

Garda boss casts doubt on 'killer officer' claim

THE Garda Commissioner has said she is not aware of any incident in which a member of the force witnessed a colleague shooting a civilian dead as has been alleged in the Dáil by TD Clare Daly.

The claim was raised under parliamentary privilege by the Independent TD who said the officer alleged to have witnessed the murder was told by his superiors to say he was not present.

Commissioner Nóirín O'Sullivan yesterday said the garda in question wrote a letter to Taoiseach Enda Kenny about the case last year and it was passed to a review panel to examine 300 claims of corruption in the force.

Ms O'Sullivan told journalists she was aware of Ms Daly's allegations but the commissioner said she was 'not aware of any

By **Ali Bracken**
Crime Correspondent

specifics surrounding the incident'.

Asked if gardaí are investigating, she said more specific details would be needed 'before we could even come to the conclusion that it was murder'.

Ms O'Sullivan said she believed the best route for such serious allegations was to be dealt with by the Garda Ombudsman.

She said: 'I would encourage any member of the public, including any elected representative, who has evidence or has suspicions of wrongdoing against An Garda Síochána to bring it to the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission.'

'Or, indeed, if they feel that isn't

appropriate that they bring it me.'

Frances Fitzgerald said she could not comment on a specific case. But, referring to Ms Daly, the Justice Minister said: 'With parliamentary privilege comes responsibility and it has to be used in a responsible way and it's not used in a responsible way I want to see action being taken.'

'Clare Daly's allegation was that one Garda member shot a member of the public dead and that another member witnessed it and was told not to reveal what had happened.'

'Of course I'm aware of the allegation. If people have information about criminal activity, if they have evidence or are concerned, that should be reported and it will be investigated.'

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

The night we wept for joy to learn our baby son was okay

HE came into our world four years ago today. Delaying as long as possible, he yielded to the inevitable only after being induced. Following a traumatic birth, our youngest child finally found peace in his mother's arms.

For a father, nothing compares to that moment when mother and child connect. After all the trials of pregnancy, and the unforgiving ordeal of labour, to see them united in love is nothing short of miraculous.

It is a bond that no words can do justice to, except perhaps the poetry of the heart.

Deep beyond description, a mother's love for her children spans a lifetime and never diminishes. It is something we have all felt, but which we find difficult to explain.

That is because it is love that begins before we are born.

Think on that: we were loved long before we were seen, named or held. During each of her three pregnancies, my wife constantly spoke to her babies, telling them not to be afraid. She assured them of our undying love, of the fact that we could not wait to hold and cherish them.

That is a form of heavenly love rarely seen this side of paradise. Yet, it is visible in the boundless affection that every mother has for her children. Even in the midst of tantrums and trauma, you can see a mother's instinctive love for those she would rather perish than be without.

It wasn't the end of our little boy's problems. His tough birth was only a prelude to a medical procedure that went wrong.

A standard operation to remove a hernia ended in the nightmare of a second surgery that same day.

We arrived into an silent hospital at dawn, and we were still waiting for our little baby well after dusk. Finally, the doors of the theatre opened and a little bundle was carried out. I will never forget the fear on his tiny face as he sought to find his parents.

For a second time in three months, he was gently placed in his mother's arms by a nurse. This time, however, both mother and son wept with sheer relief. She wrapped him in layers of love, knowing that the day could have ended very differently.

That night, she slept beside him in the hospital. Only when he realised that she was there did he cease crying. Even at that tender age, he knew that this person was his link to love and life.

You don't get over something like that too quickly. Four years on, and we still regularly recall that moment

when our son emerged from the operating theatre. We behold him as he is now and offer praise that he is big, strong and, of course, alive.

Today, he is no longer a baby. In fact, for the first time in a decade, I feel that we have emerged from the so-called 'baby stage'.

Quite suddenly, infancy has given way to independence.

