is this a stage we're going through? Is it a long-term

thing? Who knows.”

As we finish our chat I get the feeling that Mathews genuinely misses his old friend and writing partner Linehan, even mentioning how he recently rewatched his old work, including the IT Crowd. It is very sad that woke culture has almost destroyed

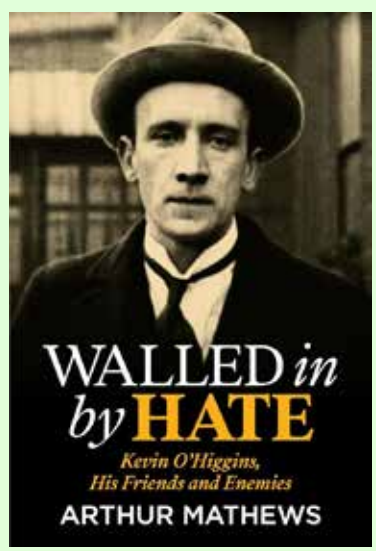
Linehan's career but somehow the toll on his friendship with Mathews seems worse, as there's a real sense of loss in Mathews' voice and a sadness that surrounds him and I suspect losing the closeness of his friendship with Graham has played a significant part.



**Happier times?
Arthur & Graham**

We don't have that nineties laugh out loud comedy anymore because we are all frightened we'll never work again. That's how things are now

Walled in by Hate: Kevin O'Higgins [Merrion Press] by Arthur Mathews is available in all good bookshops and online.



Congratulations and best wishes to the players representing Ireland at the Homeless World Cup in Seoul 2024



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Best wishes to those representing Ireland in Seoul at the Homeless World Cup

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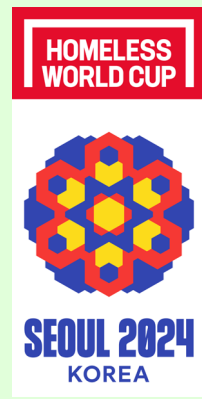
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Homeless World Cup

Ireland Arrive in Seoul for the 2024 Homeless World Cup

For all of the players this is a dream come true; one year ago they would never have imagined that they would be wearing the Green Jersey and representing their country on the world stage in Seoul, Korea. Now it is a reality; as we publish, the tournament has just come to a conclusion with Ireland's men reaching the quarter finals - beating Brazil along the way- of the HWC while our ladies team Won the Big Issue Cup in the plate competition.

We will be giving a full report in our next issue, but for now we commend the players for the obstacles they have overcome to reach this tournament and how immensely proud we all are of their achievements .

Come on the girls & boys in green!





HOMELESS WORLD CUP

SEOUL 2024 KOREA

"What defines you isn't how often you have fallen. Your character is built on how often you have got back up."

Alan Grace
Captain

The Skyscraper-Sized Tsunami No One Saw

The skyscraper-sized tsunami that vibrated through the entire planet and no one saw *Stephen Hicks and Kristian Svennevig report.*

Earthquake scientists detected an unusual signal on monitoring stations used to detect seismic activity during September 2023. We saw it on sensors everywhere, from the Arctic to Antarctica.

We were baffled – the signal was unlike any previously recorded. Instead of the frequency-rich rumble typical of earthquakes, this was a monotonous hum, containing only a single vibration frequency.

Even more puzzling was that the signal kept going for nine days.

Initially classified as a “USO” – an unidentified seismic object – the source of the signal was eventually traced back to a massive landslide in Greenland’s remote Dickson Fjord. A staggering

volume of rock and ice, enough to fill 10,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools, plunged into the fjord, triggering a 200-metre-high mega-tsunami and a phenomenon known as a seiche: a wave in the icy fjord that continued to slosh back and forth, some 10,000 times over nine days.



Dickson Fjord is surrounded by steep mountains. Uwe Dederling / wiki, CC BY-SA

To put the tsunami in context, that 200-metre wave was double the height of the tower that houses Big Ben in London and many times higher than anything recorded after massive undersea earthquakes in

Indonesia in 2004 (the Boxing Day tsunami) or Japan in 2011 (the tsunami which hit Fukushima nuclear plant). It was perhaps the tallest wave anywhere on Earth since 1980.

To put the tsunami in context, that 200-metre wave was double the height of the tower that houses Big Ben in London

Our discovery, now published in the journal *Science*, relied on collaboration with 66 other scientists from 40

institutions across 15 countries. Much like an air crash investigation, solving this mystery required putting many diverse pieces of evidence together, from a treasure trove of seismic data, to satellite imagery, in-fjord water level monitors, and detailed simulations of how the tsunami wave evolved.

This all highlighted a catastrophic, cascading chain of events, from decades to seconds before the collapse. The landslide travelled down a very steep glacier in a narrow gully before plunging into a narrow, confined fjord. Ultimately though it was decades of global heating that had thinned the glacier by several tens of meters, meaning that the mountain towering above it could no longer be held up.

Uncharted waters

But beyond the weirdness of this scientific marvel, this event underscores a deeper and more unsettling truth: climate change is reshaping our planet and

our scientific methods in ways we are only beginning to understand.

Dickson Fjord is surrounded by steep mountains.
Uwe Dederig / wiki, CC BY-SA



It is a stark reminder that we are navigating uncharted waters. Just a year ago, the idea that a seiche could persist for nine days would have been dismissed as absurd. Similarly, a century ago, the notion that warming could destabilise slopes in the Arctic, leading to massive landslides and tsunamis happening almost yearly, would have been considered far-fetched. Yet, these once-unthinkable events are now becoming

our new reality.

many times higher than anything recorded after massive undersea earthquakes in Indonesia in 2004 (the Boxing Day tsunami) or Japan in 2011 (the tsunami which hit Fukushima nuclear plant

As we move deeper into this new era, we can expect to witness more phenomena that defy our previous understanding, simply

because our experience does not encompass the extreme conditions we are now encountering. We found a nine-day wave that previously no one could imagine could exist. Traditionally, discussions about climate change have focused on us looking upwards and outwards to the atmosphere and to the oceans with shifting weather

patterns, and rising sea levels. But Dickson Fjord forces us to look downward, to the very crust beneath our feet.

For perhaps the first time, climate change has triggered a seismic event with global implications. The landslide in Greenland sent vibrations through the Earth, shaking the planet and generating seismic waves that travelled all around the globe, within an hour of the event. No piece of ground beneath our feet was immune to these vibrations, metaphorically opening up fissures in our understanding of these events.

This will happen again

Although landslide-tsunamis have been recorded before, the one in September 2023 was the first ever seen in east Greenland, an area that had appeared immune to these catastrophic climate change induced events.

This certainly won't be the last such landslide-megatsunami. As permafrost on steep slopes continues to warm and glaciers continue to thin we can expect these events to happen more often and on an even bigger scale across the world's polar and mountainous regions. Recently identified unstable

slopes in west Greenland and in Alaska are clear examples of looming disasters.

As we confront these extreme and unexpected events, it is becoming clear that our existing scientific methods and toolkits may need to be fully equipped to deal with them. We had no standard workflow to analyse 2023 Greenland event. We also must adopt a new mindset because our current understanding is shaped by a now near-extinct, previously stable climate.

As we continue to alter our planet's climate, we must be prepared for unexpected phenomena that challenge our current understanding and demand new ways of thinking. The ground beneath us is shaking, both literally and figuratively. While the scientific community must adapt and pave the way for informed decisions, it's up to decision-makers to act.

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First published on The Conversation

Congratulations and best wishes to the players representing Ireland at the Homeless World Cup in Seoul 2024



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RONALD REAGAN - THE CHARMER

When you think of Ronald Reagan, it is of a political legacy so dominant that criticising him feels almost sacrilegious. Reagan however as a rising movie star, leveraged his position at the helm of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) to betray fellow actors. In many ways, Hollywood prepared him for the ultimate role of a lifetime: President. Shaun Anthony reports.

