

IRELAND'S BIG ISSUE

Digital Edition
Jan 2025
Is 307 Vol 23



Happy New Year

Here's to more great issues in 2025!
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THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR THIS DIGITAL MAGAZINE

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.



Wishing all a Happy and Peaceful New Year

IMPORTANT CONTACTS



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

Day Services

- 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

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

Emergency Numbers

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

122 or 999



Feidhmeannacht um Dhaoiné ar Easpa
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Dublin Region Homeless Executive



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The Irish Prison Service
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(Open 11am - 3pm, Tues, Thurs, Fri)

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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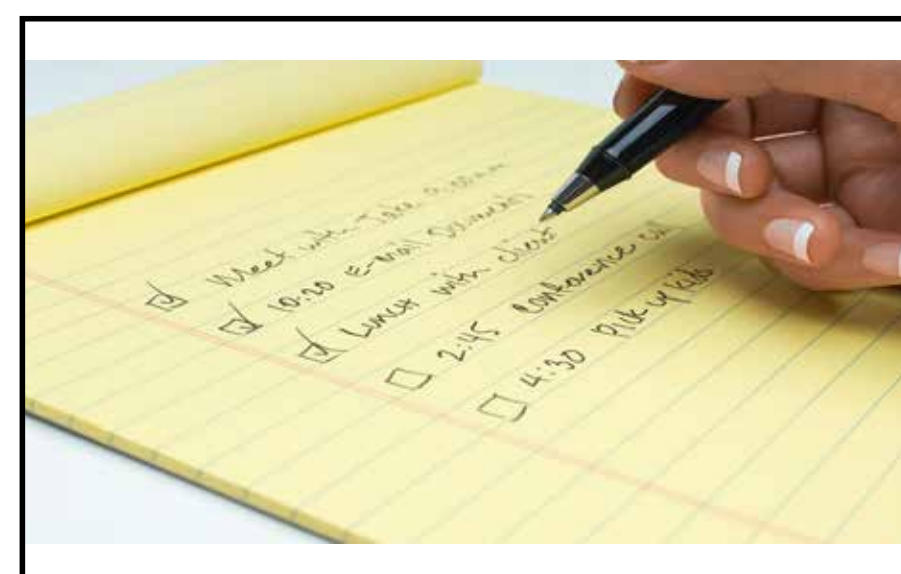
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One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest: A Cinematic Journey

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest is 50 years old this year. Shaun Anthony takes a look at the film that advocated for individual freedom against oppressive authority - subject matter that has continued to inspire each generation of film lovers.



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Beaujolais Crash: A Tragic Legacy in Aviation History

Over 40 years have passed since the tragic Beaujolais crash, a catastrophic event that echoed through news outlets around the world. Shaun Anthony reports.

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Letter to my Younger Self - BP Fallon

Each issue, we ask a well-known person to write a letter to their 16-year old self. Here it's the turn of BP Fallon (78), musician, author, DJ, actor and photographer from Rathfarnham, Dublin.



Photography by Christopher Durst

Ampleforth College, Yorkshire, England 1962

As I write this, I can gaze out the ledded windows and free my soul to luxuriate in the beautiful valley below. This is its own world. And this world is 16-year-old me in St Cuthbert's House at what people call 'The Catholic Eton', Ampleforth College. It's a Public School, which in English means it's private, i.e. your parents are paying a lot of money for you to be a pupil at this elite boarding school in the Yorkshire countryside.

Before this, it was Avisford Prep School in Sussex, the first time I was away from home. It was fairly benign except the twice-weekly singing lesson where one was expected to sing "Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves" with enthusiastic gusto. Me, being Irish, refused and twice-weekly the headmaster would punish me by thrashing me with a long handled hairbrush, exceedingly painful. So this goes on until one of the masters says,

"Fallon, why don't you just pretend to sing it, then you won't be caned?"

Me being as stubborn then as I am now, I didn't go for his suggestion and the punishment beatings continued. I never bought into the idea that if you hit someone enough they'll change their mind.

**I never bought
into the idea that if you hit
someone enough they'll change their
mind.**

But it was at Avisford that 11-years-young me fell in love with rock'n'roll. The NME - a music paper - wrote of the young fellow who'd opened this Pandora's Box for me

"He should not be on television when young people are watching. His gyrations are obscene."

And the the coup de grace,

“And he wears more makeup than Jayne Mansfield”.

Me, I heard this magnetic guitar riff and the singer going,

“Ballads and calypsos ain’t got nothing on/ Real country music that just drives along/ A-honey, move it!”

The controversial singer was Harry Webb although he’d changed his name to Cliff Richard. Believe me, then (*italics*) young Cliff was untamed and wild and his group The Drifters twanged majestic with bespectacled Hank B Marvin guitar hero and Jet Harris on bass doomed and magnificent.

So now Ampleforth. It’s run by Benedictine monks who basically tell us that we are young gentlemen whose duty is to treat the plebs as kindly as possible, that we’re a cut above the hoi polloi. And if you buy into this - which I don’t - you develop a sense of entitlement which gives you a confidence, gives you a front. It is no wonder that so many British Prime Ministers have been to Eton.

So that mindset is a problem, these highly educated men of God truly believing - or at least telling us - that their pupils are superior to anyone or anything else.

But a bigger problem is that my beloved rock’n’roll has got neutered, the Golden Calf eating from the bucket of reward as its balls are chopped off.

Elvis in the army... he was rarely as raw again. Cliff is about to become that most dreaded of creatures, an All-Round Entertainer beloved of blue-haired old dears doing their knitting (nothing wrong with blue hair and knitting, mind - or being ancient).

**It is no wonder
that so many British Prime
Ministers have been to Eton.**

Buddy Holly dead since 1959, Chuck Berry jailed for bringing a girl over State lines, Jerry Lee Lewis in disgrace for marrying his 13-year-old cousin, Little Richard abandoning the panstick to preach the word of God, Gene Vincent eternally drunk and smashed on painkillers, Eddie Cochran killed in a car crash, the front line of rock’n’roll mowed down like some mad St Valentine’s Day Massacre.

And what do we get now on your little not-allowed transistor radio under your pillow at night as you listen to the wavering tones of Radio Luxembourg? Lots of limp-dicked weedy pop singers called Bobby - Bobby Vee, Bobby Rydell though Bobby Darin has got his own thing going.



There needs to be something to shake pop music up again. Right now in England in some cellar somewhere there’s a beat group mining American rhythm’n’blues and Motown and when they get a chance they will rule the world, they’ll sing about revolution and peace and love and they’ll be adored by millions.

In the meantime, check out this new release that’s a descendent of Bruce Channel’s Hey Baby with its wheezing harmonica - it’s called Love Me Do and it’s the first record by this group from Liverpool, the oddly-named Beatles. This, dear reader, is a taste of the right direction.

Amen.

The Hospital Emergency Departments in Belfast: Night Shelters for the Homeless

As more young people are passing through our care systems in Belfast in recent years and some released without a home to go to, Liz Scales asks, is it time the public use their voice to lobby for these kids who've fallen between the cracks and are reduced to seeking warmth and refuge in hospital emergency departments.



The streets of Belfast are no stranger to the homeless population, but a recent investigation has revealed that hospital emergency departments are increasingly becoming a refuge for those without a permanent home. BBC's Spotlight spent time with some of those searching for a safe haven, including a teenage couple who have been living on the streets for months.

Kenzie and John, both 18, have been without a fixed address since their accommodation fell through one night. They took refuge in the Mater Hospital's emergency department, seeking warmth and safety. John, who has been homeless for almost a year, was suffering from a persistent cough at the time,

"We just want to be warm and safe, get two or three hours sleep so we don't have to worry for a while," Kenzie said. "It's safer than being on the streets with all these people around us. We're still kids in our heads. To be honest, we're not ready to be on the streets."

148
people registered as
homeless died while waiting for
social housing - an average then of
just over 13 deaths a month.

The couple has spent much of their childhood in care after their parents struggled with addiction. Kenzie's mother passed away when she was 14, and she is terrified of falling victim to drugs, which are a constant presence in Belfast,

"You see needles, you see people taking drugs, you see people fighting over drugs, it's very frightening," she said.

John echoed her sentiments, saying he would "travel around the world and back again" if it meant finding a home they could call their own. "I haven't felt safe since I lived with my nanny, and that's when I was seven," he said.

Grainia Long, chief executive of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), acknowledged that more needs to be done to support young care leavers like John and Kenzie,

"The role and responsibility here is on all of us, and on the Northern Ireland Executive, to ensure that we have the level of public funding for housing that is required over the next decade to ensure that those young people who feel failed by the system have a solution," she said.

Community and voluntary organisations have told BBC NI Spotlight that the system to support homeless people is in "complete chaos" due to a lack of funding and reduction in vital services. Gordon Lyons, Communities Minister, described the situation regarding social housing as "totally unacceptable," adding that he was disappointed that capital funding did not exist to build more social homes. The investigation also discovered that the number of people dying while waiting for social housing has increased in recent years. Founder of People's Kitchen and Belfast city councillor Paul McCusker said that voluntary organisations are regularly dropping service users at hospital emergency departments in an effort to keep them safe,

“There’s no other option for them. Speaking to staff from our local [emergency] departments, they clearly see it’s becoming a major problem,” he said.

McCusker added that his experience over the past few months has shown that hospital emergency departments are indeed turning into night shelters. More than 30,000 households are currently registered as being homeless, according to NIHE figures.

Providing more social, affordable, and sustainable housing is among the key priorities in the Stormont Executive’s draft programme for government. Through a freedom of information request it’s been discovered that in 13 months before the end of July, 230 homeless people died while registered on the NIHE waiting list - an average of more than 17 deaths per month.

In an 11-month period in 2018, 148 people registered as homeless died while waiting for social housing - an average then of just over 13 deaths a month. Ms Long said these deaths were a reflection of “how we behave as a society, how we underfund housing and homelessness.”



Paul McCusker

The Department for Communities stated that despite budget restraints, there are 5,700 social housing units being built in Northern Ireland, with 1,400 due to be completed in the current financial year. However, Ms Long emphasised that by the end of the decade about 3,000 new social homes need to be built every year for the next 15-20 years.

She added that the current situation is not good enough, “I think we stopped viewing housing as important as health and education,” she said. “I can’t guarantee that the housing executive will be building again because it’s not my decision, but what I can guarantee is that if we are given the powers to build again we will be ready to go.”

The NIHE has only recently started receiving funding again for new build social homes, with just six properties built by the organisation in the past 25 years. Instead, new social housing has been built by housing associations since the 1990s.

Associations use a mix of public and private funding and have built 20,000 houses since 2010. The situation highlights the urgent need for increased investment in affordable housing and support services for those struggling with homelessness.

**..the
number of kids
going into care in
Northern Ireland risen by
40% in the last ten years**

As Kenzie and John continue their search for a permanent home, they remain hopeful that one day they will find a place they can call their own. Until then, they will continue to rely on hospital emergency departments as a temporary refuge from the harsh realities of homelessness in Belfast. If a society is judged by how it treats its most vulnerable members of society, Belfast should be quite ashamed of itself. We have many great charities like Simon Community and even groups from churches who give their time to the homeless of the city - but until homelessness is tackled as the urgent crisis that it is and until we have safety nets to protect kids coming out of care, then the efforts of charities and the charitable minded is only a small drip in the ocean. Youth homelessness is on the rise in Belfast, with 400 kids left to their own devices in the past five years after falling between the cracks. This is not good enough. It’s time we all take ten minutes out of our schedule and be a voice for those who neither have access to a computer or perhaps even have the will any longer to fight. Contact your local councillor, lobby Stormont - take action as this could happen to anyone and with the number of kids going into care in Northern Ireland risen by 40% in the last ten years - and a staggering 72% since 1992, the thought of these young people living rough after surviving the care system is unthinkable.

Be a voice in 2025. Let’s take a stand and be a catalyst for change.

The Art of Setting Goals:

A Guide to Achieving Success in the New Year

Liz Scales explains how setting small, achievable goals, and not becoming discouraged when setbacks occur, leads to achieving success. We've now entered the early days of 2025, many of us yearn to get fit, save money for a specific purpose or perhaps simply invest more time in family and friends. This can all be done by goal-setting.



As the clock struck midnight on December 31st, millions of people around the world took a moment to reflect on the past year and set their sights on the future. The tradition of making New Year's resolutions is a time-honoured one, with people setting goals for themselves in the hope of improving their lives and achieving success. But why is setting goals so important? What drives us to make promises to ourselves that we hope to keep? And what are some tips for making successful resolutions that will stick?

The Power of Goal-Setting

Setting goals is a powerful way to take control of our lives and give ourselves a sense of direction. When we set specific, achievable targets for ourselves, we create a plan for getting there and stay motivated along the way. Goals give us a sense of purpose and focus, helping us to prioritise our time and energy and make progress towards achieving our dreams. But goal-setting is not just about achieving success; it's also about building confidence and self-esteem. When we achieve our goals, we feel a sense of pride and accomplishment that can boost our mood and overall well-being. And even if we don't achieve our goals, simply working towards them can give us a sense of purpose and fulfilment.

