

€90k for Garda attacked by 'drunken' Brit sailor

By Saurya Cherfi

A GARDA believed she would be choked to death when a 'drunken' British navy officer suddenly attacked her, the High Court heard.

Garda Hilary Lynch told the court said she had been in a patrol car escorting the officer back to his ship at Kennedy Quay, Cork, when he had suddenly grabbed her neck.

She thought Warrant Officer Robert Nixon, attached to HMS Mersey, was going to kill her, a garda compensation hearing at the court was told.

Her colleagues in the squad car succeeded in restraining Nixon, who was arrested and brought before Cork District Court for assault. Nixon was later ordered



Attacked: Garda Hilary Lynch to pay her €5,000 over the incident in September 2010.

Garda Lynch, from Anglesea Street Garda Station, Cork, told the High Court she had been struggling for breath for some

time after the attack and was taken to hospital for X-rays.

She had a sore throat and neck and had later felt pain in her left jaw, which had developed into a disorder causing pain and clicking noises during jaw movements.

Garda Lynch, who had been advised to wear a splint at night, said she may have to undergo surgery to treat the painful clicking disorder.

The court heard that the assault had exacerbated symptoms of a neck injury she had suffered as a result of an attack by another man in December 2008.

Mr Justice Raymond Fullam awarded her €41,823 for her assault by the naval officer and €47,674 for the 2008 incident, making a total of €89,497.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

Where are all my toys? To my shame, I can't answer

IT lay listless on the grass, a discarded object now classed as litter. I stopped and pondered whose it might be. It was a simple teddy bear, yet it bore all the signs of something that had been much loved.

Loved yet now abandoned, cherished yet now forsaken.

There it lay, face down in the dirt, a once-treasured possession forgotten and forlorn. As I stood and stared, I thought of all those toys that are, quite literally, members of our family.

Could our eldest throw away 'Happy Feet', a small penguin who has slept by his side since the cot? Could our middle child discard his monkey, without which he does not feel secure? Could our youngest abandon Winnie the Pooh, a family heirloom that is wrapped in an aura of love?

These little 'creatures' have acquired an almost sacred status in the lives of my children. I tried to imagine any one of them lying in the place of the bear but there are limits to the imagination. We have such limits because some things are simply too difficult to envisage.

This little bear may once have slept beside its owner. It may once have been the centre of her life but no more. Today, it is a forsaken memento of lost times, of a childhood outgrown and denied.

Our toys bind us to those golden years of youth. They enable us to tell our stories of who we were and how we saw the world. They keep alive memories of times past, of a life well gone but never forgotten.

I am not referring to gadgets and games but to those toys endowed with personality, character and charm. Our Winnie the Pooh is a simple cuddly toy, mass produced and available in every store. Yet only this one is, for us, an object of love.

Whenever they were sick, it gave them comfort. Whenever they were lonely, it provided solace. Whenever they were afraid in the night, this soft toy gave them safety and light.

I know it will always be part of our home, simply because I will not have the heart to throw it out. Too many precious memories will be thrown out with it. Too many dreams will be lost, beautiful dreams of innocence and love.

'Where are all your toys, Dad?' It is a question I am regularly asked and, to my shame, I have no answer.

What I do have are stories of how my grandmother made most of my toys, of how she produced all my snuggly toys and costumes with her trusted sewing machine.

She actually knitted a Humpty Dumpty in a single day. I kept it until

I was in my teens but now I am unsure of its fate. Was it also found face down in the dirt?

St Paul tells us that, in becoming a man, he gave up 'childish things'. Growing up demands leaving behind our childish ways but it does not mean severing all ties to that world of simplicity and wonder. Through our toys, we can peer back beyond the years to a time when sweet comfort was found in 'childish things'.

The bear was of average size, cream with glassy brown eyes. You could tell by its markings that it had been loved, that it had been hugged through the tears, held tightly in the night. This was no ordinary object but something that once had deep meaning for somebody.

And now, as it sat there on the grass, I saw someone's dreams go up in smoke. I saw an essential link to childhood cut away and cast aside. I saw a parent dumbstruck when asked: 'Where have all your toys gone?'

I know we can't keep everything, for hoarding one's past is just as unhealthy as cutting it completely adrift. Some things, however, cry out to be saved. Having featured so largely in your life, they somehow appeal to be retained.

Happy Feet, Monkey and Winnie are here to stay. They have journeyed with us through the best and worst of times. When my children could not be consoled, these special friends came to their rescue and all was well.

For many parents, it is too late. We cannot point to the whereabouts of our toys. They are gone and with them vital links to vital times.

LET it not be that way when it comes to the toys of our children. When Winnie has had his day, put him safely away. For there is no doubt that a day will come when you will long to live again the laughter and the love. And when that day arrives, it is in that cuddly bear that you shall rediscover both.

I left the teddy bear on the side of the road. I went home and moved from bed to bed smiling at the characters perched on each pillow. They seemed to smile back, each one an embodiment of a child's personality, of his needs and hopes.

The next day, there was no sign of the discarded bear on the roadside. Had it been retrieved or taken away with the rubbish? Had someone come to salvage something of their childhood or was that chapter of a life gone for good?

Either way, the bear called out and I responded, proving that objects of love cannot so easily be thrown away.

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6.3 Million Children Died Last Year Before their 5th Birthday

0	Born in a mud hut	Born in a hospital
1	Dirty Water	Clean Water
2	Hunger Pains	Birthday Cake
3	Walks 8 Hours for Water	First day of playschool
4	Contracts Malaria	Catches a Cold
5	Falls asleep in Mum's arms... Dies	Falls asleep in Mum's arms... Wakes up feeling better

Sarah (Sierra Leone) and **Emma (Ireland)**

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