Ronald Reagan had a quintessential, old-school presidential background. Born in Tampico, a small town in Illinois on February 6, 1911, to an Irish-American salesman father and a charitable mother, Reagan attended a small Christian college where he became a football player and embodied the all-American boy

image. After college, he found work as a sportscaster and was 'discovered' by a Warner Bros agent during his travels. Following a successful screen test, Reagan was signed to a seven-year contract. Soon after, shirtless images of Reagan were plastered

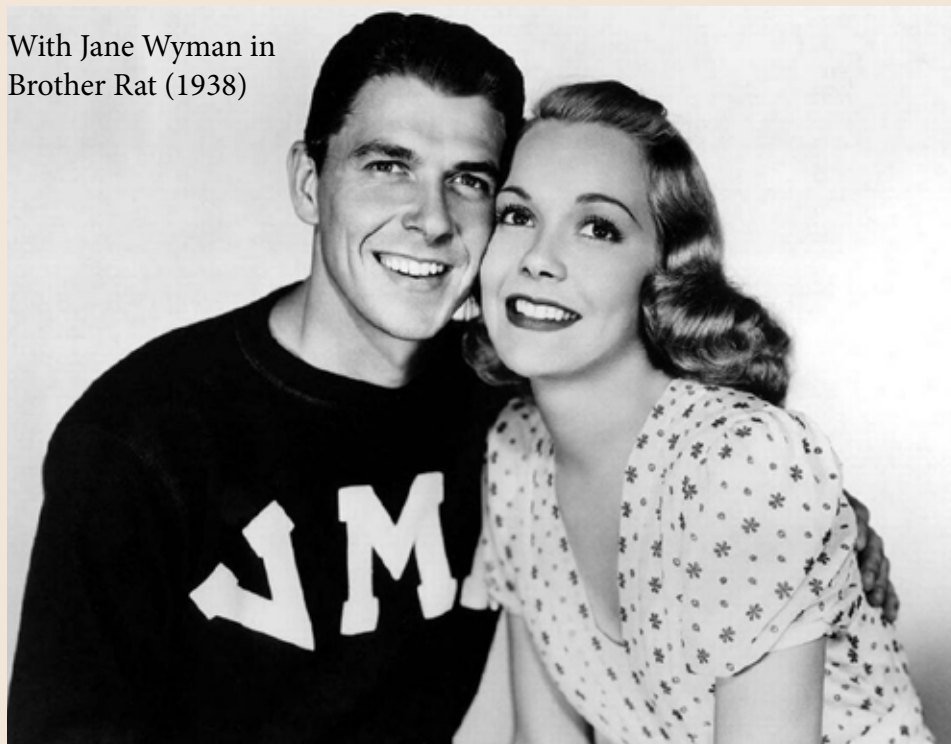
across Los Angeles, marketed as the latest heartthrob in "Love is in the Air," the first of 19 films he completed over two years. Reagan was undeniably handsome, but there were plenty of other good-looking male stars at the time who could also act. Reagan remained a B-list

actor, occasionally landing supporting roles in decent films like the Best Picture-nominee "Dark Victory," opposite Bette Davis.

He met Jane Wyman on the set of "Brother Rat," and she would eventually become his first wife.

While Wyman went on to become a major star, she was still climbing the ranks in 1939, navigating her way through bit parts and B-movies for Warner Bros. The two married in January 1940, and the publicity boosted their profiles. Reagan gained recognition

With Jane Wyman in Brother Rat (1938)



Despite Reagan's notorious affairs, Nancy remained undeterred

in the biopic "Knut Rockne, All American," but just as his career was gaining momentum, the draft board called. Poor eyesight kept him from serving overseas, and after a brief stint as a desk clerk in California, he transitioned to the First Motion Picture Unit,

making propaganda films for the armed forces.

Momentum Lost

The end of World War II could have marked a fresh start for Reagan's career, but like many stars who

had been off-screen for several years, his momentum was lost. Despite efforts to revive it, including taking on the role of Screen Actors Guild president, his star continued to fade. His marriage to Wyman ended in 1949 amid rumours of his wandering eye and a growing obsession with politics. A period of bachelorhood ensued, with Reagan reportedly enjoying a busy sex life involving Hollywood's leading ladies, including Lana Turner, Ava Gardner, Doris Day, Betty Grable, and Marilyn Monroe. According to the book *Love Triangle: Ronald Reagan, Jane Wyman, And Nancy Davis* by Darwin Porter and Danforth

Prince, Reagan allegedly had an insatiable sexual appetite and slept with over 50 Hollywood actresses - both well-known and up-and-coming.

He acknowledged suffering from "leading ladyitis," confessing he often fell for his co-stars but never mentioned that he slept with a large percentage of them during filming.

In 1949, Reagan met his future wife, Nancy Davis yet he continued his romantic escapades, including a notorious affair with 18-year-old virgin, Piper Laurie, whom he met while filming *Louisa* in 1950 (he played her father!) At 39,

Reagan's relationship with Laurie was scandalous. In her memoir, Laurie recalls that Reagan used "very expensive" condoms and bragged about his sexual prowess, though she described his performance as "without grace." Despite Reagan's notorious affairs, Nancy remained undeterred, and they married in

March 1953, welcoming their daughter Patti seven months later.

Hollywood insiders nicknamed Reagan "the swordsman," suggesting his sexual conquests exceeded even those of the famously amorous Errol Flynn. Reagan reportedly impregnated Jacqueline Park, a Warner Bros starlet, and allegedly coerced her into getting an abortion. Marilyn

Monroe was

also 'at hand' to provide sexual release for Reagan when he broke his thigh bone and had to lie out straight in hospital. Staff were very aware she was there to 'take care of business.'



...insiders nicknamed Reagan "the swordsman," suggesting his sexual conquests exceeded even those of the famously amorous Errol Flynn.

Reagan's "Turning Point"

Politically, Reagan initially leaned liberal, being a union member, elected representative, vice president, and president of SAG. However, a turning point occurred in 1947 when a striking union member threatened to throw acid in his face. Reagan cited this incident as pivotal

in his ideological shift to the right. Over seven terms as SAG president, he maintained a neutral stance, often cutting deals with producers in exchange for favours. George Dunne, a chronicler of Hollywood's labour movement, noted that SAG "was operating in conspiratorial cooperation with the Hollywood producers to destroy what was the only honest and democratic trade union movement in Hollywood—and Reagan was part of that movement."

Blacklisting

During this period, Hollywood faced a significant crackdown on communism. Anyone suspected of Marxist or leftist affiliations risked being blacklisted. In 1947, Reagan and Walt Disney testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), asserting that communists posed a serious threat to the industry. Reagan privately advised the FBI that without a clear government stance, Hollywood insiders could not "cleanse their own household." This led to a wave of persecution, culminating in the blacklisting of the "Hollywood Ten." Reagan spearheaded a campaign for all SAG officers to swear a "non-Communist pledge," which the membership approved on November 17, 1947. Film historian David Thomson described Reagan as "a bureaucrat of McCarthyism and a shortsighted searcher after redness -communists."

The Deal with MCA

In 1952, Reagan orchestrated a backdoor deal with Lew Wasserman, head of the talent agency MCA, which would reshape the television industry. Wasserman recognised that the future lay in filmed programming rather than live broadcasts. Filmed programming was more expensive initially but could be rerun indefinitely, proving more profitable in the long run. Wasserman aimed to turn MCA from an agency into a studio, but SAG rules prohibited talent agencies from producing films due to conflicts of interest. As head of SAG, Reagan, who was a client of Wasserman's and whose career was floundering, became the key to bypassing this rule.