**Goals give us a
sense of
purpose and focus**

The Key to Successful Goal-Setting

So, what sets successful goal-setters apart from those who struggle to stick to their resolutions? One key factor is specificity. Vague resolutions like "I want to be healthier" or "I want to make more money" can be difficult to achieve because they're too general. Without a clear plan and specific targets, it's easy to get sidetracked or lose motivation. For example, instead of resolving to "start exercising more," someone might set a specific goal like "I will exercise for 30 minutes three times a week for the next six months." This makes it clear what they need to do and gives them a sense of direction.

Be Accountable

Another important factor is accountability. Sharing our goals with a friend or family member and asking them to check in with us regularly can help us stay on track. We can also find an accountability partner online or through a support group. For example, someone who wants to start eating healthier might join a fitness community on social media or find an online support group dedicated to healthy eating. This can provide an added motivation to stay on track, as well as a sense of community and support.

Celebrating Successes Along the Way

Finally, it's important to celebrate our successes along the way. When we achieve small milestones on our journey towards our goals, it's important to take time to acknowledge our progress. This can help boost our confidence and motivation, and keep us moving forward towards our next goal. For example, someone who

wants to start saving money might set aside a small amount each month and then celebrate when they reach certain milestones – such as saving £100 or £500. This can help make the process feel less daunting and more rewarding.

Tips for Making Successful Resolutions

So, how can you make successful resolutions that will stick?

Here are some tips:

Make your goals specific:

Instead of making vague resolutions like “I want to be healthier,” try setting specific targets like “I want to lose 10 pounds” or “I want to eat five servings of fruits and vegetables per day.”

Break down your goals into smaller steps: Instead of trying to make big changes all at once, break your goals down into smaller, manageable steps. For example, if you want to start exercising regularly, start by committing to two or three workouts per week and gradually increase the frequency over time.

Hold yourself accountable: Share your goals with a friend or family member and ask them to check in with you regularly to track progress. You can also find an accountability partner online or through a support group.

Celebrate your successes: When you achieve your goals, take time to celebrate your successes! This can help boost your confidence and motivation and keep you moving forward towards your next goal.

Don't be too hard on yourself: Remember that setbacks are a normal part of the process. Don't be too hard on yourself if you miss a workout or slip up on your diet – just get back on track as soon as possible.

Make it fun: Choose goals that bring you joy and make you feel good! When you enjoy the process of achieving your goals, you'll be more likely to stick with it.



Be flexible: Life is unpredictable, and things don't always go according to plan. Be prepared to adjust your goals as needed, but don't give up on them entirely.

**Without a clear
plan and specific targets,
it's easy to get sidetracked**

Focus on progress, not perfection: Remember that progress is just as important as perfection. Don't give up if you don't see immediate results – focus on making small improvements each day.

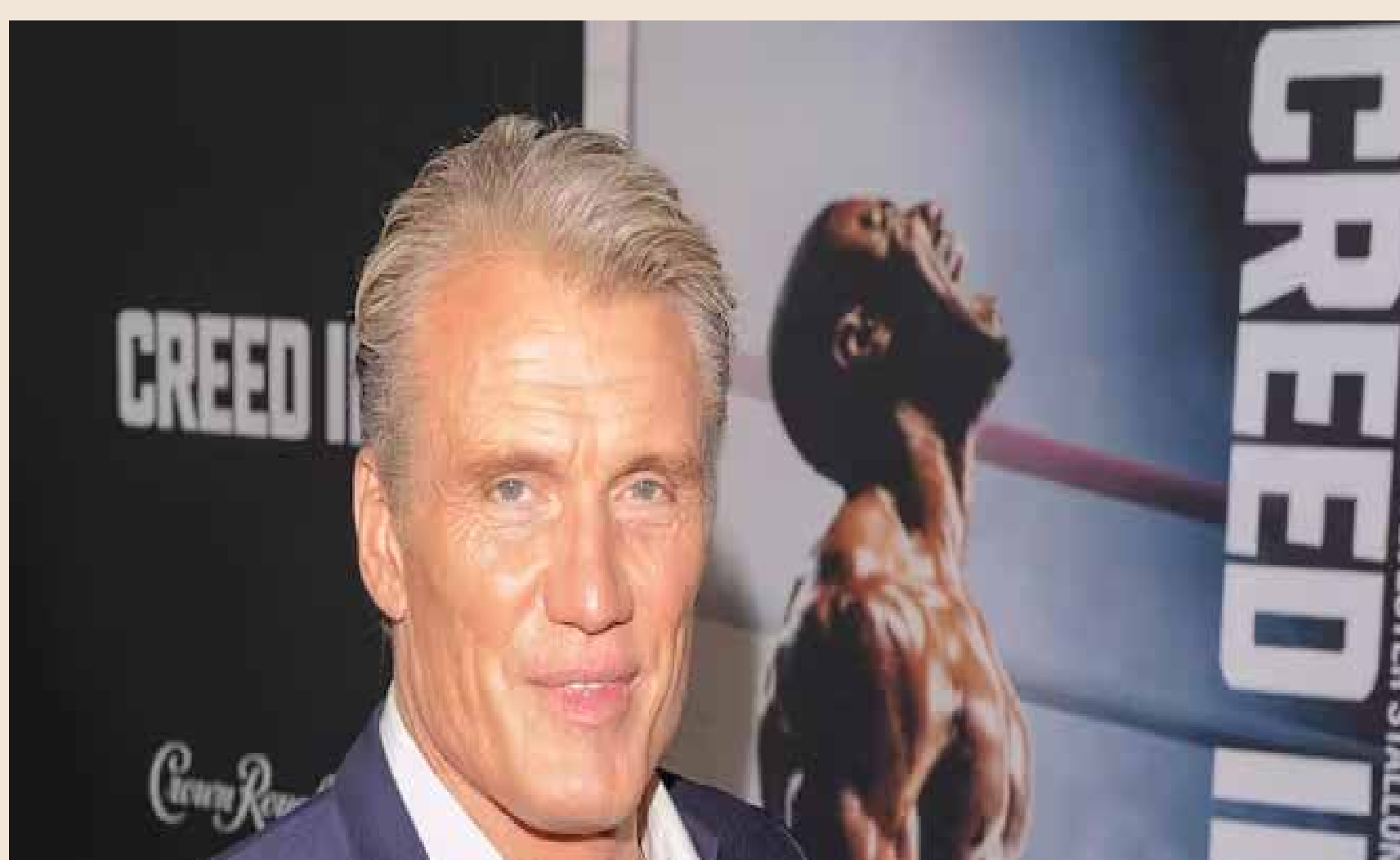
And Remember...

Setting goals is an important part of achieving success and fulfilment in life. By setting specific targets for ourselves and breaking them down into smaller steps, we can create a plan for getting there and stay motivated along the way. And by holding ourselves accountable and celebrating our successes, we can build confidence and self-esteem.

So don't give up on your New Year's resolutions (perhaps you've already 'fallen off the wagon') just because you've struggled in the past or have slipped up. Instead, take these tips to heart and make this year the year you finally achieve your goals!

Terminal Diagnosis to ‘Cancer Free’

What Dolph Lundgren’s journey from terminal diagnosis to ‘cancer free’ can tell us about cancer care Professor Justin Stebbing explains.



In a heartening turn of events, action movie star Dolph Lundgren recently announced that he is “finally cancer free” after a gruelling battle with the disease.

The Rocky IV actor, known for his iconic role as Ivan Drago, shared this news from a hospital bed in Los Angeles, where he was undergoing a final procedure – an ablation – to help remove an apparently dead tumour.

This remarkable recovery comes after Lundgren was initially given a grim prognosis of just two to three years to live.

Lundgren’s cancer journey began in 2015 when doctors discovered a cancerous tumour in his kidney. For the first five years following his diagnosis, the actor’s condition appeared to be under control with regular scans. However, in 2020, things took a turn for the worse. Lundgren began experiencing acid reflux, prompting an MRI that revealed additional tumours in his abdomen. Doctors then found another tumour in his liver.

Despite the bleak outlook, Lundgren’s story took an unexpectedly positive turn. He sought a second opinion and began treatment with a new doctor who reevaluated his cancer and prescribed medications to shrink the tumours. This change in approach allowed Lundgren to continue working, shooting major films like Expendables 4 and Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom while undergoing treatment.

Lundgren’s cancer journey began in 2015 when doctors discovered a cancerous tumour in his kidney.

The actor’s recent announcement of being cancer free raises an important question: how likely is it for someone with a terminal cancer diagnosis to be cleared of cancer altogether?

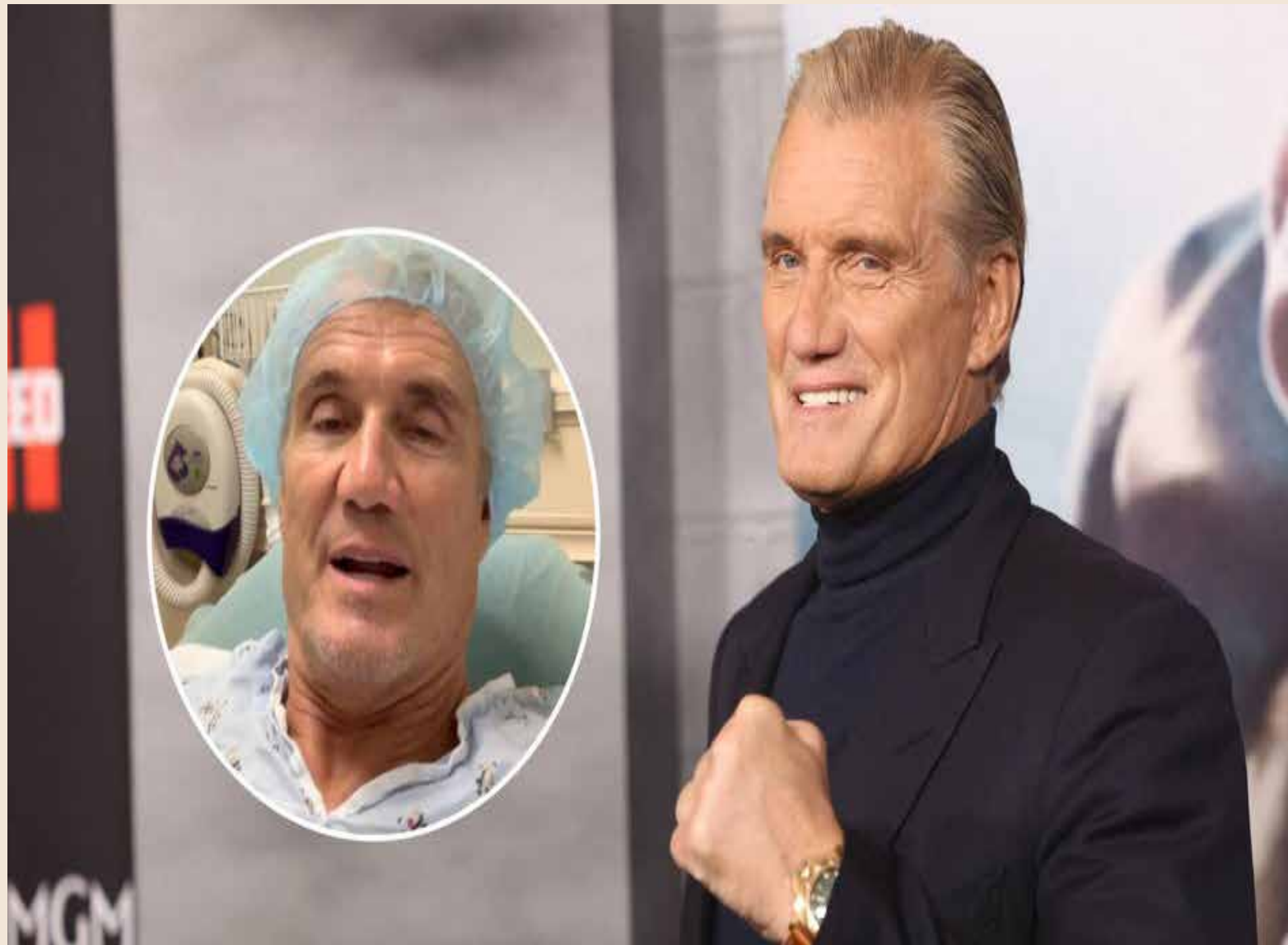
Atypical case

While Lundgren’s case is undoubtedly inspiring, such outcomes are not typical for most patients with advanced cancer – and the accuracy of predicting when terminally ill patients will die can vary considerably. One study found that clinicians tend to over-predict the number of people they think will die within a specified time period.

In fact, the study showed 54% of those predicted to die within a given time frame lived longer than expected. I’ve led research that shows how difficult it is for doctors to estimate how long patients have to live, even when those people are very sick.

The remarkable advances of new cancer drugs, and immunotherapies in particular, have led to many people living with their disease, when previously they would have died rapidly from it. Kidney cancer falls into this category as it’s often very responsive to these drugs.

We do, however, need to be vigilant as cancers can return even decades after people are given the all clear from doctors. While medical professionals strive to provide accurate prognoses, the unpredictable nature of cancer and individual responses to treatment can lead to outcomes that defy initial expectations – and the term “cancer free” can be misleading.



