

# No prosecution over drink-game death of DJ

By Louise Roseingrave

NO-ONE will face prosecution over the death of a young man linked to the drinking game NekNomination.

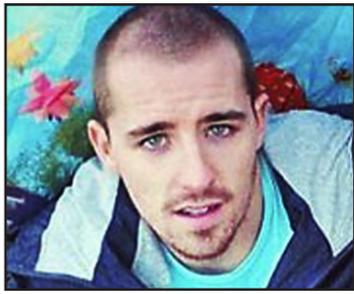
Ross Cummins, 22, from Stella Gardens, Irishtown, Dublin 4, was found dead at a house on Macken Street, near Grand Canal Dock, on February 1, 2014.

He died as a result of alcohol and cocaine toxicity, his inquest heard in February of this year.

At the resumed inquest at Dublin Coroner's Court yesterday, Garda Sergeant Ger Walsh said the DPP had directed that no prosecution be brought.

The DJ is believed to have been attending a party when he downed a pint of whiskey in a NekNomination challenge.

A preliminary postmortem



Drinking game: Ross Cummins

report by Professor Eamon Leen found that Mr Cummins died of cardiac respiratory arrest secondary to alcohol and cocaine toxicity.

The NekNomination craze swept across social media early last year. Participants were challenged to film themselves downing alcoholic drinks before nomi-

nating someone else to continue to the challenge.

The DPP's decision not to prosecute will allow the full inquest to go ahead later this year.

Mr Cummins's father, Robert Cummins, was present in court yesterday and agreed to the date set for the full inquest.

The Coroner's Court has a copy of the Garda file into the DJ's death, which will be used in preparation for the full hearing scheduled for November 5.

Mr Cummins's death came within 24 hours of that of Jonny Byrne, 19, from Leighlinbridge in Carlow, who died after entering the River Barrow shortly after downing a cocktail of spirits in a NekNomination challenge.

The deaths prompted widespread condemnation of the NekNomination craze.

# Dr Mark Dooley



## MORAL MATTERS

# Only one time is important and it is now

**T**HERE is a beautiful short story by Leo Tolstoy called The Emperor's Three Questions. Published in 1885, it tells of an emperor who believed that if he were to discover the answer to three questions, he would never fail. The questions were simple but could be answered in countless ways.

What, he asked, is the best time to do each thing? Who are the most important people to work with, and what is the most important thing to do at all times? The emperor then decreed that the person who could satisfactorily answer the questions would be handsomely rewarded.

Many came forward with well reasoned responses. One person suggested that the emperor devise a structured schedule, consecrating each hour, day, month and year for specific tasks. By adhering rigidly to such a schedule, he would undertake every task at the right time.

Similar suggestions poured in from around the kingdom but none satisfied the emperor.

In the end, he decided to defer to a hermit who lived at the top of a nearby hill. The hermit was said to be wise and enlightened.

Ordering his guards to remain at the foot of the hill, the emperor climbed the slope disguised as a peasant. Reaching the summit, he found the old man digging his garden. The hermit nodded politely and continued digging.

The emperor approached the hermit and asked his three questions. The hermit gently patted the emperor's shoulder and kept digging. The emperor offered to dig for the old man if he wished to rest.

Twice more, the emperor asked the three questions but he got no reply. Just then, the hermit pointed to a man with a long white beard running through the nearby woods. The man had a wound in his stomach and, after reaching the emperor, the fell unconscious at his feet.

The emperor used his shirt to clean the man's wound. He gave him a drink of water and helped the hermit put him to bed. The emperor fell asleep beside the injured man.

When the emperor awoke, he saw the man looking intently at him. 'Please forgive me,' he said, to which the emperor asked: 'But what have you done that I should forgive you?'

The man told the emperor that he had come to take vengeance on him for killing his brother and seizing his property in the last war.

The man heard that the emperor was travelling alone to the mountain and so he prepared an ambush.

However, when the emperor failed to show, the man left his hiding place and was spotted by the emperor's guards who then inflicted the

wound.

The man escaped and ran to the hermit's hut where he was saved by the emperor. 'I had intended to kill you, but instead you saved my life,' cried the wounded man.

The emperor was overjoyed that he had been so easily reconciled with an enemy. He forgave him, returned his property and promised to have the royal physician tend the man until fully healed.

Before leaving the hut, the emperor decided to ask the hermit his three questions one last time. He found him sowing seeds in the plot they had dug the previous day.

The hermit lifted his head and said: 'But your questions have already been answered. Yesterday, if you had not taken pity on my age and given me a hand with digging these beds, you would have been attacked by that man on your way home.'

'Then you would have deeply regretted not staying with me. Therefore the most important time was the time you were digging in the beds, the most important person was myself and the most important pursuit was to help me.'

The hermit had, however, some more to say. He told the emperor that when the wounded man ran up the hill, the most important time was that spent dressing his wound, 'for if you had not cared for him he would have died and you would have lost the chance to be reconciled with him'.

The wounded man was, in other words, the most important person, and caring for his wound was the most important pursuit. The moral of this great story is to remind us of something we too often forget.

**A**S Tolstoy writes: 'The present moment is the only time over which we have dominion. The most important person is always the person you are with...' and 'The most important pursuit is making the person standing at your side happy, for that alone is the pursuit of life'.

Try it for just a day. Focus solely on what you are doing right now and do it well, for there is 'only one important time and that is now'.

Focus solely on the person you are with at any given time, for 'who knows if you will have dealings with any person in the future'.

And as you do so, remember that your sole pursuit should be to make that one person happy.

Imagine the profound consequences of having that as your singular endeavour. Imagine dedicating each moment to making the person standing by your side as happy as can be. Imagine how such a sublime objective could transform you and the world in which you live.

Imagine, but not for too long. Precious moments are passing and with them people whose aching wounds badly need tending.

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