Reagan's Hollywood career was a rehearsal for his political life, where charm, backroom deals, and the ability to play the part proved just as essential

Wasserman sweetened the deal with a secret payment to sway the SAG board. With Walter Pidgeon, the vice president of SAG, on board, the deal passed, and Reagan enjoyed the financial benefits. In 1952, when his career needed a boost, Reagan used his influence with Wasserman to secure a coveted role as the host and star of General Electric Theater. Hollywood insiders were abuzz, wondering how a B-list actor had landed such a high-profile gig. The answer was clear: Reagan had the most powerful man in Hollywood in his corner.

By 1954, Reagan was a co-producer of General Electric Theater, which made him very wealthy. His career, image, and fortune were saved

through his dealings with Wasserman. While a few stars, especially those under MCA, benefited from these dealings, MCA's monopoly over Hollywood led to the exploitation of talent and a less innovative TV landscape dominated by endless Westerns and game shows.

Reagan's rise continued, but so did the controversies. Actress Selene Walters alleged that Reagan had forced himself on her one night, stating, "When I opened the door, it was a battle to the couch. I was fighting him... I didn't want it, but he's a big man, and he just had his way."

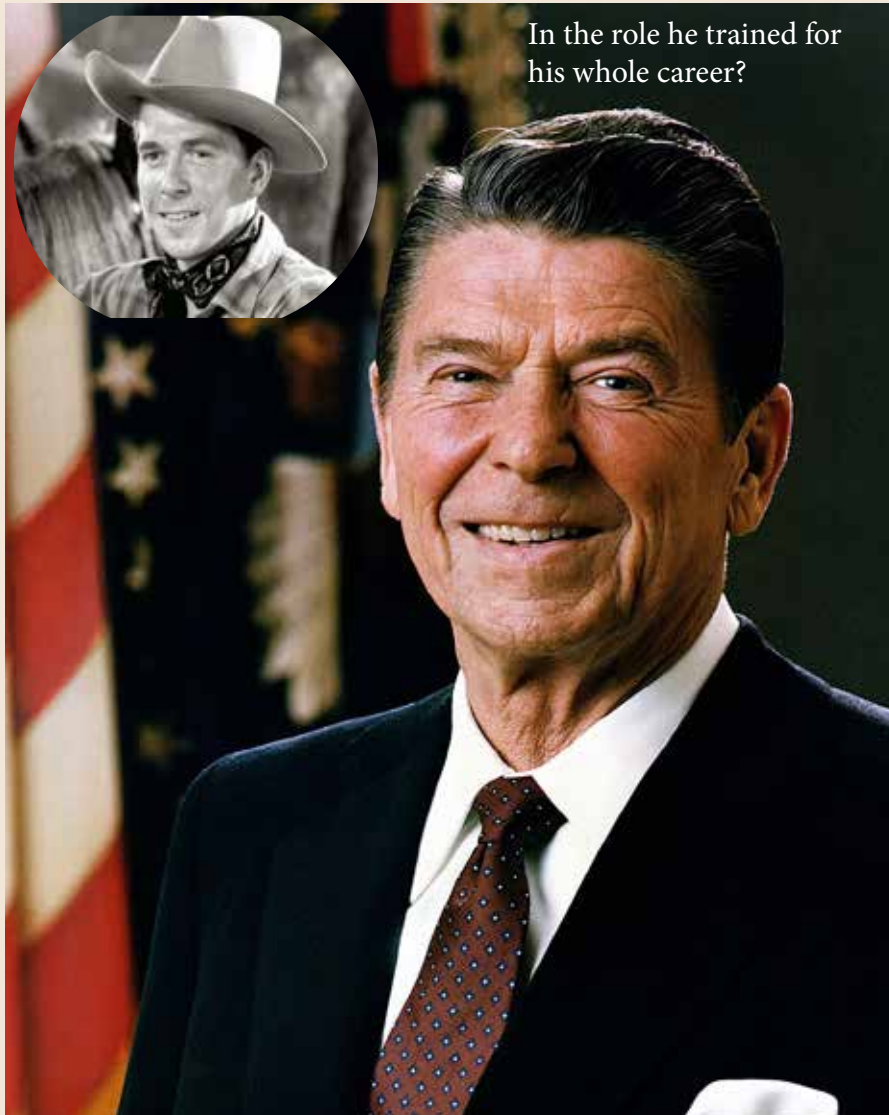
Cheating the SAG Members

By 1959, a new opportunity arose for Reagan to exploit his position. Studios began selling their film rights to television networks, and actors demanded a share of the residuals. MCA was a key player in these negotiations, having acquired Paramount's pre-1948 film library and in talks to buy Universal's. Reagan was called back to the SAG presidency to negotiate a better deal for actors. Despite his reluctance, Wasserman convinced him to return.

Reagan failed to secure a satisfactory agreement, leading to a six-week strike by SAG members. Eventually, a deal was reached: studios would establish a pension plan for actors, who would, in return, forfeit all rights to films made before 1960. This was a poor deal for the actors. To complicate matters, Reagan resigned from the SAG presidency to enter into a joint production partnership with MCA. When the U.S. government launched a grand jury investigation into MCA's monopolistic practices

in 1962, Reagan was called to testify. His testimony, sealed for 25 years, revealed that he had secured a 25% ownership stake in General Electric Theater

after discussions with Wasserman. Reagan's political ascent continued, bolstered by the support of Wasserman and the "Hollywood cabinet" that Wasserman organised around him. Wasserman would later help facilitate Reagan's election as President, anticipating Reagan's favour in return. Indeed, Reagan's administration enacted deregulatory policies that enabled the rise of massive media conglomerates, reshaping the American media



landscape.

Manipulation and Legacy

Reagan, manipulated by powerful figures like Wasserman, did not hesitate to manipulate in return. The tactics he used against SAG members—backdoor deals, strategic alliances, and political maneuvering—were employed on a larger scale during his presidency. Yet, because of his Hollywood star image and perceived embodiment of American values, many focused on what he seemed to represent rather than his actual actions.

Ronald Reagan's Hollywood career was a rehearsal for his political life, where charm, backroom deals, and the ability to play the part proved just as essential. It's a legacy that blends stardom with shrewd political calculation—one that, unlike his movies, left a lasting impression.

Taliban's Vice and Virtue's Laws

The Taliban's harsh new 'vice and virtue' laws are a throwback to the oppression of the 1990s – especially for the women of Afghanistan. *Kambaiz Rafi reports.*

Until the collapse of Afghanistan's US-backed government in August 2021, few knew clearly what the Taliban wanted once they had returned to power. Some western officials and observers hoped for a big change from the regime, which had governed the Taliban's Islamic Emirate in the 1990s.

This time, they hoped, a more sophisticated and pragmatic vision might have replaced the Taliban's previously extremist approach.

Some also argued that the rest of the world had a moral responsibility to approach Afghanistan's new rulers with cautious optimism. Engagement should be the key. Anything else risked condemning the country and its population to isolation and economic hardship.

Others weren't convinced.

During the negotiations that led to the February 2020 Doha agreement, the Taliban's position on post-settlement Afghanistan's politics remained ambiguous. The

women are now not allowed to speak outside the family home



group continued this vague posture during the

subsequent intra-Afghan dialogues with the former Afghan government. Then, appearing in a press conference three days after Taliban forces took control of Kabul, its spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, appeared to give reassurances the new regime would respect women's rights "within the norms of Islamic law".

In the ensuing three years, the Taliban's fundamentalist regime has continued to suffer from weak legitimacy, despite taking pains initially to cultivate a conciliatory image compared to its harsh rule in the 1990s.

However, what had appeared to some to

be Taliban 2.0 has increasingly looked like the old, harsh and fundamentalist Taliban as the regime has grown more confident in its hold on power.

The regime has also revived public executions and flogging

Since 2021, Hibatullah Akhundzada, the leader of Afghanistan's Islamic Emirate, has

gradually issued more than 50 decrees that affect most areas of society.

Many hard-won achievements under the former republic, such as freedom of expression and the press, have been suppressed. The regime has forced into disappearance, imprisoned or murdered many former government members, despite announcing a general amnesty.