In many cases, it doesn't mean that every cancer cell has been eliminated from the body but that there is no detectable cancer at the time of assessment. Some cancer cells may remain dormant or undetectable by current imaging technologies so, sometimes, as one of my research groups found, they can be detected using new advanced blood tests.

Changing landscape

Nevertheless, the possibility of misdiagnosis in terminal cancer cases is relatively low, given the advanced diagnostic tools available today. While this is a concern in cancer screening, it's less likely in advanced cancer cases like Lundgren's.

More likely, Lundgren's remarkable recovery can be attributed to advancements in cancer treatment. In recent years, there have been significant strides in targeted therapies and immunotherapies that have dramatically improved outcomes for many cancer patients.

These treatments can be particularly effective for certain types of cancers, those with specific genetic mutations or changes within their cancers. I was part of research team studying next generation immunotherapies in colon cancer. The study found, for the first time, positive effects in heavily pre-treated patients with few treatment options remaining.

The remarkable advances of new cancer drugs, and immunotherapies in particular, have led to many people living with their disease

We're now regularly seeing long-lasting remissions in patients treated with immunotherapy but, like all drugs, immunotherapy only works for certain types of cancer. As an oncologist, I use personalised medicine: treating the right person at the right time with the right drugs for the right cancer.

While Lundgren's case is good news, it's crucial to approach such stories with a balanced perspective. Not all patients with advanced cancer will experience similar outcomes, and previously effective treatments can stop working.

However, his story highlights the importance of seeking second opinions, exploring all available treatment options and maintaining hope, even in the face of dire prognoses.

For patients living with prolonged incurable cancer, the landscape is changing. Thanks to therapeutic advances, the period between a diagnosis of non-curable cancer and the end of life has rapidly increased for many patients.

Lundgren's journey from a terminal diagnosis to being cancer free is testament to the progress being made in cancer treatment. While such dramatic turnarounds are not yet the norm, they offer hope and underscore the importance of ongoing research and development in cancer therapies.

As medical science continues to advance, we may see more stories like Lundgren's, where patients defy the odds and reclaim their health from the grip of this formidable disease.

Author: Justin Stebbing Professor of Biomedical Sciences, Anglia Ruskin University

First published on The Conversation.

Happy New Year

Jim
O'CALLAGHAN TD

FIANNA FÁIL
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY



Please contact me if I can assist you in any way.

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(01) 618 3134

WORKING FOR YOU LOCALLY

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SF Sinn Féin



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Dublin Fingal

Happy New Year

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Thanks to you, last year
we changed the lives of
over 12,500 people

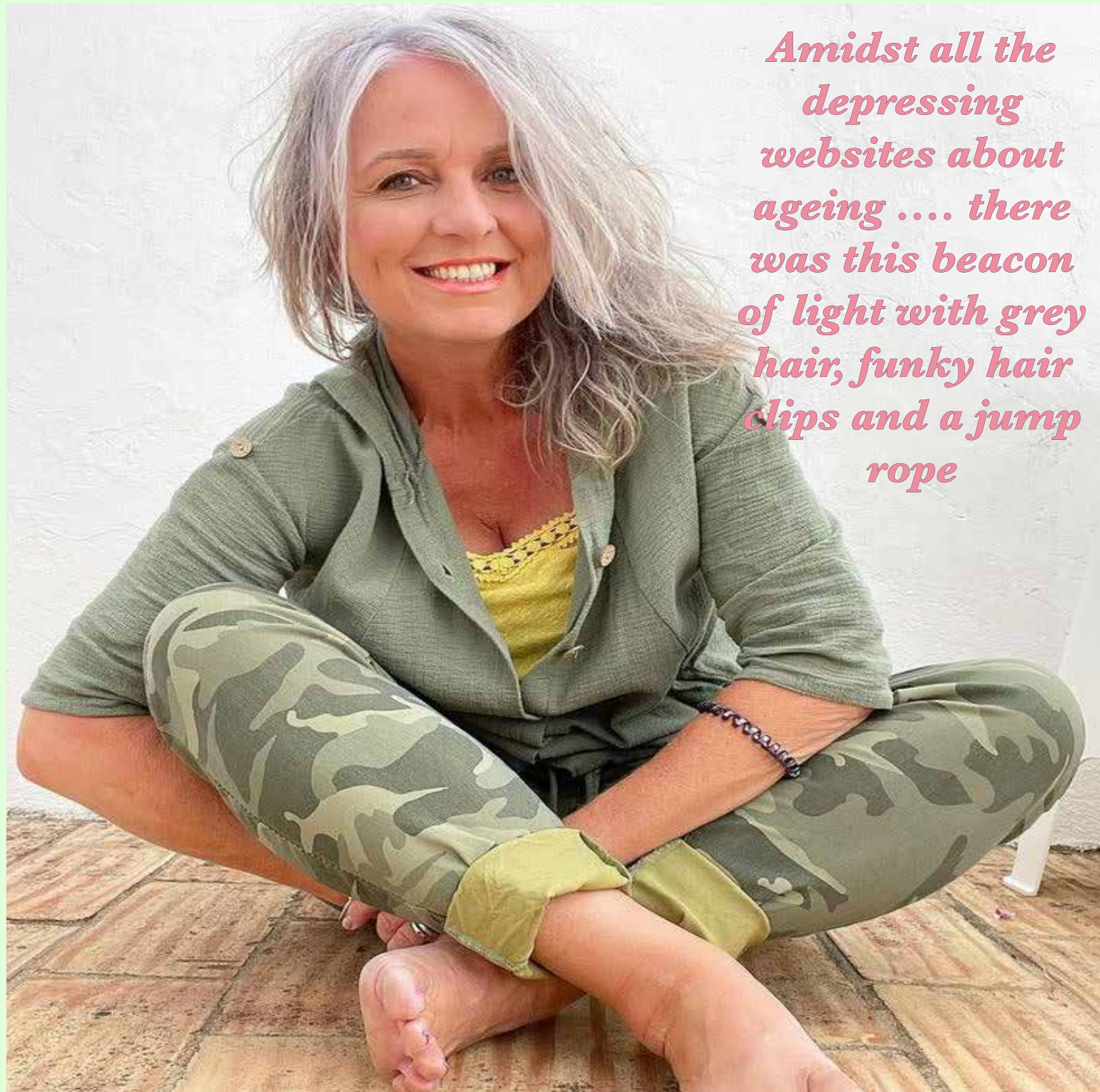
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Gail McNeill

The Reluctant Influencer

Gail McNeill (56) had it all, great job, loving husband and all the trappings of wealth but decided in 2019 to start over. She and her husband gave away or sold their belongings and started a new life off-grid in an orange grove in Portugal where they brought just ten small boxes from their previous lives. Gail went on to lose over two stones, beat depression and became an internet influencer in her fifties thanks to her celebrated YouTube channel FiftySister. Samantha Bailie-McMurdock recently had a chat with her.



Amidst all the depressing websites about ageing there was this beacon of light with grey hair, funky hair clips and a jump rope

I discovered Gail McNeill's content on YouTube a couple of years ago. Her channel FiftySister is all about positivity and zest for life in midlife. Amidst all the depressing websites and chat forums about ageing, perimenopause, balancing hormones and women's health there was this beacon of light with grey hair, funky hair clips and a jump rope telling us this life transition could be an exciting new chapter in our lives. Rather than bemoaning fine lines and greys, she was celebrating them, instead of accepting the inevitable midlife tyre around the belly she started jumping rope and eating plant based, losing over two stone in the process and rather than retreating from life she makes each day 'a new start' by learning new skills, going out to meet new people and has even started a couple of new careers besides her YouTube channel - as a social media influencer (she has nearly 700k Instagram followers), as well as a podcaster and author.

We so needed a midlife influencer. I don't think any forty plus woman is interested in watching a 19-year-old contour her face, I joke.

[Laughs] I am the most reluctant influencer ever. I was the same as you. I was looking online for positive content and it was endless searching. I couldn't find a single midlife woman who wasn't whining about aging and trying to sell me lotions and potions and that's not what I wanted. I found Training with Joan and she teaches how to shape up with weight training, I stumbled upon Mimi Kirk and she's all about eating vegan, then I found Nick [Keomahavong] a Buddhist monk who left a successful career in California to pursue a life of monasticism in Thailand. It dawned on me that I was searching so many different places to get my 'fix'. One day I was talking to my son and I was saying that someone should combine all this wisdom together and suddenly I came up with the idea that I should do it - why not?"

Did you realise your Instagram and YouTube were going to be such a hit?

"I actually started the channel just to connect with other women so I could pass this hope onto others so the success has been a huge bonus."

Passing hope on was very important to you.

"Yes, you clearly watch my channel. I was in a very very dark place, I didn't want to be here anymore, I just wanted to pull the covers over me and retreat from everything. My mind was in chaos. I needed to find a way out of this bedlam. I started listening to Nick the monk more and more, embracing the philosophy, not the religion. He ate just twice a day, had no choice in what he consumed as it's donated by locals and I thought I would try eating just twice a day, as if Nick could transform from living in California and eating six meals a day to just two, so could I."

This encouraged you to try intermittent fasting (IM).

“Actually, he wasn’t promoting IM but I naturally turned to it as he said, ‘We need to eat what we need, not what we want’ and I thought that was so right. Eating has become entertainment rather than nourishment hasn’t it? That’s doing no one any good.”



Fasting has helped you mentally, physically and spiritually.

“Well, I needed to improve my health and strength, quiet my mind and take my life back and Nick the monk’s content really helped me in my journey as I slowly implemented his advice into my life and found myself improve in so many ways.”

And to think you and he are now podcasting together.

“I can’t believe it - and he approached me, he loved my channel and what I’m doing. His brother monk in Thailand said his mother in Alabama follows me and I’ve helped her so much so he said we needed to work together and I cannot believe it. Me and two monks are podcasting together.....”

**I was in a very very
dark place, I didn’t want to
be here anymore**

And your book *The Midlife Edit* has been a huge hit.

“I love that I was given the opportunity to share the hope, wisdom, skills and tools I found because I wanted other women to know there are ways to make things better.”

I’m completely curious how a couple who couldn’t speak Portuguese and had no connections to Portugal decided to up sticks and move there.

“[Laughs] One day I looked at our house [in Torquay] and thought, ‘what a huge house’, there were three storeys and eight rooms on each floor ... some of those rooms I hadn’t set foot in in months. I suddenly realised, here I was in this big house - everything I ever wanted, yet I didn’t have what I needed, which was more time... more time to do the things I’d always dreamt of. I’d become a slave to this huge house and it had become a massive financial burden - always needing repairs, costing a fortune to heat and so taking into consideration that my son had flown the nest with no plans to reside in the UK, we put the house on the market and it sold extremely quickly.”

You wanted a minimalistic life, free from all the gadgets and things you’d purchased over the years.

“True. I wanted rid of everything. I believe that if you like stuff, you’ll completely fill your house until its bursting and that’s what I was doing, I’d 22 rooms filled with everything you can think of, nice furniture, lots of lovely clothes, the fancy shoes.... everything. Again, I had this realisation that ‘wouldn’t it be nice if everything I owned could fit in a backpack’? Let’s face it, everything we own becomes a burden - yet another thing that has to be looked after. I didn’t want stuff.... I wanted freedom from it, so the paintings, pottery, furniture and everything else went to charity, was given away or sold.”

So, what did you take with you?

“I took important paperwork, some momentos, my husband and two dogs. I got rid of more than I should have but I was on a roll. I felt immense freedom - freedom that that house and all the trappings was gone and the equity from the property gave us complete freedom to start our new lives. We live in a world where we are told that we need stuff to be happy, we’re constantly consuming things that are being sold to us, but the truth is - none of it makes you truly happy, none of it.”

You’ve really fallen in love with this new life in Portugal.

“The Algarve is lovely. I remember I Googled ‘best market towns in Portugal’ and when I found the area we

live, I fell in love with it and said, 'This is it, this is home.' I must say that 300 days of sunshine a year helps [laughs]. We started building a house seven years ago Unfortunately there's a lot of 'yes, we'll get that done tomorrow' - [laughs] and their laidback ways really slow you down and make you take it easy. It's not easy for me because I've always been a person, coming from a business background who's full on and gets stuff done. The Portuguese have really taught me about taking time out, taking the pressure off and so that's really done me the world of good. We've been living in a little rental place, on an orange grove in the countryside. Life is simple, I go out with the dogs, pick oranges, go out in my little 1990 Renault car.... Back in the UK I always had the new cars, all the trappings of wealth and now I feel I can slip under the radar, shopping at the farmer's market daily and cooking at home. We don't go out to eat, we live simply. I don't buy anything and to be honest, we can't shop online anyway as we have no house name or number and our home is incredibly difficult to find. It's freeing knowing I'm not a slave to browsing online and if I really need something, I have to physically go to a shop or boutique, browse and speak to real people."



And every day women across the globe tune in to watch you.

"It's incredible. Forty per cent of my audience are American and I always find that really something, that these women across the globe have found a connection with me."

Advice for women in Ireland of a certain age?

