

Man jailed for 'Bruce Lee punch' death loses appeal

A FATHER of two jailed for life for murdering his friend with what he described as 'Bruce Lee punches' has lost an appeal against his conviction.

John Hannigan was handed down a mandatory life sentence by Judge Paul Carney in the Central Criminal Court on February 28, 2014.

His trial had heard that Hannigan, 48, had called an ambulance on the morning of January 18, 2012, saying that his friend, Anthony Fallon had rung his doorbell and then collapsed.

A post-mortem exam found 31 separate fractures to Mr Fallon's ribs, along with fractures to his collar and breast bones.

The cause of death was blunt force trauma to the head and trunk, with the trunk injuries the

By **Ruaidhrí Giblin**

major cause. Hannigan later told gardaí he had lost his temper when Mr Fallon 'would not shut up' and had punched him 'hard and fast' like martial arts legend Bruce Lee.

He had also said that Mr Fallon had never lifted his hands to defend himself.

But in the witness box Hannigan said he was 'just panicking' when he told gardaí he had attacked his friend.

And the defence argued that his accounts were unreliable, noting that he had told gardaí that he had a black belt in karate, before admitting that he had no belt.

Counsel for Hannigan, Damien Colgan SC, submitted during the appeal that the trial judge erred

in refusing to permit expert psychological evidence relating to Hannigan. But dismissing his appeal yesterday Judge Alan Mahon said the trial judge did not disallow psychological evidence to be given or to be called.

Furthermore, Judge Mahon said the trial judge had heard expert evidence on Hannigan's capacity to make reliable statements.

He said that trial judge was entitled to rule as he did.

Hannigan of River House, New Quay, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, had pleaded not guilty to murdering father of two Anthony Fallon on January 18, 2012.

He had also pleaded not guilty to assault causing harm to the 46-year-old on the same date at Mr Fallon's flat on Abbey Street in the town.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

Life's miracle reveals itself in winter too

IN the midst of darkness that never seems to subside, there is a light that never ceases to shine. That we are human allows us to see beyond the gloom, beyond our limits to those things which make life a thing of wonder. Even when the worst strikes, we can transfigure it into something beautiful.

The stories that we tell of our dear departed lessen the raw agony of death. With the insight of hindsight, the tragedies of our lives can be seen as stepping stones to enlightenment. We glance back and see that what looked like a disaster at the time was actually something that made us stronger.

It is the way that we look at things which makes them either bad or good, beautiful or ugly. There is no denying pain or death or poverty. And yet, when I think of the poorest people I have known, I see only nobility and such beautiful simplicity.

It is through us that the universe was made known. It is through human consciousness that the world in all its splendour was revealed. What's more, we have the capacity to transform what we see into a work of art.

Dusk dawns shortly after 3pm. 'It is time to light the lamps!' exclaims our eldest. When set against the light of a candle, the evening shadows take on a new complexion. No longer threatening, the winter sky seems to smile.

The darkness is the perfect backdrop to homemaking. It forces us to value those gentle domestic routines which are often neglected in the sun.

For us, the darkest days of the year are rendered glorious through music. As the rain and wind smash against the windowpane, we invariably reach for John Rutter, the choral genius whose sweet melodies are the 'sound of Christmas'.

The wonder of Rutter is that his music carries light. It banishes the winter shadows and drives away the darkness. After only a few bars, you somehow see the world from the edge of paradise.

Even by the standards of late November, it was an especially dark day. There was nothing for it except to press 'Play'. And then, as if by a miracle, the whole world looked radiant.

'For the beauty of the Earth, for the glory of the skies, for the love which from our birth over and around us lies'

The song was For The Beauty Of The Earth and was written in 1864 by Folliott S Pierpoint. Rutter set it to music in 1984 and it is as fresh now as it was then. Light, magic and warmth are all contained in a tune that could thaw the hardest heart.

'For the beauty of each hour of the

day and of the night.' How often we grumble about the long hours of winter and yet, as the flute flutters like a little winter robin, you want to give praise for each and every second. Our time is what we make of it and to complain is merely a waste of time.

Here was a man practising mindfulness in 1864. There is so much beauty in each and every hour, so much that we miss because we cannot wait for the hours to pass. But when they pass they are gone for good.

'For the joy of ear and eye', the joy of those senses that reveal the colours, the sounds and the scents. For the joy of seeing into the depth of things and hearing the voice of nature as she sings her precious songs. In the 'mystic harmony', sight and sound are linked to reveal 'the heart and mind's delight'.

As I listened, there was no more rain but joyful tears falling from on high. The wind seemed to sigh with contentment, while the skeleton trees swayed to a heavenly harmony. To the naked eye creation was dying, but to my eye it was never more alive.

'For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child, friends on Earth and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild'

In the end, it all boils down to the joy of human love. What does it benefit a person to possess the entire world and yet be without human love? Winter is our time to rediscover the joy of this sacred gift.

WE retreat indoors, shut out the night, light a fire, pour a tincture and chat while the meal simmers.

We play with the children, enter their magical world and become just like them. And we do all this for the simple joy of human love, for that without which none of us can truly thrive.

It is the way that we look at things which changes everything. In itself, the world stays pretty much the same. It is our perception of it that imbues it with colour, majesty and glory.

The winter is at its worst, they say. And yet, as I looked over 'hill and vale, tree and flower', I saw only beauty. The flute fluttered for the final time as I turned away from the window.

'For the joy of human love', I turned and saw children smiling, candles dancing, pots bubbling and life in all its beautiful abundance.

I saw the wonder of a world 'so freely given', one that we see with that 'mystic harmony, linking sense to sound and sight'.

What I saw is what we all see when we look at the world with love. It changes everything because, when we are changed, nothing stays the same.

At age 5, Katie began to struggle to feed her own kids.



When Katie was 5, her mother got sick for two weeks. This led to two weeks without pay from her casual cleaning job. The family fell behind on their rent. It was all the excuse their landlord needed to evict them. Katie's education never recovered from the many moves that followed. When she started her own family, she had no qualifications and a low income. Putting food on the table soon became a struggle.

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