In their treatment of women, including forbidding education after the age of 12, restrictions have become so harsh that the resulting subjugation has been labelled “gender apartheid” by many journalists, academics and activists.

Many female students have had to flee the country. Most recently a group of women medical students made the news after they were granted scholarships to go to UK to complete their studies.

The regime has also revived public executions and flogging reminiscent of their 1990s practices. An edict issued in March 2024 stated the regime will also resume public stoning.

The regime has now introduced a series of new “vice and virtue” laws, to be enforced by the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (PVPV).

Until now, government has been mainly by decrees

from the Taliban leadership. But these, while giving an indication of the regime’s increasingly extremist and authoritarian nature, have not been

accompanied with details of how they should be enforced. This uncertainty could, at times, allow local authorities a degree of leeway, including the ability in some cases to ignore decrees when it suits.

But the recent law change removes these ambiguities, empowers the Taliban’s morality police and is enforceable on

everyone residing in Afghanistan.

Blueprint for oppression

The new laws are particularly harsh on women. They enforce the wearing of the hijab and stipulate this garment must be made of thick enough material to fully

cover a woman’s face and body and avoid offering temptation to men.

Women’s voices are also deemed to be a source of

temptation, so women are now not allowed to speak outside the family home. If a woman can be heard singing, even from within her own home, this is considered a violation of the law and can be punished. Women are even forbidden from looking directly at a man who is not their husband or blood relative.

Enforcement can be undertaken by anyone in society



If a woman can be heard singing, even from within her own home, this is considered a violation of the law and can be punished

“who is capable”. Reports by two “trustworthy” individuals is enough to bring a prosecution. This is a worrying prospect, as it could lead to arbitrary accusations based on personal or political vendettas.

Officially enforcement will be carried out by the ministry’s appointees, the morality police or mohtaseb.

“Fairness and kindness” are stipulated as guiding principles for how the new rules should be enforced, although these terms are not defined and the law is replete with subjective terminologies open to interpretation by those enforcing them.

New media laws introduced as part of the package prohibit “un-Islamic content” and empower the morality police to compel media officials to prevent the publication of content deemed contrary to Sharia and images of living beings. This last measure will effectively throw into doubt the future of TV broadcasting in Afghanistan.

The laws also forbid music in public and “un-Islamic” hairstyles. Men must grow beards at least as long as a fist. As a worrying sign for continued humanitarian engagement involving non-Muslim

foreign workers, the law prohibits befriending, helping or imitating “nonbelievers”.

Violations will be met with on the spot fines issued by the mohtaseb or imprisonment for one-to-three days and prosecution in the regime’s courts for repeat offenders. The morality police also has the power to

compel attendance at the mosque, with prosecution for those who do not obey, regardless of whether they pray at home.

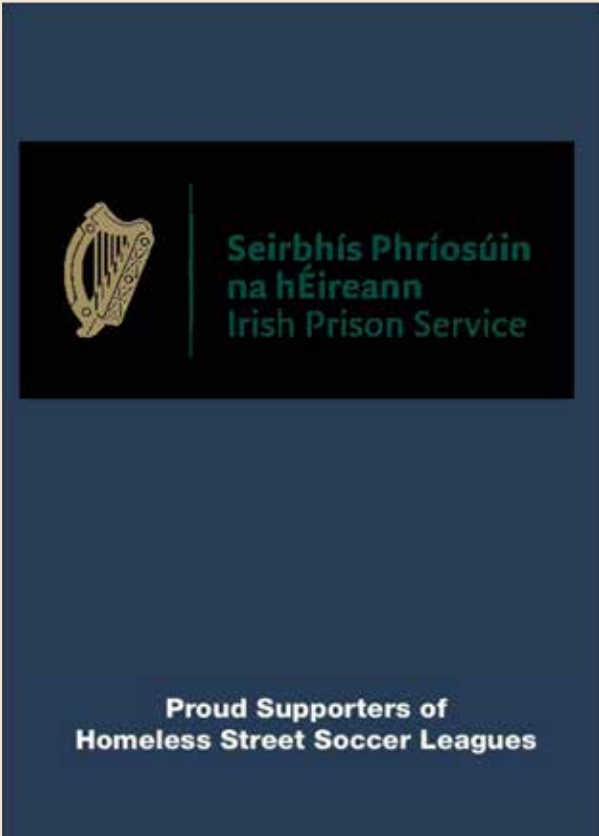
Women are even forbidden from looking directly at a man

As recently as June, Taliban representatives attended UN-sponsored talks in Doha at which spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid called for funds frozen by the west to be released and for the relaxation of sanctions on the regime. He dismissed western concerns over the regime’s treatment of women as “cultural differences”.

But these new laws have effectively removed any remaining differences between the current regime and its 1990s predecessor, a fundamentalist pariah that turned Afghanistan into an isolated outcast.

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First published on The Conversation

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A LITTLE BIT OF IRISH

PHRASE	TRANSLATION	PRONUNCIATION
Harvest time is here	Tá am an fhómhair anseo	Tah ahm un oh-wur an-shuh
I love Autumn	Is breá liom an Fhómhar	Iss braw lum un oh-wur
Let's buy a pumpkin	Ceannaímis puimcín	Kyah-NEE-mish PWIM-keen
The evenings are cold	Tá na tráthnóna fuar	Tah nuh traw-noh-nuh foo-ar
Grab a warm cardigan	Beir ar chairdigan te	Ber air khar-dih-gun cheh
Let's bake cookies	Bácáilimis fianáin	Baw-kaw-lim-ish fee-uh-nawn
It will be Hallowe'en next	Beidh Oíche Shamhna ar aghaidh	Begh ee-ha how-na air eye

Word Power

Over the next few issues we'll be attempting to increase your word power. Have a look at the words below and afterwards see if you know their meaning. This issue, it's words beginning with A.

Word	Pronunciation	Answers
1. accede	ak-seed	1. To give consent, approval, or adherence
2. accretion	uh-kree-shuhn	2. an increase by natural growth or by gradual external addition; growth in size or extent.
3. adroit	uh-droit	3. expert or nimble in the use of the hands or body.
4. adumbrate	ad-uhm-breyt	4. to produce a faint image or resemblance of; to outline or sketch.
5. aggrandize	uh-gran-dahyz	5. to widen in scope; increase in size or intensity; enlarge; extend.
6. alacrity	uh-lak-ri-tee	6. cheerful readiness, promptness, or willingness
7. anachronistic	uh-nak-ruh-nis-tik	7. not in its correct historical or chronological time
8. arboreal	ahr-bawr-ee-uhl	8. of or relating to trees; tree-like.
9. arcane	ahr-keyn	9. known or understood by very few
10. arable	ar-uh-buhl	10. suitable for farming
11. approbation	ap-ruh-bey-shuhn	11. approval; commendation.
12. apocryphal	uh-pok-ruh-fuhl	12. of doubtful authorship or authenticity.

How did YOU score?
 10 or more - Perfection!
 6-9 Brilliant.
 3-5 Well done.
 0-2 Must do better.

Screen Scene

Woman of the Hour ****

Starring: Anna Kendrick
Run Time: 94 mins
Streaming: Netflix
Available: 18th September

Anna Kendrick's directorial debut, *Woman of the Hour*, is a phenomenal depiction of the infamous and shocking true crime story of serial killer Rodney Alcala's 1978 appearance on *The Dating Game*. But more than that, Kendrick uses the story as a backdrop to explore the enduring struggles faced by women, such as not being believed or putting yourself in uncomfortable positions to spare the feelings of others. The film centres around Cheryl Bradshaw (Kendrick), a struggling actor, on the hunt for her big break. Cheryl is struggling to get past the audition phase and is excited to hear she booked a spot on the popular TV series, *The Dating Game*. She didn't even need to audition! Sally Field went on the show so why couldn't this be a potential win for her too? The bad news is, unbeknownst to Cheryl, one of her three hidden male suitors is serial killer Rodney Alcala. He just so happened to take time out of his busy schedule of murdering women to appear on national TV to try to charm America. Through a series of flashbacks during the lead-up to Cheryl's on-air appearance, we are given a glimpse into Alcala's life as a photographer, as well as insight into the women he murdered. Now the question is... will Cheryl choose him as her final date and if so, will she be his next victim?