"If there's something you're not happy with in your life - change it. Never fall into the trap that you're too old - you're never too old so if you want to wear that mad colourful outfit, wear it. You want to wear that bikini - put it on, you want to learn a new skill - do it."

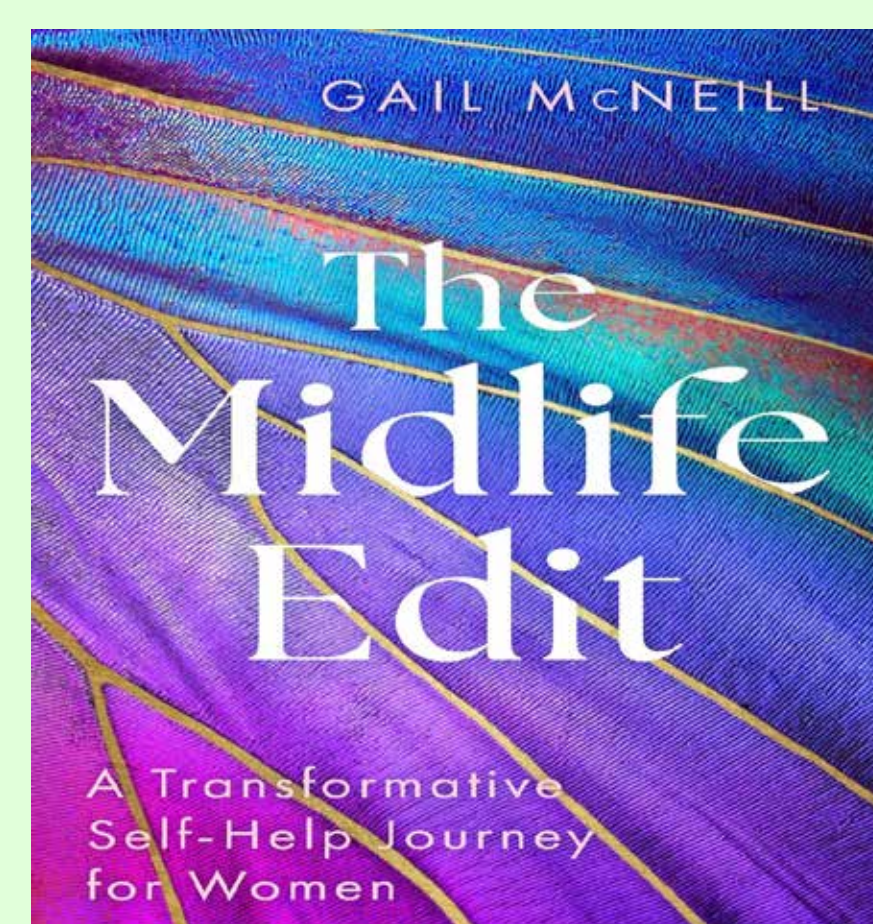
**I was in this big house
- everything I ever wanted, yet
I didn't have what I needed, which
was more time**

You receive your fair share of cruel comments.

"I do and one night a while back I was reading my comments section as I was drifting off to sleep and woke up very anxious the next morning. I asked myself 'why am I so anxious' then it dawned on me - my brain had been sorting through all this as I slept so I instead of throwing in the towel I said to myself, 'of every 100 comments, one might be negative; am I going to let a negative comment stop me?' I immediately gave myself some advice - 'stop dwelling on the minority negative jibes and get back to what you love doing.' I will say, as one final piece of advice that exercise is key for coping with anxiety and if I skip it, it does get worse so always stay in tune with your mind and body and be mindful of what it needs."

As we finish chatting Gail is going off into the sunshine with her two gorgeous dogs. A perfect example of taking life by the tail!

The Midlife Edit (Sheldon Press) is available in all good bookshops, online and on Audible.



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The Making of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*: A Cinematic Journey

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest is 50 years old this year. Shaun Anthony takes a look at the film that advocated for individual freedom against oppressive authority - subject matter that has continued to inspire each generation of film lovers.



Released in 1975, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, directed by Milos Forman, stands as a milestone in cinema history. Adapted from Ken Kesey's seminal 1962 novel, the film tackles themes of individual freedom against oppressive authority, exploring the nuanced dynamics of identity, sanity, and autonomy. Featuring outstanding performances from Jack Nicholson as Randle P. McMurphy and Louise Fletcher as the iconic Nurse Ratched, the film garnered widespread acclaim, securing five Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, and Best Actress.

The Novel and Its Transition to Film

Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* was inspired by his experiences working as a night aide in a mental hospital in the late 1950s. The narrative, steeped in the counterculture spirit of the time, reflects the writer's belief in the importance of personal freedom. The protagonist, Randle P. McMurphy, personifies rebellion against a dehumanising system, setting the stage for an exploration of life within a mental institution under the watchful gaze of authority figures.

The journey from page to screen began in the late 1960s, nearly a decade after the novel's publication. Kirk Douglas owned the rights to the novel by Ken Kesey after acquiring them shortly after its publication in 1962. He starred in the Broadway adaptation of the play in 1963 as Randle McMurphy. Saul Zaentz, a savvy producer, was brought on board to co-produce the film with Michael Douglas who'd acquired the rights from his father and they sought collaborators who could effectively translate Kesey's intricate themes to a cinematic format. Teaming up with screenwriter Lawrence Hauben, Zaentz aimed to preserve the essence of the original work while adapting it to suit the visual storytelling medium.

The narrative, steeped in the counterculture spirit of the time, reflects the writer's belief in the importance of personal freedom.

One of the challenges the creative team faced was how to convey the novel's psychological complexities while maintaining a coherent and engaging narrative. They sought to balance the darker themes surrounding mental illness with elements of humour and humanity that Kesey wove throughout his text. The screenplay, drafted by Hauben, underwent multiple revisions, striving to capture the emotional depth of the characters and their experiences within the institution.

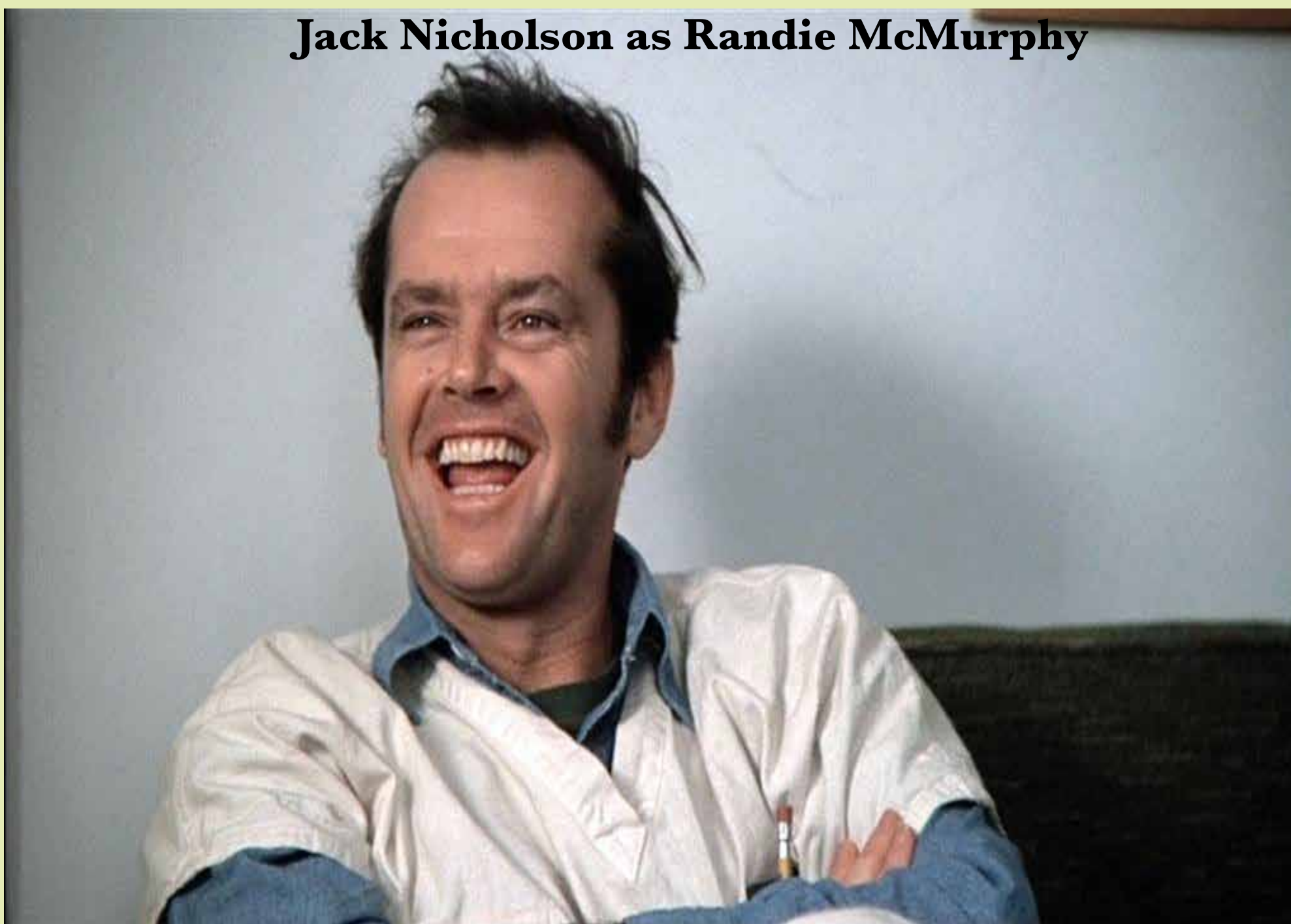
Milos Forman's Vision

Milos Forman, a Czech émigré who had previously directed films such as *The Firemen's Ball* and *Loves of a Blonde*, was brought on to direct. Forman's own experiences with authoritarian regimes in Czechoslovakia infused him with a deep understanding of power dynamics, enabling him to approach the material with a unique perspective. He sought to authentically portray life in a mental hospital, focusing on the emotional and psychological struggles of the characters rather than sensationalising their conditions.

Forman's direction emphasised the tension between McMurphy and Nurse Ratched, the film's primary antagonists. Ratched's character embodied the cold, calculating nature of institutional authority, while McMurphy's rebellious spirit challenged that very oppression. The director aimed to weave humour into the narrative, creating a multi-layered emotional experience for the audience. His commitment to authenticity and emotional realism shaped how the film would ultimately resonate with viewers.

Casting Decisions

Casting proved to be a vital aspect of the film's development. Jack Nicholson was cast as Randle P. McMurphy, a decision that would significantly impact both his career and the film's legacy. Nicholson's boundless charisma and ability to transition seamlessly from humour to intensity made him an ideal fit for the role. He embodied McMurphy's spirit of rebellion, infusing the character with a complexity that captured the audience's ethos.



Equally essential was casting Louise Fletcher as Nurse Ratched. Fletcher's chilling portrayal became iconic, representing institutional authority's oppressive nature. Initially auditioning for different roles, she ultimately secured the part thanks to her nuanced performance, which balanced control with subtle vulnerability. The intense chemistry between Nicholson and Fletcher heightened the ideological battle at the heart of the story, ensuring that viewers could feel the stakes involved.

The supporting cast also played a critical role in bringing the narrative to life. Actors such as Danny DeVito, Christopher Lloyd, and Brad Dourif depicted the ensemble of patients, each character contributing to the film's exploration of individuality and struggle. Their performances, rich with authenticity, complemented Nicholson's and Fletcher's, creating a vivid tapestry of interactions that highlighted the themes of isolation and rebellion.

Shooting and Production Challenges

Filming for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* commenced in 1974, with principal photography taking place primarily at the Oregon State Hospital in Salem, Oregon. This choice was deliberate; filming on location in an actual psychiatric facility lent a stark realism to the portrayal of mental illness and institutional life. The hospital's austere atmosphere, characterised by its institutional walls and somber interiors, became an integral part of the film's narrative landscape.

The initial budget for the film was set at \$2m, however, as production progressed, costs began to escalate largely due to the scope of on-location shooting and intricate logistical arrangements. The budget eventually ran to \$4.4 a significant amount for that time. The challenges faced during production included managing the emotional intensity of certain scenes and ensuring that the narrative's darker themes were handled with sensitivity and respect.

Forman's own experiences with authoritarian regimes in Czechoslovakia infused him with a deep understanding of power dynamics...

One notable challenge was the depiction of the controversial electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) scenes. Forman sought to represent these moments authentically but was determined not to glorify or sensationalise the violence associated with the procedure. To achieve this, he employed practical effects and careful choreography, ultimately reinforcing the emotional weight without losing sight of the inherent dignity of the characters.

Forman's commitment to improvisational acting sometimes led to unexpected moments on set, particularly with Nicholson, whose spontaneous approach often pushed the boundaries of the script. This creative energy

facilitated genuine moments that captured McMurphy's unpredictable nature and enhanced the overall authenticity of the film.

The psychological toll of the film's darker subject matter called for considerable emotional investment from the cast and crew. Forman fostered an atmosphere of openness, allowing actors to explore their characters' vulnerabilities fully. The collaborative spirit on set helped create a supportive environment where each actor could delve deeply into the complex layers of their roles.

