

Murderer Dwyer's appeal may not go ahead for year

MURDERER Graham Dwyer has yet to formally lodge submissions for his appeal against his conviction for the murder of childcare worker Elaine O'Hara.

The architect was convicted of the killing in March last year following a high-profile trial.

An appeal was lodged within two weeks of his conviction, the time frame within which murder convictions must be appealed.

But his legal team and the State have not moved the process along since then. They are still at the 'submissions stage', Dwyer's solicitor Jonathan Dunphy said.

'There is no appeal date in the immediate future,' he added.

Because of the delay, legal sources said it could be another 12 months before the case goes to the Court of Criminal Appeal. The

By **Ali Bracken**
Crime Correspondent

legal source added: 'It must be very difficult for Elaine Hara's family. The chances of [Dwyer] winning an appeal are always slim but he has nothing to lose by lodging it.'

Legal sources said a 'possible reason' for the delay in lodging the appeal is that Dwyer has lodged a High Court action against the State over the use of mobile phone records in his trial for the murder of Ms O'Hara whose body was found in August 2013.

Dwyer initiated his High Court action in January last year. He claims the decision to use his mobile phone records in evidence breached his rights to privacy. It has yet to be heard.



Court action: Graham Dwyer

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

Extraordinary lives led by 'ordinary' folk

ONE thing I have learned in writing this column is that there is no such thing as 'ordinary people'.

Those who have written to me over the years, many of whom I now consider dear friends, have extraordinary stories to tell. Their lives bear witness to the beauty and magnificence of our human condition.

Mary Flynn modestly describes herself as a 'backroom' person. A regular reader of this column, she began writing to me last year. Since then, we've corresponded on a weekly basis.

I have never met Mary, yet I feel as though I've known her all my life. She is a person with an enormous heart, one whose soaring spirit never ceases to shine. At first, I considered her a kind and thoughtful reader, but now I see her as a paragon of pure goodness. I say that because Mary has selflessly dedicated her life to others.

After a long struggle, she and her husband Joe adopted a little girl when she was nine. Today, they are proud and grateful grandparents.

Mary's relationship with her grandchildren is both beautiful and inspiring. She collects books for them to read, believing that there is no greater gift you can give a child. In this day and age, when most are glued to a screen, Mary's grandchildren are out discovering the glory of nature, the wisdom in great literature and the perfection we experience in art.

'Did you ever notice,' she recently wrote, 'that when children paint, their skies are always blue and their optimism shows through. My little ones just love to present their own little cards for all occasions and I love the time and energy they put into them.' Mary is someone whose prayer for this world is that everyone's skies will always be blue.

Each summer for seven years, Mary and Joe took two little girls from an orphanage in Belarus. However, Mary could not rest easy until she knew what kind of care they received at the orphanage. And so she visited Belarus, and found that 'whatever little was there, was shared by the girls, and they were safe'.

There is nothing 'ordinary' about Mary Flynn. In her quiet and gentle way, she has moved through this life leaving behind a trail of love. Unassuming and self-effacing, she has opened her home and her heart to those who badly needed both.

What I could never have guessed when she first wrote was that Mary and Joe were local celebrities. Joe, it transpires, is a fine musician and Mary a songwriter. I only realised this when they recently featured on an RTE Radio documentary.

The documentary tells the story of how, during the 1960s and in response to falling farm incomes, Joe recorded a song to highlight the plight of the farming community. At that time, he was the lead singer of The Saints, a

showband from Co. Westmeath.

Despite performing Mary's song The Broken Hearted Farmer in the United States, it did not become a hit in Ireland. In fact, until the documentary aired earlier this year, it had never been played on RTE Radio.

The Broken Hearted Farmer is a riveting story with an intriguing political backdrop. However, the most powerful and moving moment of the whole show comes at the very end when Joe sings Mary's words. Joe is 84 and is set to release a new CD next Monday night.

Getting to know Mary and Joe Flynn has been one of the great gifts I have received in writing this column. Similarly, the precious words of Patricia Murphy have so often raised my spirits. Patricia is a poet of extraordinary depth and compassion.

From her hospital bed, she recently wrote these poignant lines about a much-loved homeless man:

*'Gentle footsteps echo through memory,
like whispers in the breeze amidst the steady rumble of rushing traffic.
Memories of his gentle step remain long after footsteps fail.
A shadow, silently there, treading this path.
God bless you my stranger friend.
How can we forget one so gentle, so sure, content with so little?
You walked life's road.'*

I have been blessed to encounter people like Mary and Patricia, and those like Kay Reynolds and Carol Broderick whom I have previously mentioned here. Such people have never sought the limelight and have lived relatively quiet lives. Yet, in so many ways, those lives have been anything but ordinary.

BEYOND the mundane events of each day, we all have stories to tell. Those stories contain highs and lows, moments of great joy and those we would rather forget. We are composed of such stories, of fairy tales and tragic tales. That is what makes each and every life so interesting. Despite our periods of pain, our trials and our tears, you and I have lived unique lives. We have seen what no other person has seen, heard what others will never hear.

We have taken the journey of life along a road that will never be travelled again. It is a road lined with memories of broken-hearted farmers, stranger friends and sweet souls who, at a certain point, slowly faded from sight. It is a road along which the beauty of a life is laid bare, revealed in all its tragedy, love and wonder.

And sometimes, if we are lucky, our roads intersect and our paths converge. It is then that we become part of each other's story. It is then that we have a common tale to tell.

A little while ago, I crossed paths with some extraordinary people. In sharing their story, you now know a little bit more of mine.

—mark.dooley@daily@mail.ie—

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