The Instigators **

Starring: Matt Damon, Casey Affleck
Run Time: 101 mins
Streaming: Apple TV+
Available: Currently

Pairing Matt Damon and Casey Affleck in a Boston-based heist movie is an intriguing start, but add Doug Liman (*Road House*, *Edge of Tomorrow*) behind the camera and consider our interest piqued. Rory (Damon) and Cobby (Affleck) are reluctant partners who team up to rob a corrupt politician. When the heist goes wrong, they're pursued by police, bureaucrats, and crime bosses, all of whom are looking for their taste of justice (or vengeance). Out of their depth, they rope in Rory's therapist (Hong Chau) to help them in a riotous getaway through the city.

Affleck and Damon are in talks with Apple executives right now for a sequel but it's a tad Marmite - you're either going to love the knucklehead rapore of Matt and Casey or you'll find it downright annoying. Not for everyone and the film comes across a little too laidback at times which causes the film's structure and plot to unravel.



Lee ****

Starring: Kate Winslet, Andy Samberg

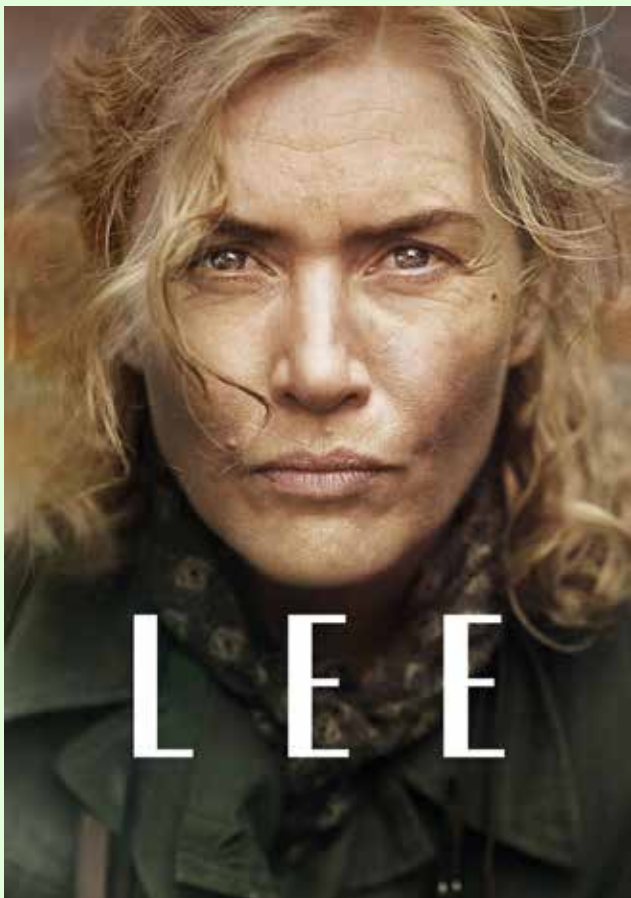
Streaming: At cinemas

Run Time: 116 mins

Available to watch: Currently

Lee tells the story of Lee Miller (Winslet) an American Vogue photographer who is determined to document the truth of the Nazi regime, and in spite of the odds stacked against female correspondents, she goes on to capture some of the most important images of World War II, but sadly they come at an enormous personal price as the experience, especially those of the concentration camps – would continue to haunt her for the rest of her life. In the years that followed she struggled with alcoholism and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Winslet plays Lee Miller perfectly and whilst not an easy watch (for obvious reasons), it's an important film and Kate Winslet brings the very essence of this lady to life.



Road Diary: Bruce Springsteen and The E Street Band ***

Starring: Bruce Springsteen

Streaming: Disney+

Run Time: 99 mins.

Available to watch: 25th October

Disney+ releases the new documentary film, “Road Diary: Bruce Springsteen and The E Street Band,” on 25 October. The documentary offers an unprecedented glimpse into the iconic performances of Bruce Springsteen and The E Street Band, with never-before-seen footage detailing the intricate process behind their legendary live shows. Viewers are treated to a behind-the-scenes look at band rehearsals, candid moments backstage, and insights from Springsteen himself.

Fans of the band will also have the opportunity to experience professionally filmed segments from the ongoing 2023-2024 tour, marking the first time this tour footage has been made available. The film traces the band's rigorous preparation, capturing the energy and atmosphere leading up to performances that span continents and draw tens of thousands of fans. Directed by Thom Zimny, a longtime collaborator of Springsteen and an Emmy and Grammy Award winner, the documentary is produced by Bruce Springsteen, Jon Landau, Thom Zimny, Adrienne Gerard, and Sean Stuart.

Fans of ‘The Boss’ will love this.





Kinsale - kegs in front of pub in Ireland

Jokes

Because laughter is
the best medicine!



A guy goes into a proctologist's office for his first exam. The doctor told him to have a seat in the examination room and that he would be with him in just a few minutes. When the man sat down and began observing the tools, he noticed there were three items on a stand next to the exam table.

A tube of K.Y jelly, a rubber glove and a beer.

When the doctor finally came in the man said, "Look Doc, I'm a little confused. This is my first exam. I know what the K.Y is for, and I know what the glove is for, but can you tell me what the BEER is for?" At that the doctor became noticeably outraged and stormed over to the door. The doctor flung the door open and yelled to his nurse, "Dammit, Helen! I said a BUTT LIGHT!"

Bubba goes to the revival and listens to the preacher. After a while, the preacher asks anyone with needs to come forward and be prayed over. Bubba gets in line and when it's his turn the preacher says, "Bubba, what you want me to pray about?" Bubba says, "Preacher, I need you to pray for my hearing." So the preacher puts one finger in Bubba's ear and the other hand on top of his head and prays a while.

After a few minutes, he removes his hands and says, "Bubba, how's your hearing now?"

Bubba says, "I don't know preacher, it's not until next Wednesday!"

Jesus and Satan have a discussion as to who is the better programmer. This goes on for a few hours, until they come to an agreement to hold a contest, with God as the judge. They type furiously, lines of code streaming across the screen, for several hours straight. Seconds before the end of the competition, a bolt of lightning strikes, taking out the electricity. Moments later the power is restored, and God announces that the contest is over. He asks Satan to show what he has come up with. Satan is visibly upset, and cries: "I have nothing. I lost it all when the power went out." "Very well then," says God, "Let us see if Jesus fared any better".

Jesus enters a command and the screen comes to life in vivid display, the voices of an angelic choir pour forth from the speakers. Satan is astonished. He stutters, "B-b-but how?! I lost everything, yet Jesus' program is intact! How did he do it?" God chuckles, "Everybody knows... Jesus saves !!"

Paddy goes for a job at a chemical factory; the factory manager asks, 'Have you worked with chemicals before?' 'Yes!' Paddy replies. The manager asks, 'Can you tell me what nitrate is?' Paddy replies, 'I'm hoping its going to be time and a half.'

While being interviewed for a job, the personnel manager said to the Maguire brothers:

'We're going to give you a written examination. Ten questions. Whoever gets most right we'll hire.'

Papers were produced and the boys set to work answering the general knowledge questions. When the time was up the personnel manager collected and marked the papers.

'Well,' said he, 'you've both got nine out of ten, but I'm giving Mick the job.'

'Why's that?' asked Pat.

'Well,' said the manager, 'you both got the same question wrong but he had

'I don't know this' and you had 'Neither do I!'