Budgetary Considerations and Financial Strain

Despite budgeting challenges, the cast and crew remained committed to Forman's vision, understanding the importance of the story they were telling. Ultimately, Zaentz's dedication to producing a quality film proved fruitful. The insistence on authentic settings and characters contributed significantly to the film's realism, which would later be celebrated by audiences and critics alike - which paid dividends at the box office, earning a cool \$163.3m - the highest earning film that year!



Louise Fletcher as Nurse Ratched

Cinematography and Soundtrack

The film's cinematography, led by Haskell Wexler, played a pivotal role in shaping its overall tone and emotional depth. Wexler's use of natural light and handheld camera techniques created an immediacy that allowed viewers to connect intimately with the characters. This stylistic approach added to the film's raw and honest feel, immersing the audience in the oppressive environment of the mental institution.

Wexler's work received critical acclaim for its ability to capture the nuanced performances and emotional dynamics within the story. The choice to film in natural light not only enhanced the visual authenticity but also reinforced the film's themes of mental health, isolation, and the struggle for freedom.

Music, composed by Jack Nitzsche, complemented the film's emotional landscape and underscored pivotal

moments throughout the narrative. The score ranged from melancholic motifs to more vibrant, energetic themes, mirroring McMurphy's journey from rebellion to acceptance. Nitzsche's music served to enhance the emotional undercurrents of the film, providing moments of levity amidst the darker themes, ensuring that the storytelling remained engaging.

**...filming
on location in an
actual psychiatric facility lent
a stark realism to the portrayal of
mental illness and institutional
life.**

Post-Production and Release

Once filming concluded in 1974, the film entered post-production, with Richard Chew undertaking the editing process. Chew worked meticulously to create a cohesive narrative, ensuring that the emotional rhythm built throughout the film remained intact. He aimed to create a pacing that balanced humour and tension, allowing moments of levity to flow seamlessly into darker scenes.

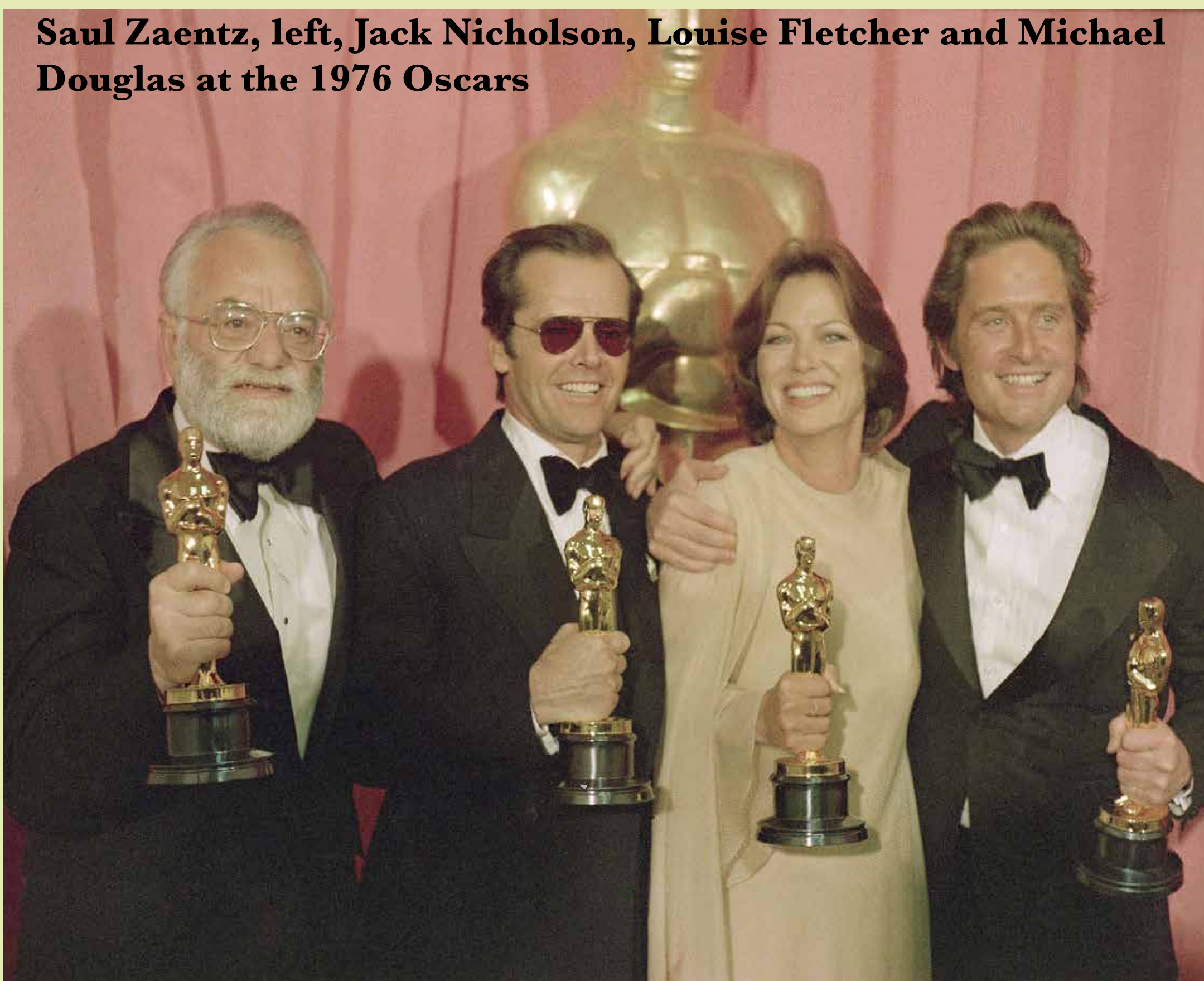
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 1975, receiving significant

attention and critical acclaim. The film garnered a standing ovation, which signalled its potential impact and resonance with audiences. When it was released in the United States later that year, it quickly gained traction due to its powerful performances and unflinching portrayal of mental health challenges.

The film sparked conversations about mental health and the treatment of individuals within institutional settings, ultimately contributing to a broader dialogue about societal perceptions of mental illness. Viewers were captivated by the universal themes of freedom and individuality, setting the stage for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* to become a cultural touchstone.

Legacy and Cultural Impact

The significance of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* extends well beyond its five Academy Awards. It became a catalyst for discussions on mental health, challenging societal norms and perceptions surrounding institutionalisation. By shining a light on the struggles faced by individuals within the system, the film encouraged a reevaluation of mental health treatment, emphasising the importance of compassion and understanding.



The film's success at the Oscars solidified its status as a classic, with Nicholson and Fletcher's performances lauded as some of the finest in cinematic history. Their portrayals set a standard for future representations of nuanced characters in film, paving the way for greater diversity in storytelling.

**The film's success
at the Oscars solidified its
status as a classic**

Further, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* inspired subsequent filmmakers to tackle themes of authority, rebellion, and the human spirit. Its narrative complexities resonated through various genres, influencing creative minds to explore the struggles for personal freedom within societal constraints. The film earned its rightful place in the National Film Registry in 1993, preserving it for its cultural, historical, and aesthetic significance.

In the years following its release, the film continued to resonate with audiences, serving as a reminder of the importance of individuality in the face of conformity. The characters' stories became symbols of defiance against oppressive systems, inspiring generations to challenge authority and advocate for personal freedom.

Behavioural Change

What Ireland's smoking ban 20 years ago can teach us about big changes to human behaviour Renaud Foucart reports.



In March 2004, the Republic of Ireland became the first country in the world to ban smoking in indoor public places, including bars and restaurants.

Every country that eventually followed suit wrestled with the same arguments. The bans were seen as a good idea for health reasons, but widely opposed as being against civil liberties, and potentially disastrous for the hospitality industry.

In 2005, only a third of British adults supported a full smoking ban in pubs, which was ultimately implemented in 2007. By 2014, 82% supported keeping it in place. No polling institute is even asking the question anymore.

**Ireland
showed us that things
that once looked inconceivable can
very quickly become normal**

One reason behind this huge change in opinion is that smoking itself is now much less common in most countries (partly a result of the bans themselves). But long-term trends cannot explain the fact that all over the world the popularity of smoking bans increases dramatically almost immediately after they are imposed.

Economics though, can help to explain this change of perception – and how humans are sometimes more accepting of change than we might think.

Game theory, the study of strategic choices, describes this kind of phenomenon as “multiple equilibria”. Simply put, it means that when our own choices depend on the choices of others, there is sometimes more than one possible outcome – and no reason to believe that one is more natural or stable than the other.

So with smoking, in one situation (or equilibrium), almost every pub used to allow smoking and that was generally considered normal and acceptable. Twenty years on, we have shifted to another equilibrium where a lack of cigarette smoke in pubs is the norm.

Once you get used to the idea, you can see the concept of multiple equilibria everywhere.

**there
is an equally viable
alternative: a parallel world where
nobody joins social media and there is no
interest in doing so.**

For instance, roads have two sides, and in some countries you drive on the left, in others you drive on the right. The two conventions are states of equilibrium. If everyone has agreed to drive on the left, you drive on the left too. It would be dangerous not to. But if everyone drives on the right, you do the same.

Urban planning is another example. When a city starts taking space away from cars, through pedestrianisation or adding bus lanes, it is always controversial. But after more space is given to public transport, research suggests that the quality of the service tends to improve, and attracts more customers.

These new customers stimulate demand, which means public transport becomes more regular, making it even more attractive.

And with fewer cars, walking and cycling become safer and more enjoyable too, so less space for cars does not lead to higher congestion. In Barcelona or Brussels for instance, car ownership decreased following large reductions in the space given to cars, and those who have a car simply use it less.

In this situation, there are again two equilibria: one where most people drive and more space is provided for cars, and another where few people drive, and a majority support wider pavements and bike lanes. A recent UK report found that more than twice as many residents of low-traffic neighbourhoods support their local scheme than oppose it.

Or consider how much time and attention we give to social media. There is evidence that many teenagers have a fear of missing out on these platforms, so spend time on Instagram or TikTok largely because they expect their friends to be on it. But there is an equally viable alternative: a parallel world where nobody joins social media and there is no interest in doing so.



Theory and reality

One problem with multiple equilibria is that they often remain theoretical. The only way to prove they exist is when someone has managed to coordinate a switch to a different one, like with the smoking bans.

A personal attempt to achieve this happened a few months ago, when a car nearly hit my daughter as I walked her to school along a pavement. The road in question is always busy with cars on the school run, with vehicles jostling for parking spaces on the kerb.

**with
fewer cars, walking and
cycling become safer and more
enjoyable too, so less space for cars
does not lead to higher congestion.**

My interest in multiple equilibria led me to try and convince my local council to at least stop cars driving on the pavement while children were walking, cycling or scooting to school. I argued that it would make everyone safer and healthier. In fact, we know from a pilot project in Birmingham that banning cars altogether around some schools at drop off time does not increase congestion.

I didn't succeed. And I can't really blame my local council for claiming that taking away space from cars

would just send more of them on to other roads nearby. I was canvassing for a different situation – an alternative equilibrium – which would require a big change, from the vested interest of a pedestrian parent.

And it's also true that changing equilibrium can create winners and losers. Some bars had to close because of the smoking bans, and some smokers no doubt wish they could still light up in their favourite pub. Some young people are much happier socialising virtually than in person. And some parents really love their cars.

But 20 years ago, Ireland showed us that things that once looked inconceivable – like pubs that weren't hazy with cigarette fumes – can very quickly become normal. It showed that there is not always just a single equilibrium, one way of doing things, which reflects most of our preferences. Jumping from one equilibrium to another is not easy – but as a society we can, and sometimes do, make significant changes to the way we live.

Author:

Renaud Foucart

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First published on the Conversation

**Wishing all a Happy and Peaceful
New Year**

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A LITTLE BIT OF IRISH

PHRASE	TRANSLATION	PRONUNCIATION
Would you like a glass of sparkling wine?	An mbaint thú ag iarraidh gloine fiona splancánta?	Ahn vahnt hoo ag yar-rid gloine feena splank-anta?
Happy New Year	Athbhliain faoi mhaise dhuit	Ah-vee-on foo-ee mah-sha ditch
Would you like to go for coffee?	An mbaint thú ag iarraidh dul ar cupán caife?	Ahn vahnt hoo ag yar-rid dhol ar kup-awn kah-feh?
January is a long month	Is mí fhada é Eanáir	Iss mee fah-dha eh Eh-nah-ir
Any New Year's resolutions?	An bhfuil aon rún athbhliana agat?	An fool hon roon ah-vee-ah-na agut?
Wishing you good health	Sláinte mhaith duit	Slawn-cha mah duit
Check on your elderly neighbours	Féach ar do chomharsana seanóirí	Faykh ar d'khoh-mar-sa-na shayn-oir-ee
Show kindness	Déan cainthead	Deyn kawn-chah
How's your family?	Conas atá do theaghlach?	Kon-as a-tah d'thay-ghlach?

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.

