

'I never told her that Bailey was the killer'

Detective rejects witness allegations

By Paul Caffrey

A RETIRED detective has denied telling key witness Marie Farrell that Ian Bailey had killed Sophie Toscan du Plantier.

On the 46th day of the Bailey case, ex-detective Jim Fitzgerald told jurors how he tracked down Ms Farrell on the instructions of a superior officer.

She had initially called gardai anonymously from a phone box, using the name Fiona.

Ms du Plantier was killed at her West Cork holiday home on December 23, 1996.

Ms Farrell contacted gardai anonymously two days later, and told of a "weird-looking" thin man in a black beret in the area, in the days before the murder, it has been claimed.

Ms Farrell has since claimed she was pressurised by officers to



Retired detective: Jim Fitzgerald



Suing the State: Ian Bailey

DEBT AND MITTERRAND LINK

SOPHIE Toscan du Plantier's husband may have racked up massive debts - as well as friends in high places, the High Court heard yesterday.

The jury heard that Daniel du Plantier was rumoured to be friends with former French president François Mitterrand - and might have been 'hiding something'. Former garda JP Twomey acknowledged that he interviewed Paris Match journalist Caroline Mangez in the course of inquiries into the December 1996 killing.

Mr Creed said the French

reporter had made 'all kinds of suggestions about Mr [Daniel] du Plantier' - including that he 'was hiding something'.

The court heard Ms Mangez had suggested that Mr du Plantier had 'big debts' and was a friend of Mr Mitterrand.

Ms Mangez had also briefed gardai about an allegedly 'violent' former French lover of Ms du Plantier and his whereabouts at the time of the murder, the court heard. Mr Bailey previously told the court how he was convinced of a 'French connection' to the murder.

get the f*** out.' Mr Fitzgerald yesterday told the court that when gardai met Ms Farrell, she acknowledged making the calls and said of the man she saw at the bridge: 'I now know him to be Ian Bailey.'

Asked if gardai had suggested Mr Bailey was the murderer, Mr Fitzgerald said: 'That's not correct... We didn't go up there with any agenda, other than to find out she was "Fiona", and what she saw.'

Mr Fitzgerald also claimed yesterday that ex-soldier Martin Graham was himself convinced that Mr Bailey was guilty of murder and wanted to 'assist gardai

getting information'. Giving evidence last month, Mr Graham said he was given drugs by gardai to help him befriend Mr Bailey.

But Mr Fitzgerald told the court: 'That never happened.'

He said Mr Graham once told gardai he would require payment of €4,000 if he managed to obtain certain information.

Mr Fitzgerald said he taped conversations with Mr Graham because he became convinced that the former soldier 'was trying to set me up in some way'.

The hearing continues.
paul.caffrey@dailymail.ie

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

Put away the headphones and find your way back home

OUR world is bedeviled by distraction. Gadgets, toys and noise prevent us from hearing the sweet sounds of life. Instead of finding joy in the beauty of creation, we search for it behind a screen.

We have never been more prosperous, comfortable and leisured. Why, then, are we so unhappy, desperate and distracted? Why are we so anxious, restless and stressed?

A world that cannot sleep, that cannot take time away from the maddening crowd, is one that has lost touch with reality. When our only solace is to withdraw into a virtual space where neither flowers nor love ever bloom, we have surely forgotten what it is to be human. The virtual life has robbed us of our emotions, compassion and a sense that we belong to something greater than ourselves.

It is this that has transformed our society into one of hostile strangers. When people no longer identify with their world and with each other, they will look upon both with distrust. Instead of seeing society as a shared home, they will view it as a halfway house to which they owe neither love nor loyalty.

In such a world, the great message of Lent is surely lost. For the children of Cyberia, six weeks of self-denial is a prospect that defies comprehension. In a society dominated by the selfie, the idea of noble sacrifice is alien.

Yet, as I travel and talk to people about existence in our world of instant everything, I realise that even young people yearn for something more. They yearn to leave behind their gadgets, to escape the screen and return to restful waters. Deep down, they understand why we can never be fulfilled when estranged from real life.

