

# Wallace speaks to gardaí over €15k 'bribery'

## NAMA official sought money, says TD

By **Jennifer Bray**  
Political Correspondent

INDEPENDENT TD Mick Wallace has spoken to gardaí about claims he made in the Dáil about a construction company paying €15,000 cash in a bag to exit NAMA.

He told the Dáil last week he knew a person in construction who wanted to exit NAMA, the State's bad bank, and was twice asked to pay €15,000 cash 'in a bag' in order to do so.

The construction worker did so on both occasions and the matter was 'all sorted', claimed Mr Wallace last week.

Mr Wallace yesterday confirmed he has spoken to two detectives for around 90 minutes about the allegations.

The Wexford TD met the officers

### 'They paid up to exit NAMA'

on Friday. An investigation team has now been established and will investigate any lines of inquiry that may have arisen from the information Mr Wallace supplied.

It is understood this will include an initial check into the background details, including whether a property developer whose name was given by Mr Wallace to gardaí was in NAMA.

Gardaí will also check if the same developer has since exited NAMA and if the reasons for that were as was stated by Mr Wallace.

During a previous debate on the North, the TD questioned the sale of the Northern Ireland loan portfolio of 850 properties.

He then made the allegations about a NAMA official allegedly bribing a construction firm.

Mr Wallace said in the Dáil: 'I



**Claims in Dáil: Mick Wallace TD** know of a construction company that wanted to exit out of NAMA. 'When it asked the manager of its portfolio if it could happen, he said, "Yes, but it will cost you €15,000 in cash and I want it in a bag."

'Two weeks later, the company delivered the money. A few weeks later he demanded the same again. It duly obliged and all was sorted.'

NAMA chief executive Brendan McDonagh then asked gardaí to investigate the claims about the agency made in the Dáil.

In a letter sent by Mr McDonagh to Garda Commissioner Noirín O'Sullivan, Mr Wallace was urged to bring his bribery allegations to gardaí.

Referring to the TD's claim, Mr McDonagh wrote: 'To my knowledge, this is the first time that any such allegation has been made.'

Mr McDonagh said as matters



**Garda boss: Noirín O'Sullivan** stand, the allegation - if not investigated swiftly - casts a shadow over 'all NAMA officers'.

Following Mr Wallace's claims, NAMA was accused of insulting a Stormont watchdog after declining to appear before its investigation into a property deal in the North. Stormont's finance committee wants NAMA to be a witness in its investigation into the sale of NAMA's Northern property portfolio.

Stormont committee chairman Daithí McKay, of Sinn Féin, said last week: 'The Public Accounts Committee in the Dáil has received evidence from NAMA. I take it as an insult to this committee that NAMA officials again have said that they will not be sending anybody to this committee to listen to committee members' concerns and indeed the concerns of the public here in the North.'

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# Hospital worker is jailed for sex assault of patient

A MAN who sexually assaulted a patient while working as a care assistant at the Mater Private Hospital in Dublin has received a two-year prison sentence with six months suspended.

Folajimmy Awode, 31, of Ballinteer House, Tyrellstown, Dublin, had pleaded not guilty to sexual assault of a female patient at the Mater Private Hospital, Eccles Street, in November 2013.

Last month a jury at Dublin Circuit Criminal Court returned a majority guilty verdict.

Awode was working as a part-time care assistant in the woman's ward and had cleaned the toilet that evening at her request. Before going to sleep at around 11pm, the woman had taken a muscle relaxant. She told the trial that she later awoke to

By **Declan Brennan**

feel rubbing on her right breast. She opened her eyes and the sensation seemed to stop.

'Because of where I was, in hospital, you're just not expecting this to be the case, so I closed my eyes again,' she testified.

The sensation resumed when she once again closed her eyes. She turned over and saw Awode standing by her bed and moving his hand away from her body.

'I looked at him. He looked totally stunned and just took off,' she said.

Another patient in the ward told gardaí that she was sitting up reading and saw Awode coming into the ward twice and leave. She said after she had turned her reading light off and lay down to

sleep she saw Awode come into the ward a third time and go to the bed of the injured party.