Word	Pronunciation
1. Petrichor	peh-tri-kor
2. Somnolent	som-no-lent
3. Equanimity	ek-wa-nim-i-tee
4. Effervescent	ef-er-ves-ent
5. Mellifluous	muh-li-floo-uhs
6. Euphoria	yoo-for-ee-ah
7. Mercurial	mer-kyoor-ee-uhl
8. Obsequious	ob-see-kwee-us
9. Cognizant	kog-ni-zant
10. Yonder	yon-der
11. Raconteur	rak-on-tur
12. Winsome	win-sum

Answers

1. The pleasant, earthy smell after rain.
2. Sleepy and drowsy.
3. Mental calmness, composure, and evenness of temper
4. Vivacious and enthusiastic.
5. Pleasingly smooth and musical.
6. A feeling or state of intense excitement and happiness.
7. Subject to sudden or unpredictable changes of mood or mind.
8. Obedient or attentive to an excessive degree.
9. Aware of something.
10. At a distance, but within sight.
11. A person skilled in telling anecdotes.
12. Attractive or appealing in an innocent way.

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



Screen Scene

Back in Action **

Starring: Cameron Diaz, Jamie Foxx
Run Time: 93 mins
Streaming: Netflix
Available: 17th January

It's been almost 10 years since Cameron Diaz's last film appearance but she's back with *Back in Action* alongside her *Any Given Sunday* and *Annie* co-star Jamie Foxx in this tale of CIA spies who, having given up the trade years previously to start a family are pulled back into the world of espionage when their cover is blown.

Nothing ground-breaking, hence the 2/5 rating but quite entertaining if you like spy comedies.



High Potential ****

Starring: Kaitlin Olsen, Daniel Sunjata
Run Time: 7 x 60 mins
Streaming: Disney+
Available: 16th January

The show centres on Morgan, a single mother with three children who is a cleaning lady for the Los Angeles Police Department. She is also a high potential intellectual, with an IQ of 160. After figuring out a case using her unconventional mind, she becomes a consultant for the LAPD's Major Crimes division. A subplot involves Morgan using the LAPD's help and resources to find out what happened to her first boyfriend Roman, the father of her oldest daughter Ava, who disappeared when Ava was a baby.

Perfect viewing for long, dark nights in January. 3.5/5



Maria *****

Starring: Angelina Jolie, Haluk Bilginer
Streaming: In cinemas
Run Time: 123 mins
Available to watch: 10th January

Maria is a biographical psychological drama about Maria Callas (played by Angelina Jolie) the world's greatest opera singer as she lives the last days of her life in 1970s Paris, confronting her identity and life.

Jolie earned an Academy Award for her performance in *Girl, Interrupted*, and has displayed her incredible range in films like *Changeling*, *The Good Shepherd*, *Maleficent*, and *Those Who Wish Me Dead* and *Maria* seems a cert for an Oscar win. Excellent performances all around and Callas' fans will be incredibly impressed as Jolie really does the American-Greek soprano justice. A respectable 4.5/5

Prime Target ***

Starring: Leo Woodall, Quintessa Swindell
Streaming: Apple TV+
Run Time: 96 mins.
Available to watch: 22nd January

Prime Target features a brilliant young maths postgraduate, Edward Brooks (played by Leo Woodall), who is on the verge of a major breakthrough. If he succeeds in finding a pattern in prime numbers, he will hold the key to every computer in the world. Soon, he begins to realise an unseen enemy is trying to destroy his idea before it's even born, which throws him into the orbit of Taylah Sanders, a female NSA agent (played by Quintessa Swindell) who's been tasked with watching and reporting on mathematicians' behaviour. Together, they start to unravel the troubling conspiracy Edward is at the heart of.

Compelling, and a worthy 3/5.



Tell us what you're binge watching this New Year?

Let us know on X @BigIssueIreland

Stuck in a walk-in freezer

What happens to your body when you get left in the cold Adam Taylor reports.



Pret a Manger, a sandwich and coffee chain, was handed an £800,000 fine recently after one of its employees became stuck in a walk-in freezer. The employee was trapped in the -18°C freezer for two and a half hours before being found. Reports suggest the employee displayed symptoms of hypothermia as a result.

Pret has reportedly apologised and said it is working with the manufacturer to ensure this doesn't happen again. This is not the first instance where an employee has become locked in a walk-in freezer – with a 2022 US case sadly resulting in death from hypothermia.

Extreme cold temperatures are no joke. It only takes a short amount of time in the cold for the body to be seriously affected.

The employee was trapped in the -18°C freezer for two and a half hours before being found

The body's normal temperature is about 37°C . When the body deviates from this temperature, it's either because it's fighting an infection (causing temperature to rise) or because it's been exposed to cold.

One of the body's first responses to a temperature drop is to undergo a process called vasoconstriction. This reduces blood flow to exposed areas – such as fingers and toes – by narrowing the diameter of the blood vessels. This process helps maintain core body temperature, which keeps vital organs functioning. In temperatures below -4°C , vasoconstriction also prevents ice crystals from forming in the blood.

When core temperature drops below 35°C , hypothermia occurs. This means the body is unable to produce enough heat to keep up with the rate it's being lost.

In the case of the Pret employee, they were only wearing jeans and a T-shirt in a -18°C environment. Since most body heat is lost through our skin and when we exhale, even just a few minutes in this environment would lower body temperature and cause hypothermia to set in.

Hypothermia has three stages.

In the mild stage, body temperature drops to between 32 and 35°C . The heart beats faster, breathing rate and blood pressure increase and muscles become tense from shivering. This all happens to generate heat. You may also need to urinate more often, as the body diverts blood to the kidneys. Confusion and reduced coordination may also happen.

In the moderate stage, body temperature drops to between 28 and 32°C . By this stage all body functions begin to slow and shivering ceases.

In the severe stage, body temperature drops below 28°C and most body systems stop functioning. Most will be unconscious by this stage. Heart function deteriorates and the lungs lose function as they become congested with fluid due to the lack of blood circulation.

The more layers you have, the better equipped you will be to handle the cold.

Research suggests that for every 5°C drop in temperature, there's a 1.6-fold increase in the risk of injury or death. There's no exact information on how long a person can survive in a walk-in freezer, but based on information from past cases it could only be a matter of hours. Modelling also predicts a healthy man could survive naked in -20°C for two and a half hours. This is extended to around 15 hours when wearing two layers

of clothing.

Dangers of the cold

Hypothermia is so dangerous because it progresses gradually, with the sufferer becoming unaware and confused. This confusion, brought on by the temperature drop, leads to a decline in brain function. In some cases of hypothermic death, people have been found naked or hidden in small, enclosed spaces (known as terminal burrowing) in an attempt to keep warm. Removing one's clothes, termed paradoxical undressing, happens in the final stages of hypothermia. It's caused by the blood vessels opening one last time to push blood into tissue to warm them. This causes people to become extremely hot.



Hypothermia commences quicker in water as it conducts heat away from the body 25 times better. Body size and shape can also affect how quickly hypothermia commences. Surprisingly, people with higher body fat are more likely to develop hypothermia. This is because they have an increased body surface area to lose heat, and less muscle mass to generate heat through shivering. Women also develop hypothermia faster than men.

Although hypothermia due to cold air takes longer, air movement can cause it to set in faster. This is because continually moving air shifts the body's warmth away from the skin's surface.

There's also the risk of tissue damage from frostbite from cold exposure. At -18°C , frostbite happens in as little as 30 minutes. Frostbite is the freezing of the skin, which progresses to deeper tissues if cold exposure continues. This results in tissue death and can lead to loss of fingers and toes.

Movement can be beneficial in the early stages of frostbite. But as hypothermia sets in this can be counterproductive as it circulates blood from the

cold limbs back to the core, risking even greater body temperature drops. Movement during moderate or severe hypothermia can increase the risk of death due to this rush of cold blood to the core.

Removing one's clothes, termed paradoxical undressing, happens in the final stages of hypothermia

Hypothermia is treated through rewarming. For people with mild hypothermia, removing them from the cold, taking off any wet clothing and giving them extra layers to warm up usually helps. Offer them warm food or drink to give them energy to generate heat through shivering.

People with moderate or severe hypothermia will require heat from an external source as their body isn't able to generate heat. This can be provided in the form of external warmth, such as chemical heat packs, applied to the head, neck or torso. In extreme cases, warmed saline may need to be inserted into body cavities. Be wary of applying heating pads to limbs or immersing the person in warm water, as this may burn the skin or increase the risk of death from cold blood rushing to the core.

It's unlikely you may find yourself trapped in a freezer. But should you ever find yourself in a situation where hypothermia is a risk, your best bet for slowing its progression is layering clothes (or other materials you can find) to help trap the body's heat.

Author Adam Taylor
Professor and Director of the Clinical Anatomy Learning Centre, Lancaster University

First Published on The Conversation

Beaujolais Crash:

A Tragic Legacy in Aviation History

Over 40 years have passed since the tragic Beaujolais crash of 13th November 1984, a catastrophic event that echoed through newspapers and broadcast news outlets around the world, leading to the untimely demise of nine individuals, including prominent journalists and influential businessmen - all men in their 30s and 40s. Shaun Anthony delves into the technical intricacies that contributed to the disaster, the societal repercussions, and the far-reaching legacy that emerged from this sorrowful chapter in aviation history.



Similar aircraft to one involved in tragedy

The Flight and the Fateful Journey

On 13th November 1984, a group of esteemed journalists, including Niall Hanley, editor of the Evening Herald, John Feeney, columnist for the Evening Herald, Kevin Marron a Sunday World columnist, Tony Heneghan, an Irish Independent contributor, along with renowned businessmen such as Cormac Cassidy, the owner of Cassidy Wines and Pat Gibbons who owned Sands Hotel boarded a light aircraft bound for France, piloted by John Walsh. The party intended to spend a day visiting a vineyard near Paris before flying home. They were to open the bottles in Gibbons's nightclub at a special party.

This trip was far more than just a routine flight for these accomplished individuals; it represented an annual pilgrimage to celebrate the arrival of Beaujolais Nouveau, a wine symbolic of the harvest season in France - a PR exercise to boost sales of the wine. The journey was intended as a bit of light-hearted fun to commemorate a cherished tradition, yet as the plane ascended into the skies, the weather posed unforeseeable challenges.

**Within
a heartbreaking turn of
fate, the aircraft plummeted into
hilly terrain near Eastbourne, England,
resulting in a devastating breakup of
the fuselage.**

Upon takeoff, the aircraft encountered increasingly tumultuous weather conditions. A severe rainstorm engulfed the area, leading to drastically reduced visibility. The last communication with air traffic controllers occurred when the plane had reached a cruising altitude of 25,000 feet. Moments later, radar contact was lost. Within a heartbreaking turn of fate, the aircraft plummeted into hilly terrain near Eastbourne, England, resulting in a devastating breakup of the fuselage. A local witness reported watching the plane circling over the village of East Dean—then it vanished in a ball of flames. It's believed that the men would have died instantaneously in the air.

Investigation Findings: The Technical Breakdown

Police, firemen and farmworkers tramped through thick mud in search of survivors. The aircraft was owned by Dublin-based Flight Line Executive Air Charter.

The aftermath of the Beaujolais crash prompted an extensive investigation that unearthed critical technical failures resulting in the tragic flight. Immediately, concerns surrounding the structural integrity of the aircraft arose. Debris was scattered over a four-mile radius across the Sussex Downs, indicating a mid-air breakup—a signal that severe mechanical or structural issues had occurred.

Notably, the aircraft in question lacked a black box recorder, a vital tool that plays an essential role in post-accident investigations. The absence of this crucial technology significantly hampered investigators' ability to reconstruct the sequence of events leading to the disaster.

Official reports, released three years post-incident, could not definitively ascertain the cause but noted that the festive atmosphere aboard may have affected the pilot's performance. Distractions and potential alcohol consumption among passengers were cited as factors that potentially impaired the pilot's ability to cope with the adverse flight conditions. Furthermore, it was suggested that the individual seated in the co-pilot's position might have inadvertently deactivated the autopilot, exacerbating critical control difficulties during a challenging predicament. This highlighted the essential importance of crew resource management, even amidst celebratory environments.

The narrative concerning the aircraft's structural defects was further exacerbated by the troubling revelation that prior to the Beaujolais crash, an alarming number of thirteen similar aircraft models had faced catastrophic failures in the United States. Such findings prompted significant discussions surrounding aviation safety standards and regulatory protocols governing aircraft maintenance and operational readiness.



The Wreckage

National Trauma: Collective Mourning and Reflection

The Beaujolais crash not only led to the loss of lives but also deeply resonated within the Irish community. A profound sense of grief enveloped the nation, encapsulated by the poignant headline from the Irish Independent: "Our Darkest Day." The untimely deaths of revered journalists and successful businessmen unsettled the very fabric of society. Public mournings were organised, and heartfelt tributes flowed in, honouring the substantial contributions made by those lost in the crash.

The journalists were celebrated for their unwavering commitment to truth and storytelling, each leaving an indelible mark on the media landscape. Concurrently, the businessmen, including Cormac Cassidy who played an influential role in the wine industry and others connected to the Sands Hotel, had built enduring legacies within their communities, making their loss feel particularly acute.