Jock & Jimmy were walking along a street in London. Jock looked in one of the shop windows and saw a sign that caught his eye. The sign read, "Suits € 5.00 each, Shirts € 2.00 each, Trousers € 2.50 per pair". Jock said to his pal, "Look at the prices! We could buy a whole lot of these and when we get back to Scotland we could make a fortune. Now when we go in you stay quiet, okay? Let me do all the talking cause if they hear our accents, they might think we are cheap Scotsmen and try to screw us. I'll put on my best London accent."

"OK Jock, I'll keep me mouth shut," said Jimmy.

They go in and Jock said in a posh voice, "Hello my good man. I'll take 50 suits at € 5.00 each, 100 shirts at €2.00 each, and 50 pairs of trousers at € 2.50 each. I'll back up me truck ready to load them on, old chap!"

The owner of the shop said quietly, "You're from Scotland, aren't you?"

"Well yes," said a surprised Jock. "What gave it away?"

The owner replied, "This is a dry-cleaners....."

Congratulations and best wishes to the players representing Ireland at the Homeless World Cup in Seoul 2024

FORSA

Ireland's largest public sector union is proud to campaign for decent housing and an end to homelessness.

On behalf of its 85,000 members nationwide, Fórsa trade union wishes Ireland's teams the very best of luck at the Homeless World Cup tournament in Seoul.

forsa_union_ie



Fórsa trade union



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Fórsa Trade Union



forsa.ie



CATHERINE CONNOLLY

Independent TD

Best of luck to all our players competing in the Homeless World Cup, in Seoul.



Catherine.connolly@oir.ie
091-567870
4 Commerce House
Flood Street
Galway



A BALL CAN CHANGE A LIFE

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Who Cares for Me?

Carers Urged to Care for Themselves Too During National Brain Tumour Awareness Week (October 21-27)

Broadcaster and mental health advocate, Keith Walsh, is the special guest at a webinar being organised by Brain Tumour Ireland that seeks to encourage carers of people with brain tumours to think about their own well-being, as well as that of their loved ones.

The webinar, “Who cares for me? Challenging the carer to care for themselves too”, on Tuesday October 22 at 6pm, forms part of National Brain Tumour Awareness Week (October 21 to 27).

Hosted by leading psychotherapist Bríd O’Meara, the event aims to explore how stress can manifest itself as compassion fatigue and burnout, and what we can do to prevent this.

With an estimated 150 types of brain tumour, figures from the National Cancer Registry show that there are approximately 800 people diagnosed with a brain or other central nervous system tumour each year in Ireland.

“Caring for someone you love can feel like a vocation—it’s a huge sacrifice, and it’s easy to lose sight of yourself in the process,” says Keith Walsh. “That’s why this event is so important, as it’s aimed at carers, reminding them that taking care of their own well-being isn’t a luxury—it’s a necessity. By finding moments to recharge, for example, mindfulness, reconnecting with creativity, or

exercise, whatever brings you peace, you’re actually strengthening your ability to support your loved one.”

Bríd O’Meara adds, “Without good self-care, longer-

term caring may lead to stress, and even compassion fatigue or burnout. Norm Kelly coined the phrase ‘you cannot pour from an empty cup’. We need to practice self-care to be able to refill our cup. Do something that you enjoy and that gives you pleasure.

Build yourself a support network.

Make sure you eat well. Try to get a good night’s sleep. Your lack of sleep can impact your ability to concentrate, to make good decisions and can have a negative impact on mood.”

Other events taking place as part of the week include a “Write Your Story” workshop series for family carers; an update on research in Ireland; a series of bedtime stories for children read by leading brain tumour oncologists; and a charity music night, Tunes for Tumours, featuring music artists ANDI, Leona McManus, Claire Malone, and Pamela Tully.

If you have any concerns about brain tumours, contact Brain Tumour Ireland on 085 7219000 (Mon-Thurs, 9am to 5pm), or for details on all events taking place as part of the week, visit www.braintumourireland.com



THOMAS MACDONAGH

The Most Affable of the Rising's Leaders

The 'Proclamation of the Republic' was read in front of the General Post Office (GPO) in Dublin on Easter Monday of 1916. In the past six editions, Liz Scales delved into the lives of each of the signatories. This issue, she focuses on the final signatory in our series - Thomas MacDonagh.

Thomas MacDonagh was born in Cloughjordan, County Tipperary in 1878. The son of two schoolteachers, Joseph MacDonagh and Mary Parker, his upbringing was deeply rooted in education and culture and the MacDonagh home was filled with books, music, and discussions about Irish heritage, all of which fostered in him an early appreciation for literature and the Irish language. MacDonagh was incredibly good-natured and made friends easily wherever he went - in fact, throughout his childhood, days at university and just prior to his death he was described as "gregarious" and "personable."

Early Life and Influences

From a young age, Thomas showed a real curiosity about the world around him. He excelled academically and went on to attend Rockwell College, a prestigious secondary school in Co. Tipperary, where he initially considered joining the priesthood, however, his passion for literature

and teaching ultimately led him to pursue a different path. He enrolled at UCD where he earned an M.A.



in English, becoming deeply involved in the literary and cultural revival of the early 20th century.

His involvement with the Gaelic League in 1902 marked the beginning of

his intense interest in Irish nationalism. The League aimed to promote the Irish language and culture, countering the anglicisation of Irish society. Through the League, MacDonagh became associated with other like-minded intellectuals, writers, and nationalists, including Patrick Pearse, who would later play a central role in the 1916 Easter Rising.

As the political climate grew more tense, MacDonagh, like many of his contemporaries, felt that the time for passive resistance had passed.

Literary and Cultural Contributions

MacDonagh was heavily involved in the local literary scene, contributing to various publications and journals that were central to the Irish literary revival. He wrote several books of poetry, plays, and literary criticism, and was a key figure in the movement that

sought to revive our cultural heritage. His works were often infused with themes of nationalism, Irish landscape, and a longing for freedom.

In addition to his literary endeavours, MacDonagh taught English and French at St. Enda's School, which was founded by Patrick Pearse. St. Enda's was unique in its focus on bilingual education and its emphasis on Irish culture and nationalism.

During this time Thomas met the lady who would later become his wife - Muriel Gifford. Muriel was the sister of his friend Frederick and the pair began corresponding. Their dates were conducted in a clandestine way - they met in the museum, the Sinn Féin Co-op's People's Bank and places where they had mutual friends. Three years after they had first met they got engaged. Muriel's mother took the news of their engagement very badly (they were Protestant Unionists).

Through Thomas' work at the school he was able to merge his love for teaching with his passion for the Irish language and independence. His students and colleagues remembered him as a very kind, inspiring teacher who encouraged creativity and critical thinking.

Move to Militancy

By 1913, the political situation had become increasingly volatile, with growing demands for independence. That same year, MacDonagh joined the Irish Volunteers. He quickly rose through the ranks, becoming Commandant of the entire Dublin

Brigade and Director-General of Training. His role was crucial in preparing the Volunteers for armed conflict, and he began to align himself more closely with the radical elements within the nationalist movement.

Thomas, Muriel and baby Barbara



As the political climate grew more tense, MacDonagh, like many of his contemporaries, felt that the time for passive resistance had passed. His involvement in the planning and execution of the Easter Rising of 1916 marked his transition from a cultural

nationalist to a revolutionary.

The Easter Rising

During the Easter Rising, MacDonagh was one of the seven signatories of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, a document that declared Ireland's independence from the United Kingdom. This act alone was considered an act of high treason by the British. During the insurrection, MacDonagh was in charge of Jacob's Biscuit Factory, located at the intersection of Bishop and Aungier Streets in Dublin. It was one of the many strategic positions occupied by the rebels throughout the city.