It seems to me that Lent offers a beautiful opportunity to make that journey home. 'I think I'll give up chocolate this year,' said my eldest. I replied that to give up things is good but searching for the desert is even better.

When Christ departed for the desert, He went in search of silence. He went in search of something for which we also desperately desire. Silence, solitude, serenity: all these are the key to happiness in a world of noise.

The journey to the heart of the desert is one that we can all undertake, even if we have grown weak in the Faith. That is because the desert is a metaphor for that place which is buried deep within each of us. It is a journey to that sphere of silence where, ironically, we hear the sound of everything.

There is no great secret to finding the desert. We simply stop, unplug

and sit in solitude. If that is impossible for many today, it is because we have forgotten what silence sounds like.

It is, however, the most harmonious and sensual of all sounds. In the silence, we hear the hum of life. We hear the breath as it powers body and mind. We hear the symphony of nature as its glorious melody soars to the heavens.

To sit alone, without noise or distraction, is to find your way back to the world. It is to rediscover the magic of listening to the voice of creation. It is to enliven the senses to things without which we cannot be truly content.

In the desert, we rediscover the power of poise. We rediscover that inner harmony which enables us to stand back from our problems and see them for what they are. We sit, become still and find that our lives become less strained and stressed.

To approach Lent in this way, is not to see it as a period of self-denial but as one of self-discovery. In retreating to the stillness for a period each day, we begin to see others and our world in a new light. We notice colour, beauty and the little miracles of life beyond the fast lane.

WE notice people, their needs and the ways we can help fulfil them. In so doing, we realise again the great virtues of patience and compassion. We understand why, in all things, it is more blessed to give than to receive.

In the stillness of the desert, we find our route back home. In the silence, we hear 'the voice of one calling in the wilderness'. To respond does not mean abandoning the world but to learn how to love it again. It is to learn how to value the things that matter while there is still time.

It is true that Lent involves letting go. It involves detaching from those things that burden life with clutter and confusion. However, once relieved of that weight, we find that we are truly free.

Six weeks of silence: how hard can it really be? Six weeks to switch off from selfies and Snapchat. Six weeks to find the desert and to discover that it is anything but a barren wasteland. It is our pathway to paradise here on Earth.

All of which means that lasting happiness is not something that can be found on Facebook. It can, however, be found simply by sitting down and savouring the sounds of silence. You can't switch on those sounds but you can tune into them.

The only requirement being that you throw away your headphones.

mark.dooley@dailymail.ie

Teen awarded €40k following Tesco fall

A TEENAGER who injured her left knee and back when she slipped and fell in a Tesco store has been awarded almost €40,000 in damages.

Barrister Rory O'Reilly told the Circuit Civil Court that in June 2013, Anne Teresa Stokes had been with her mother and two sisters at Tesco, Clearwater Shopping Centre, Finglas, Dublin.

Mr O'Reilly said that 16-year-old student Anne Teresa, who was 14 at the time, slipped on liquid on the floor and fell on her knee. She had banged the back of her head in the fall and also suffered soft tissue injuries to her lower back.

The court heard yesterday that she suffered from ongoing knee and back pain. Through her father Bernard Stokes, of Barnamore Park, Finglas, she sued Tesco Ireland Ltd for negligence.

Tesco made a €39,433 offer, following an assessment by the Personal Injuries Assessment Board. Judge Raymond Groarke approved the offer.

Dealer gets to keep stolen BMW

A GLOBAL insurance company lost a court battle with a small west of Ireland car dealer over a top-of-the-range BMW yesterday.

The BMW 5 jeep had been stolen from the driveway of the home of a company director in Northern Ireland and given false number plates before being offered for sale on the Done Deal website.

Declan Hanly, who employs four at his car dealership in Roscommon town, spotted the ad and travelled to Shinrone, Co. Offaly, to view the car.

Roscommon District Court heard that Mr Hanly met a man called Pádraig and bought the vehicle for €12,800. He had checked to ensure it had not been crashed and that there was no money owing on it.

Later it emerged that the registration did not match the chassis number of the car.

He was seeking to secure possession of the car, as was Zurich Insurance which had insured the vehicle.

Judge Geoffrey Browne said the insurance company had not proven its case and awarded possession of the car to Mr Hanly.