**Indeed,
when the plane crashed
the following night, many of
my colleagues thought I was on it,
and one of them was asked to come
in from home to write my
obituary**

A Close Shave with Disaster

Journalist John Boland met Evening Herald editor Niall Hanley at a rugby international in Lansdowne Road on the Saturday before the crash. As an Evening Herald editor, he'd been belatedly invited on the flight the following Tuesday but hadn't got around to confirming his acceptance. Niall's enthusiasm for the upcoming trip was infectious and over a few post-match drinks he persuaded John to phone organiser Francois Schillebaum early on Monday morning, with a view to securing a seat, "But when Monday morning came, and despite having told my friends and colleagues that I was going, I kept putting off making the call."

Finally, at lunch he called and Francois said he'd call back with the details of the flight but when he did it was to tell him regretfully that his boss (hotelier Pat Gibbons) had assumed he wasn't going and had just given his seat to fellow journalist Kevin Marron. Boland reflects, "Such is the thin line dividing life and death. Indeed, when the plane crashed the following night, many of my colleagues thought I was on it, and one of them was asked to come in from home to write my obituary, which she had half completed before the list of the nine men who'd died arrived at the news desk. There's even a ghostly photo of me as one of the dead in an early edition of the London Evening Standard."

A Lasting Legacy: Lessons Learned

The repercussions of the Beaujolais crash extend far beyond the immediate sorrow; it has since evolved into a critical reference point in the aviation safety narrative. In the unacceptable aftermath of the disaster, regulatory bodies began to rigorously scrutinise aircraft design standards and the pressing need for advanced safety technologies. The necessitation of mandatory black box recorders in all commercial aircraft stands as a lasting testament to the valuable lessons drawn from such tragedies, aimed at bolstering future accident investigations.



John Boland reflects on his close encounter with death

The scars of the Beaujolais crash serve as an enduring reminder of life's vulnerability and the capricious nature of fate - as evidenced by John Boland's near miss. Yet this sorrow also fosters resilience—a community's commitment to ensuring that the memories of those who perished continue to inspire earnest discussions concerning aviation safety and the unwavering importance of stringent maintenance protocols.

In reflecting upon the Beaujolais crash of 13th November 1984, the palpable sorrow expressed by friends, family, and the nation reminds us of the need for continual vigilance in aviation safety. It invites us to recognise that while we can never bring back those lost, we can honour their memory through actionable changes that safeguard future generations.

The Impact on Aviation Policy

The disaster compelled aviation authorities to rethink and reform their policies governing aircraft operations and maintenance. It set into motion a series of legislative changes that vastly improved safety measures within the airline industry - measures that are in place and refined to this day. Regulatory frameworks, driven by recommendations from investigation reports, now demand rigorous training for pilots that emphasise situational awareness, even during unusual circumstances, such as flights characterised by celebratory atmospheres. For instance, the tragedy highlighted the critical importance of communication within the cockpit. Better training programs focusing on crew resource management ensure that co-pilots and flight attendants are well-prepared for emergency scenarios. Furthermore, there has been a significant emphasis on mental health awareness among pilots to mitigate the impacts of stress and distractions, which can occur in personal or professional settings.

**while
we can never bring back
those lost, we can honour their
memory through actionable changes
that safeguard future generations.**

Cultural Reflections and Media Portrayal

In the wake of such a profound tragedy, media and public discourse played a pivotal role in shaping societal perceptions surrounding aviation safety. The Beaujolais crash was not only covered in news articles but also analysed in documentaries, scholarly papers, and public forums that sought to understand the deeper implications of the event.

Remembrance and Resilience

The Beaujolais crash ultimately serves as an essential chapter in aviation history, standing as a somber

reminder of the past while promoting a culture of safety aimed at preventing similar tragedies in the future. The pain associated with the event continues to resonate, serving as a bittersweet remembrance of the lives and the impact this took on their families - nine wives lost their husbands and 25 children were left fatherless.

In 1987, Maria Cassidy, the widow of the former sales director of Cassidy Wines, Cormac Cassidy was awarded £275,000 by the High Court. Cormac's wife sued Flightline Ltd, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin, under provisions of the Air Navigation and Transport Acts. From the total sum, the judge approved separate payments to Mr Cassidy's two sons. A payment of £35,509 was made to Gavin Cassidy (then 16) and £37,488 to Emmet Cassidy (then 13). Little is known of the details of the settlement. Sadly, Maria's father, whom she relied on for emotional support died 12 days after the crash after injecting too much cortisone to treat his Asthma. Maria suspects the accident occurred as he felt, "I need to be there for my daughter, now more than ever." This is evidence of the far-reaching effects of such a tragedy.

Learning from History

Believing deeply in progress, society must continue to learn from history, ensuring that the lessons from the Beaujolais crash endure. In doing so, we honour the legacies of the journalists and businessmen who lost their lives, recognising that the pursuit of safety in aviation remains a paramount responsibility shared by all.

Wishing all a Happy and Peaceful New Year



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Because laughter is the best medicine!



Today, my boss said, “You are so talented! Why don’t you work on my team?”

Flattered but annoyed, I replied, “Im already on your team, boss!”

Boss said, “I know that, eejit. I’m asking, WHY DON’T YOU WORK?”

Two rednecks are out hunting, and as they’re walking along they come upon a huge hole in the ground. They approach it and are amazed by the size of it.

The first hunter says, “Wow, that’s some hole. I can’t even see the bottom. I wonder how deep it is?”

The second hunter says, “I don’t know, let’s throw something down and listen and see how long it takes to hit bottom.”

The first hunter says, “There’s an old gearbox over there, give me a hand and we’ll throw it in and see”.

So they pick it up and carry it over, and count one, and two and three, and throw it in the hole.

They are standing there listening and looking over the edge and they hear a rustling in the brush behind them.

As they turn around they see a goat come crashing through the brush, run up to the hole with no hesitation, and jump in headfirst.

While they are standing there looking at each other, then gazing into the hole, and trying to figure out what that was all about, an old farmer walks up.

“Say there”, says the farmer, “You fellers didn’t happen to see my goat around here anywhere, did you?”

The first hunter says “Funny you should ask, but we were just standing here a minute ago and a goat came running out of the bushes doin’ about a hunert miles an hour and jumped headfirst into this hole here!”

And the old farmer said... “Why that’s impossible, I had him chained to an old gearbox!”

A wife being the romantic sort sent her husband a text “ If you are sleeping send me your dreams. If you are laughing send me your smile. If you are eating send me a bite. If you are drinking send me a sip. If you are crying send me your tears. I love you!”

The husband, typically un-romantic, replied “ I am on the toilet. Please advise.”

A man in the Scottish Highlands sees a hillwalker kneeling by the side of a burn scooping up water in his hand to quench his thirst.

“Haw, min!” he shouts. “Dinna’ drink oot o’ there, it’s fu’ o’ coo’s poo!”

“I don’t understand a word you’re saying,” replies the hillwalker. “Why on Earth can’t you Scotch people learn to talk proper English?”

The man says, “I was saying, ‘Use both hands to scoop up the water - you’ll get more!’”

A guy comes to his doctor, and tells him:

“Hi, Doc.....well...everytime I put my finger on my elbow, uuuuuuhhhhhh...so painful...everytime I put my finger on my leg...uuuuuhhhhhh...so painful.....everytime I put my finger on my head...uuuuhhhhso panful.....everytime I put my finger on my belly.....uuuuhhhh.....so painful.....Do I suffer Fibromyalgya????”

“No”, said the Doctor.....”I’m afraid you’ve got a broken finger”

Went to my sons house.

Bit bored. Got up out of the sitting room chair and into the kitchen to see him.

“Have you got a newspaper?”

“Newspaper? get modern Dad, we get the news online nowadays!” and he handed me his tablet.

Later on he came in asked me what I thought about using the tablet.

“It’s really good! I tell you that fly didn’t stand a chance!”

I saw Tony Bennett with a large jam cake today.

I said, “Where you going with that Tony?”

He said, “I’m just going to visit my son Frank in his new nightclub. Then I’m taking it home for tea. You can come along if you like.”

Later when we were at his house I said, “Where’s that cake Tone?”

He said, “Oh no!!...I left my tart in son Franks disco.”

Did you hear about the first restaurant to open on the moon?

It had great food, but no atmosphere.

Got a good joke you’d like to share?

Message us on X (formerly Twitter)
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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.

This issue, Patricia brings her favourite books of the moment.

Time Of The Child – Niall Williams – Bloomsbury



Doctor Jack Troy was born and raised in the little town of Faha, but his responsibilities for the sick and his care for the dying mean he has always been set apart from his community. A visit from the doctor is always a sign of bad things to come.

His youngest daughter, Ronnie, has grown up in her father's shadow, and remains there, having missed her chance at real love - and passed up an offer of marriage from an unsuitable man.

But in the advent season of 1962, as the town readies itself for Christmas, Ronnie and Doctor Troy's lives are turned upside down when a baby is left in their care. As the winter passes, father and daughter's lives, the understanding of their family, and their role in their community are changed forever.

The Housemaid – Freida McFadden – Little Brown

“Welcome to the family,” Nina Winchester says as I shake her elegant, manicured hand. I smile politely, gazing around the marble hallway. Working here is my last chance to start fresh. I can pretend to be whoever I like. But I'll soon learn that the Winchesters' secrets are far more dangerous than my own . . .

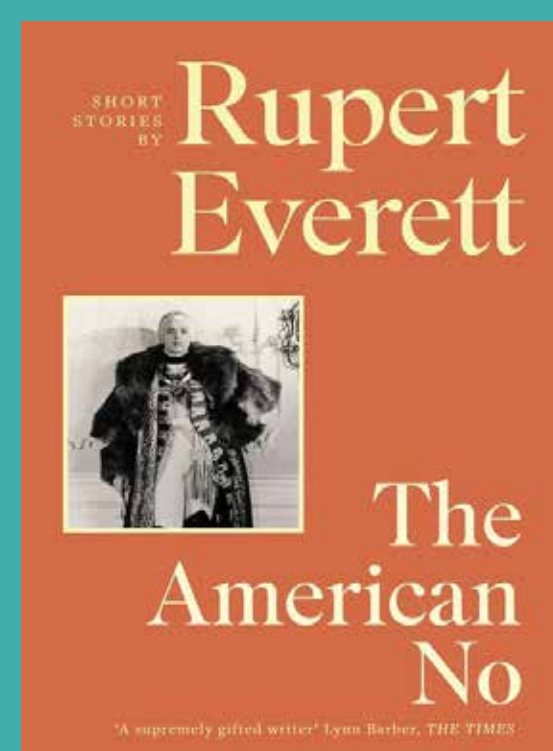
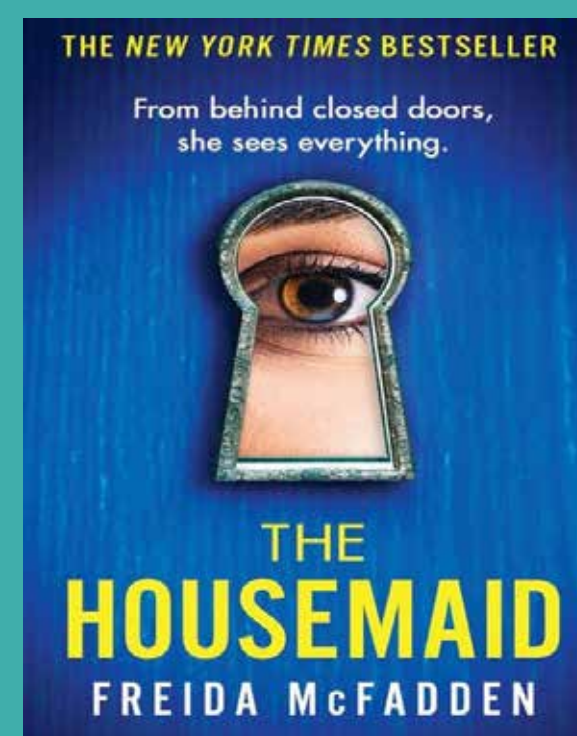
Every day I clean the Winchesters' beautiful house top to bottom. I collect their daughter from school. And I cook a delicious meal for the whole family before heading up to eat alone in my tiny room on the top floor.

I try to ignore how Nina makes a mess just to watch me clean it up. How she tells strange lies about her own daughter. And how her husband Andrew seems more broken every day. But as I look into Andrew's handsome brown eyes, so full of pain, it's hard not to imagine what it would be like to live Nina's life. The walk-in closet, the fancy car, the perfect husband.

I only try on one of Nina's pristine white dresses once. Just to see what it's like. But she soon finds out... and by the time I realize my attic bedroom door only locks from the outside, it's far too late.

But I reassure myself: the Winchesters don't know who I really am.

They don't know what I'm capable of . . .