Although he was beloved by his men, MacDonagh was not considered a seasoned military strategist. When the Rising began, he encountered Major John MacBride while mustering his troops at St. Stephen's Green. MacBride, a veteran of the Second Boer War, quickly took on a leadership role within the factory, bringing his military experience to bear on the situation. Under their joint command, the Volunteers held Jacob's Factory for nearly a week. Interestingly, Jacob's Factory saw the least action of all the rebel-held positions. This was partly due to

“They might shoot some of us, they can't shoot all of us.”

its location, which was not in the immediate path of British forces advancing to quash the rebellion. As a result, the Volunteers stationed there had a somewhat quieter experience compared to their compatriots at the General Post Office (GPO) and other strategic sites in Dublin. Nevertheless, the men were prepared to defend their post to the last, and MacDonagh remained resolute in his commitment to the cause.

When Nurse Elizabeth O'Farrell brought Pearse's terms of surrender to MacDonagh, he met with General Lowe and decided to surrender Jacob's Factory. Addressing his men, he sought to reassure them, stating,

"They might shoot some of us, they can't shoot all of us."

His words were intended to instill a sense of calm and resolve among the Volunteers, who were initially reluctant to lay down their arms. The intervention of MacBride, who backed MacDonagh's decision, ultimately convinced the men to comply. They then marched to St. Patrick's Park, where they formally surrendered to the British forces under General Lowe.

Court-Martial and Execution

At his court-martial, MacDonagh remained mostly silent, refraining from offering a defence or showing any sign of remorse for his actions. When given the opportunity to speak, he said only that he had,

"...done everything I could to assist the officers in

the matter of the Surrender, telling them where the arms and ammunition were after the surrender was decided upon."



In a letter to his wife, Muriel, written shortly before his execution, MacDonagh clarified his position,

"At my court-martial in rebutting some trifling evidence I made a statement... On hearing it read after, it struck me that it might sound like an appeal. It was not such. I made no appeal, no recantation, no apology for my acts. In what I said I merely claimed that I acted honourably and thoroughly in all that I set myself to do... In all my acts...I have been actuated by one motive only, the love

of my country, the desire to make her a sovereign independent state. I am ready to die and I thank God that I die in such a holy cause."

He had a pleasant, intelligent face and was always smiling...

MacDonagh's courage and composure in the face of death were noted by many.

Father Aloysius, a priest from Church Street who heard his confession and administered Holy Communion, described how MacDonagh and Pearse received the sacrament "with intense devotion" and spent their final hours in prayer. "They were happy," he recalled, "no trace of fear or anxiety." After Pearse was executed, MacDonagh was next. A British soldier who witnessed the executions later remarked,

"They all died well, but MacDonagh died like a prince."

His dignified bearing and calm acceptance of his fate left a lasting impression on those who saw him in his final moments. He was just 38-years-old and it is said that when taken from his cell, he whistled right up until he was executed by firing squad (on 3rd May 1916).

Personal Tragedy and Legacy

The execution of Thomas MacDonagh marked the beginning of a series of tragic events for his family. His wife Muriel Gifford, like her sisters, was deeply committed to the cause of independence. She converted to Catholicism shortly after MacDonagh's execution and on the first anniversary of his death, she received her First Holy Communion.

In the summer of 1917, the widows and families of several of the 1916 martyrs were sent on a seaside holiday to Skerries, sponsored by the Irish National Aid and Volunteer Dependents Fund, which was administered by Michael Collins. During this time, Muriel (32) tragically drowned while swimming (heart failure). According to Anne Clare in her book *Unlikely Rebels*, Muriel's children were collecting shells on the beach with their Aunt Grace Gifford when Grace noticed her sister in difficulty. Despite frantic efforts by onlookers, including Dublin comedian Jimmy O'Dea, they were unable to save her in time.

Muriel's untimely death at the age of 32 left their two young children, Donagh and Barbara, orphaned. The MacDonagh children were subsequently raised by the MacDonagh family. The

extended family worked to ensure that they were brought up with a sense of pride in their father's legacy and the cause for which he had given his life.

Legacy

Thomas MacDonagh remains a central figure in the story of our land's struggle for independence. A poet, playwright, educator, and revolutionary, he embodied the spirit of the Irish cultural revival and the militant nationalism that ultimately led to the establishment of the Irish Republic. His contributions to Irish literature and culture were significant, but it was his dedication to the cause of freedom that truly defined his life and legacy.

Today, MacDonagh is remembered as one of the martyrs of 1916, whose sacrifice helped to inspire a new generation of Irish men and women to continue the fight for independence. His commitment to education and culture and his ultimate sacrifice for the Irish cause continue to inspire those who cherish our hard-won freedom.

Geraldine Plunkett Dillon, a sister of Joseph Plunkett gave a contemporary description of him in her book *All in the Blood*,

"As soon as Thomas came into our house everyone was a friend of his. He had a pleasant, intelligent face and was always smiling, and you had the impression that he was always thinking about what you were saying."

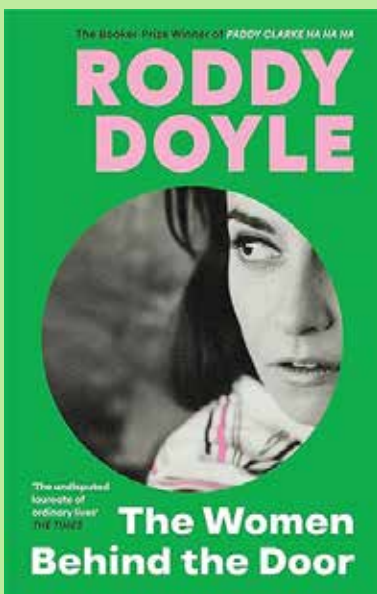
Many commentators have credited MacDonagh as being the most likeable of all the Rising's leaders and besides commitment and bravery, it's not a bad way to be remembered.



Patricia Scanlan's Book Club



Patricia Scanlan was born in Dublin, where she still lives. She is a #1 bestselling author and has sold millions of books worldwide. Her books are translated in many languages. Patricia is the series editor and a contributing author to the award winning Open Door Literacy series. In this monthly feature, Patricia brings you her favourite reads of the moment.

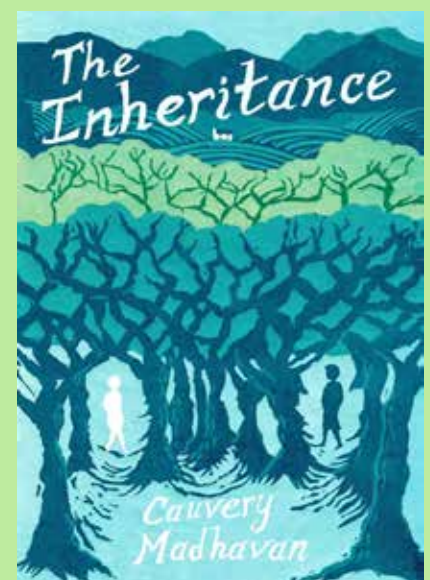


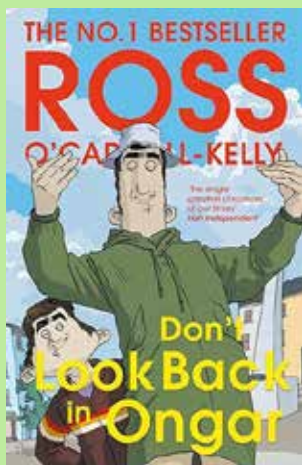
The Women Behind the Door - Roddy Doyle - Jonathan Cape.

Booker-Prize winner Roddy Doyle's spectacular return to his iconic heroine, Paula Spencer. At sixty-six, Paula Spencer – mother, grandmother, widow, addict, survivor – is finally living her life. A job at the dry cleaners she enjoys, a man – Joe – with whom she shares what she wants, friends who see her for who she is, and four grown children, now with families and petty dramas the likes of which Paula could only have hoped for. Despite its ghosts, Paula has started to push her past aside. That is until Paula's eldest, Nicola, turns up on her doorstep. Independent, affluent, a loving wife and mother, "a success" – Nicola is suddenly determined to leave it all behind. Over the next few days, as Nicola gradually confides in Paula the secret that unleashed this moment of crisis, mother and daughter find themselves untangling anecdotes, jokes, memory and revelation to confront the bruised but beautiful symmetry of what each means to the other.