Judge Patricia Ryan said there was an element of planning to the crime. She said the breach of trust was an aggravating factor.

She placed Awode on the Sex Offenders Register. Judge Ryan said that in suspending six months of the sentence, she had to consider his previously good employment record and the extra hardship of custody on someone who is not from this country.

The father of two has two previous convictions for dangerous driving and having no insurance.

Michael Hourigan, defending, told the judge that Awode came here from Nigeria aged 17 seeking asylum and had later been granted residency.

# Dr Mark Dooley



## MORAL MATTERS

# Only you can build the very firmest of foundations

**F**OR as he thinks in his heart, so is he'. That beautiful line contains all there is to know about how to lead a happy and successful life. We search so hard for the secret to health, wealth and peace, yet we search in vain when we ignore the inner self.

What is the inner self? We endlessly refer to the 'self' but can we ever really know what it is? We can point to the body, but not to this thing we call the 'self'.

And yet the self is what I am. It is that miraculous thing which lights up the body and which is alternatively described as 'character' or 'personality'. It is that which attracts and delights, and which is the source of true human love.

We can't touch the self, but we can see it. We see it in a smile, a facial expression or simply in someone's eyes. It is that vital thing for which we would travel a million miles simply to catch a glimpse.

The body grows old, but the self stays young. When two people are in love, they see beyond the physical blemishes. The root of their love is that unique force which smiles through the flesh. And when we say that someone is not quite himself, we mean he is unhappy, off-form or simply depressed. He may not appear physically sick, yet it is obvious he is suffering spiritually. The inner self is down in the depths and, should it remain there, physical symptoms will soon follow.

The inner self is who I am. It is 'me', this person who thinks, speaks and laughs in an unmistakable way. I could exist without most of my body but the loss of the self signals the loss of existence.

The great secret of life is that harmony and happiness do not have their source in the outer world. Everything that you establish in the external world is subject to decay. You can build up the body, your bank balance, even an empire only to have it destroyed in an instant - for such things are ultimately built on sand. To build on firm foundations is, however, to build within. It is to build from the inside out, for as you think in your heart so you shall be.

The truth of that statement is easy to demonstrate, and it is one that I have come to see as the key to joy. That is so because as a person feels inside, so shall his circumstances be on the outside. Think, for example, of how someone who is down in the dumps drags the whole world down with him.

A tormented self emits an air of

gloom that blackens the entire environment. As that person thinks in his heart, so is his world outside. Everyone and everything is directly affected by his dark emotional energy.

Change the mood and everything changes. When a smile replaces a grimace the outer world suddenly fills with sunshine. The dark air lifts and all is light.

Physical changes are cosmetic. The new hairstyle will soon grow out of shape. The perfect body will one day decline.

Inner changes, however, last a lifetime. To change from within, to transform the self, is to refuse to be a slave to circumstance. It is to control one's circumstances by recognising that we all have a say in how our lives unfold.

Misery, worry and gloom are all symptoms of a troubled self. Outer circumstances have seemingly conspired against us and we are in despair. The usual response is to sink further into the pits until we have no option but to drown.

A far better response would be to recognise that as you think in your heart, so it shall be in your world. Calamity, sickness or despair cannot be wished away. They cannot be eliminated by ignoring or disbelieving they exist.

**T**HEY can, however, be transformed by how we respond to them from within. External problems cannot be solved when we are down in the pits. It is only when we ascend to the heights that we see solutions.

It is not easy, but when we disperse the dark clouds by filling the soul with sunshine, problems seem to fall into perspective. Healing seems to happen faster and our dilemmas somehow don't cause the same level of despair. We see through the darkness, radiate light and outer circumstances respond accordingly.

'For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.' You can only discover the truth of that powerful proverb by testing it for yourself. You can only discover it by believing that what you are is something much more than matter.

You are a unique self, a centre of light and life that can either drag the world down or raise it up. The flesh will fade and time take its toll but that inner light will shine for as long as you do.

So let it shine and watch how the world responds. Think joy and perfection and watch how they pour into your life. Go deep into your heart and discover who you really are.

It is the journey of a lifetime, one that will give you nothing less than the time of your life.

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