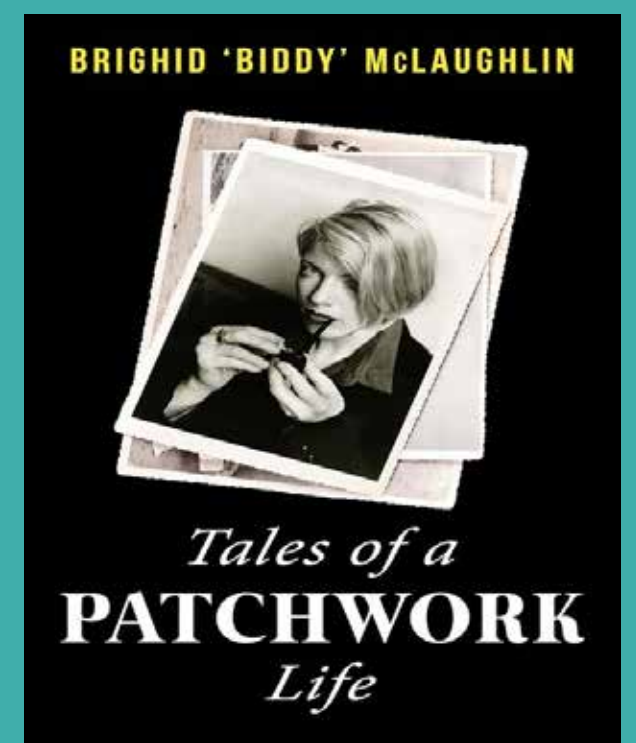
The American No – Rupert Everett – Abacus

In Rupert Everett's first, glorious collection of stories, he takes us on an exhilarating journey with a cast of extraordinary characters. A blackly humorous story of a chaotic and emotional funeral in Paris. Oscar Wilde's last night in Paris, vividly evocative, unflinching and elegiac. A Russian-American countess who confronts sex and age in a Wiltshire teashop. The ferociously unforgiving life of an L.A. talent agency and the unexpected twist that launches a completely different kind of career. The deathbed confession of a woman who left home for 1850s India, never to return. A story of emigration, love and grief. And a beautifully evocative and touching portrayal of Proust's creative life and his childhood.

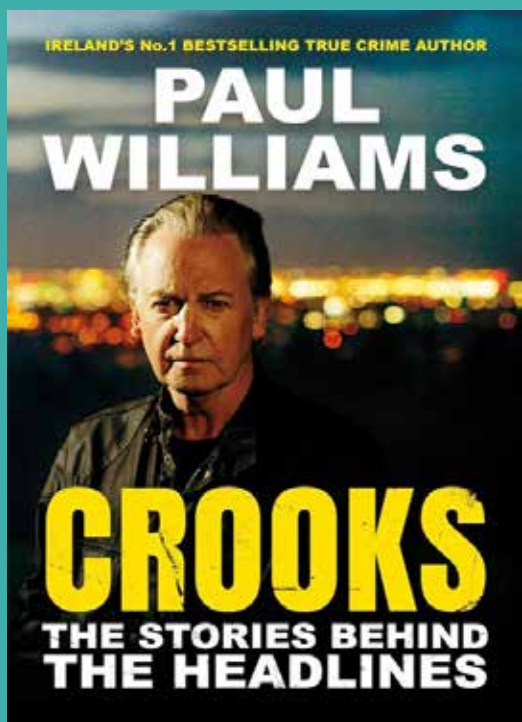
A brilliantly witty, funny and tender collection of stories that draws on the wealth of film and TV ideas Rupert Everett has created over the course of his career, *The American No* will delight and surprise his many fans.

Tales of a Patchwork Life: A Memoir of the Stories That Keep Me – Brigid ‘Biddy’ McLaughlin – The Mercier Press

Brigid ‘Biddy’ McLaughlin, the acclaimed Irish journalist and storyteller, has endured unthinkable tragedy—the murder of her beloved sister Siobhan and the devastating drowning of her husband. Yet, in the face of overwhelming grief, McLaughlin refuses to be consumed by darkness. From behind the half-door of her enchanting Dalkey cottage, in exquisite and honest prose, McLaughlin reflects upon the cherished memories evoked by the objects surrounding her, carrying the reader along on a journey of grief, resilience and hope. From the delicate Madeleine tray that whispers Siobhan’s name to her own folk art illustrations that dance across the pages, McLaughlin’s memoir is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the power of storytelling to heal even the deepest wounds. As the late John B. Keane once remarked, ‘Biddy had been a storyteller all her life. In drawings, words and painting, she has captured the tales of common and not-so-common folk caught up in the maelstrom of life.’ McLaughlin’s memoir celebrates the people, places, and passions that sustained her: her unconventional background, her bohemian friends, her love of art and cooking, and the solace found within the walls of her cottage. *Tales of a Patchwork Life* is a must-read for anyone seeking inspiration and comfort. It offers a powerful reminder of the extraordinary strength that lies within.



Crooks: The Stories Behind the Headlines – Paul Williams – Allen & Unwin



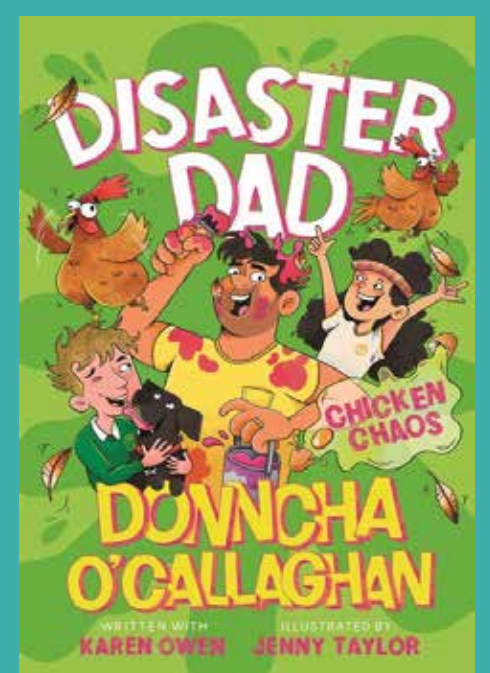
For almost forty years, Paul Williams has chronicled the life and crimes of some of Ireland’s most notorious godfathers, killers and thieves. In *Crooks* he brings his readers for a ride-along, taking us behind the scenes of his most notorious scoops, describing the run-ins he’s had with unsavoury, dangerous criminals and the high price of his line of work.

From pursuing the General to death threats from PJ ‘The Psycho’ Judge, exposing the Westies and tracking the Kinahan cartel, Paul’s extraordinary career doubles as an eyewitness account of the evolution of organized crime in Ireland.

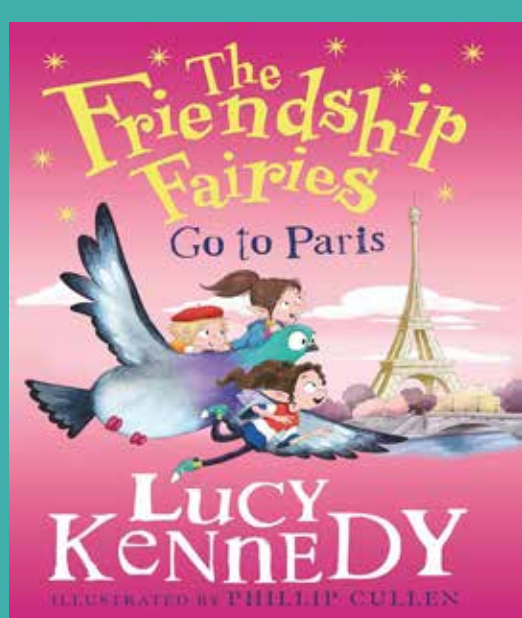
Disaster Dad: Chicken Chaos – Donncha O’Callaghan (Author) Karen Owen (Author) Jenny Taylor (Illustrator) Eriu

When Dad decides to plan a special surprise for Mum’s birthday, the house turns to chaos!

Mum is going to America to visit family for a week and has left a very clear master plan for Dad, Finn and Emma to follow. But when the plan is destroyed, Dad goes rogue and starts organising a birthday surprise! From disastrous D-I-Y and cockadoodle-doo-ing cockerels to bonkers baking, this book is crammed full of chaos!



This laugh-out-loud family story is sure to delight readers aged 7+



The Friendship Fairies Go to Paris – Lucy Kennedy (Author) Philip Cullen (Illustrator) Gill Books

The Friendship Fairies – sisters Emme, Holly and Jess – are off to Paris with their parents, exchanging homes with a French family for a month. The girls are having a brilliant time exploring the city, until disaster strikes and they have to track down their host family’s precious pet octopus, who someone seems to have let out accidentally ...

They chase the octopus all over Paris – through the streets, the Louvre and even up the Eiffel Tower – following a trail of puddle prints. The Friendship Fairies better track him down soon, or they’ll be in BIG trouble when the French family gets home!

What are you reading?

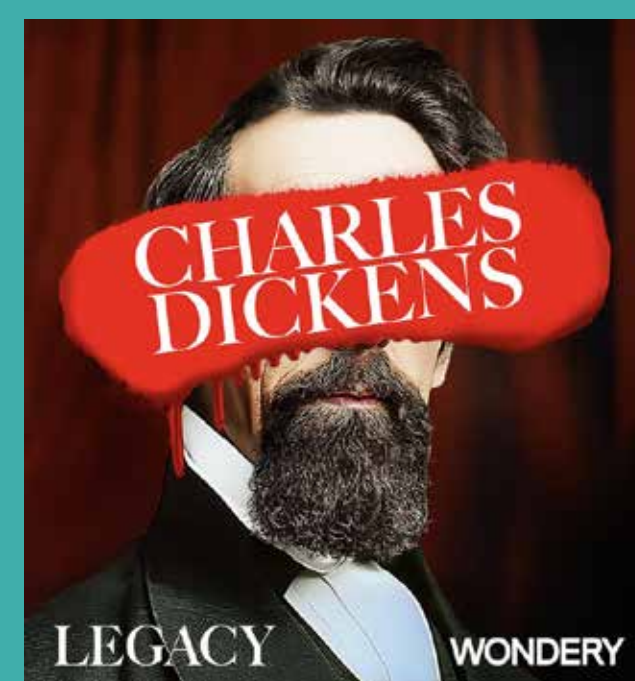
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The Podcast Review

We source the best selection of podcasts each issue. This time we bring you, Legacy: Charles Dickens, Assume Nothing: Murder at the Stables, Costing the Earth: The Real Cost of Chinese Medicine, The Madman's Hotel and Scamtown.

Legacy: Charles Dickens (History)

For many, Charles Dickens is considered one of the world's greatest novelists. In Legacy, writer, broadcaster and journalist Afua Hirsch and author and global historian Peter Frankopan delve into the lives of some of the most famous people and ask whether they have the reputation they deserve, or was he, like his daughter stated, "No gentleman at all"?



Assume Nothing: Murder at the Stables (True Crime)



Horse trainer Jonathan Creswell is able to break and control animals that others just can't. His partner's sister Katie Simpson, has a bright equestrian career ahead of her. The inside story of a crime that rocked Northern Ireland's equestrian community. This is a story that exposes what can happen behind the stable doors and raises questions about the safety of young women in a world to which many are instantly attracted.

Costing the Earth: The Real Cost of Chinese Medicine (Investigation)

As Chinese money is invested around the world there is a surprising toll to pay. The endangered species of far-flung regions suffer from the demands of traditional Chinese medicine. Quite shocking!



The Madman's Hotel (Mental Health)

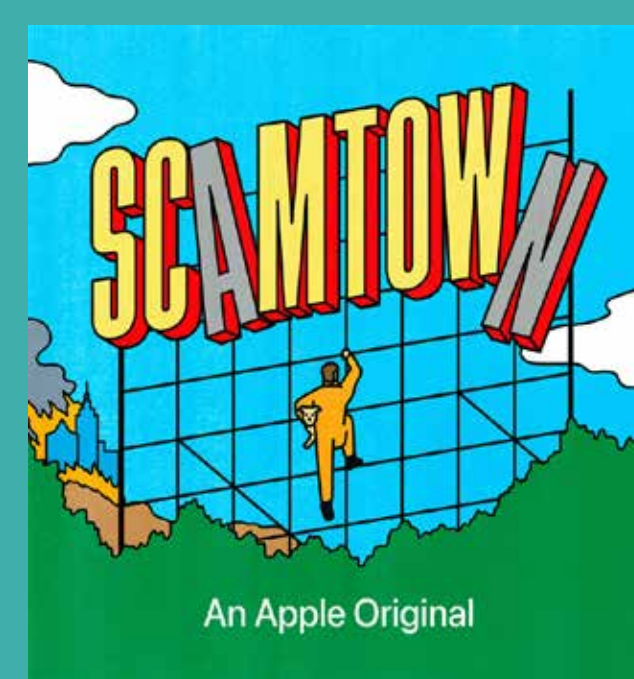


In the heart of the rolling green hills of Ireland a huge abandoned psychiatric asylum looms large and holds its secrets close, until one family fights to find the truth about their long-lost great grandmother.

Presented by mental health advocate Niall Breslin - this is the untold story of the quest to find patient Julia Leonard, alongside many others, who came to die in St Loman's Hospital near Dublin. Why was Julia in St Loman's? And what happened to her and other patients who found themselves within its walls? Niall joins the campaign to find out the truth, as he knows the hospital well... he grew up in the town next door.

Scamtown (Entertainment)

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