Still, I cannot look at our four-year-old without thinking of his early troubles. As he plays with his brothers, as he sings and laughs, I often find myself smiling with deep gratitude. For here is a little boy bursting with all the joy that life can supply, and yet he started with such a rough ride.

Nothing, however, compares to the depth of love that flows between him and his mother. Sometimes, without their knowledge, I watch as they play or chat. Remarkably, it is as though I am back in that maternity ward, staring in awe as mother clings to her new child.

She loved him from the moment of conception, and that profound love saw them through a desperately difficult birth and his subsequent surgery. Each time they look at each other, you can see the strength of feeling in their eyes.

I know he doesn't remember his stormy start, but there is no doubt he knows that she has never failed him, not for a single second.

A mother's love is the best this world can offer. We so often take it for granted, yet it is always there when required. It is the one thing we can rely on even when it is least deserved.

It is three in the morning and Mrs Dooley wakes to find someone tapping her head. 'I had a bad dream', he says, and immediately she jumps out of bed. In the silence of the night, she sits and comforts him until he feels safe again.

An hour later and she's off to yet another bedroom, this time to soothe a stomach pain. This is nothing heroic and it is something that most mothers do. However, the sum total of all these little sacrifices, over so many years, is not only heroic but a towering testament to the wonder of motherhood.

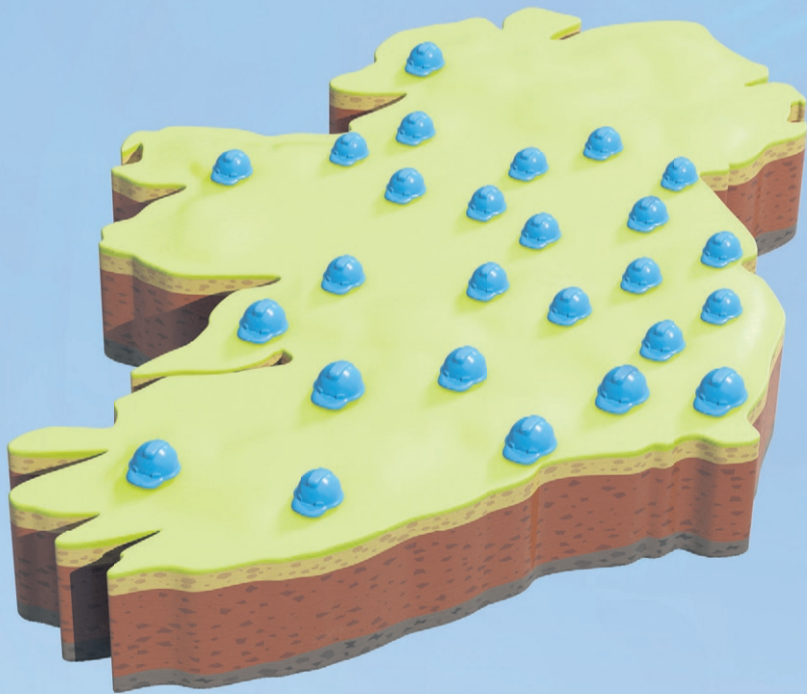
In turning four today, our youngest child has reached a precious milestone. He is no longer a baby, but a bright and bubbly little boy who loves life and who squeezes the most out of each day. For me, however, he is much more than that.

In this sweet and sensitive child, I see someone who suffered and survived, who triumphed over all his troubles and who deserves every minute of his happiness.

That he did so is thanks to his mother's love, a force so beautiful and strong it can sustain any soul.

There are 803 water infrastructure projects happening across Ireland now.

We're here to make a difference.



Upgrading and maintaining our water system is vital to help maintain and improve our water services. Irish Water is now engaged in works in every county nationwide, and in excess of 200 projects will be completed by the end of the year.

For more information visit www.water.ie

UISCE
ÉIREANN : IRISH
WATER

Safeguarding your water for your future.