The Inheritance - Cauvery Madhavan - HopeRoad Publishing.

It's 1986 and 29-year-old Marlo O'Sullivan of London-Irish stock has just found out that his sister is his mother. To steady his life, he moves to Glengarriff, to a cottage he has inherited, in the stunning Beara Peninsula. When a neighbour dies unexpectedly, Marlo takes over his minibus service to Cork. There is nothing regular about the regulars on the bus - especially Sully, a non-verbal 6 year old, who goes nowhere but does the journey back and forth every day, on his own. Marlo is landed with this a strange but compassionate arrangement, fashioned to give the child's mother respite from his care. Sully's obsession with an imaginary friend in the ancient oak forests of Glengarriff slowly unveils its terrible secrets – a 400-hundred-year-old tragedy reveals itself.





Don't Look Back in Ongar - Ross O'Carroll-Kelly - Penguin

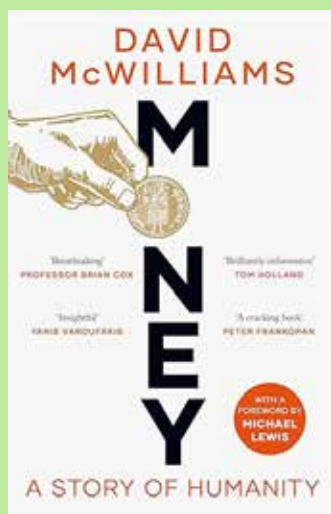
The final instalment in the Ross O'Carroll-Kelly series. It looked like it was Game Over for the Rossmeister General. I was staring down the barrel of the big four-oh! And what did I have to show for it? I was an out-of-work rugby coach who was soon to be divorced. My old dear was sliding away in a nursing home in a certain suburb of West Dublin. And my old man had brought the country to the verge of, like, nuclear annihilation. And if that wasn't bad enough, my teenage daughter was in love again. My sister-in-law was about to give birth to a baby that was possibly mine. And Castlerock College was about to go – I can't even say the word – co-ed. People kept saying that we were facing Ormageddon. But I was like, 'Hey, it's not the end of the world.' Because Father Fehily used to say, 'Sometimes good things come to an end so that better things can come to a beginning.'

Frankie - Graham Norton - Coronet

Always on the periphery, looking on, young Frankie Howe was never quite sure enough of herself to take centre stage - after all, life had already judged her harshly. Now old, Frankie finds it easier to forget the life that came before. Then Damian, a young Irish carer, arrives at her London flat, there to keep an eye on her as she recovers from a fall. A memory is sparked, and the past crackles into life as Damian listens to the story Frankie has kept stored away all these years. Travelling from post-war Ireland to 1960s New York - a city full of art, larger than life characters and turmoil - Frankie shares a world in which friendship and chance encounters collide. A place where, for a while, life blazes with an intensity that can't last but will perhaps live on in other ways and in other people. But as Frankie's past slowly emerges, her spirit and endurance are revealed as undeniable . . . and unforgettable.



Money: A Story of Humanity - David McWilliams - Simon & Schuster



MONEY. The object of our desires. The engine of our genius. Humanity's greatest invention. Money is everything. It brings freedom and it takes it away. It inspires and corrupts us. But what is money? Is it the main thing holding us back from utopia or is it the one constant that's driven us to success? In his illuminating, entertaining and often surprising book, economist David McWilliams charts the relationship between humans and money – from clay tablets in Mesopotamia to coins in Ancient Greece, from mathematics in the medieval Arab world to the French Revolution, and from the emergence of the US dollar right up to today's cryptocurrency. Along the way, we meet a host of characters who have innovated with money, disrupting society and transforming the way we live. Like humanity, money is ever changing, adapting to its time and circumstances. The question is, over the last 5000 years, have we changed money or has money changed us? Money tells an astonishing new story of our species. Taking the reader on an epic journey through the history of money, McWilliams reveals its fundamental role in our society.

Fia and the Last Snow Deer - by Eilish Fisher (Author) Dermot Flynn (Illustrator) - Puffin

Born under the same solstice sky thirteen years ago, Fia and her snow deer Solas have always had a powerful and unbreakable connection. But as Fia's village face a seemingly eternal winter, they turn their sights to Solas and an ancient prophecy that promises the return of sunlight and life, if the ultimate sacrifice is made . . . Refusing to allow the worst to happen, Fia and her cousin Mish run from the village with Solas, seeking out the Deer Mother - the mythical being who wakes the sun at the winter solstice and who might be their only hope. But the wilderness is harsh and shadows lurk at every turn. Can they make it to the Deer Mother? And, if they do, what choices will Fia face to bring back the sun and save her village?



The Podcast Review

We source the best selection of podcasts each issue. This time we bring you, Not Another True Crime Podcast, Revisionist History, Life is Short with Justin Long, Sports Wars and I'm All In with Scott Patterson.

Not Another True Crime Podcast (True Crime)

The story of Natalia Grace is literally a real-life horror movie—specifically, Orphan, which came out in 2009. Kristine and Michael Barnett thought they adopted a 6-year-old from Ukraine in 2010, but things were not what they seemed. The Barnetts claim that their adopted daughter, Natalia Grace, was actually a disturbed 22-year-old who tried to kill them. Sara, Danny, and Casey give the lowdown on this insane story.



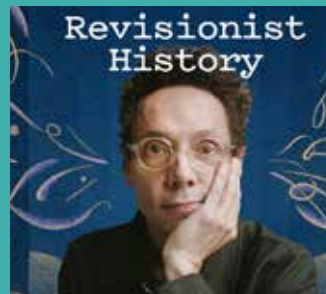
guests like Zack Snyder, Kristen Bell, and Billy Crudup. The siblings get sidetracked by nostalgic reminiscences and occasional bickering, which sort of makes the show, but they are always generous and kind to their guests.

Sports Wars (Sport)

Epic rivalries and long-anticipated showdowns are a massive part of the enduring appeal of sports, and this slick production homes in on them. Rivalries like Federer vs. Nadal in tennis and Tyson vs. Holyfield in boxing are unpacked over a few episodes apiece by host Dan Rubenstein, who digs into their backgrounds to understand why some face-offs get so highly charged.

Revisionist History (Trivia)

In this eclectic mix of quirky stories, Malcolm Gladwell tackles misunderstood events and rarely discussed ideas, veering from subjects like Toyota's car recall to underhand-throwing basketball legend Wilt Chamberlain, and even the firebombing of Tokyo at the end of World War II. Gladwell freely mixes research and opinion and enjoys challenging conventional views, but every episode serves up facts and stories you have likely never heard before.



I'm All In with Scott Patterson (Pop Culture)

24-years-ago, you met Luke Danes...backward cap, plaid shirt, pouring the coffee. For the first time, Scott Patterson (aka Luke) is watching Gilmore Girls. 154 episodes and 4 movies. We'll visit Stars Hollow, Doozey's Market, Miss Patty's, Mrs. Kim's antique shop and more pop culture references than you can count. You'll love this podcast whether you're Team Dean, Team Logan or Team Jess. And, we'll see if we can figure out 'who's the daddy' to Rory's baby! Gilmore Girls fans - old and new will love this.



Life Is Short With Justin Long (Celebrity)

Likable actor Justin Long and his brother Christian host this enthusiastic and sprawling interview show, where they chat with



How to:

Search "Google podcasts" in the Play Store app (if you've an Android phone). iPhones comes with Apple podcasts app installed. Open the app and type in the name of the podcast you want or you can just browse categories whilst there.

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