

Thief caught out by DNA he left on restaurant cup

A MAN who bought a cup of tea from a fast-food outlet before robbing the manager was caught after his DNA was found on the paper cup he left at the scene.

Hugh McWeeney, 44, was sentenced to five years yesterday after he pleaded guilty to robbery of €8,865 from Eddie Rocket's in Dublin's South Anne Street on August 6, 2013.

He has 33 previous convictions, including one for armed robbery which he carried out with the actor Stephen Clinch, 49, who played 'Noely' in RTÉ's Love/Hate. McWeeney is still serving this sentence for this raid.

Garda Brendan Kearns told Dublin Circuit Criminal Court how McWeeney bought a cup of tea in the restaurant before sitting outside to drink it. When the man-

By **Sonya McLean**

ager was on his way to the bank to lodge four days' worth of takings, McWeeney jumped on him and tried to grab the bag.

A second thief then arrived on the scene and the victim was kicked and punched while he lay on the ground before his bag was stolen. Both men managed to get away. Garda Kearns said the staff alerted gardai to the paper cup that had been left and McWeeney's DNA was later found on it, leading to his arrest.

Judge Melanie Greally heard that McWeeney had a long history of drug abuse that stretched from when he was just eight until he went 'cold turkey' aged 39.

McWeeney took the stand and told Judge Greally that one of his

biggest regrets in life was not being there for his older sons. He said he now wanted to be a better father for his nine-month-old son with his new partner.

'I'm tired with this way of life. I have had enough. There is something else out there,' said McWeeney of Roseglen Road, Kilbarrack, Dublin.

He told the court he wanted to apologise to all his victims. He outlined how he got clean but was under duress due to drug debts and had to commit crime to pay them off.

Judge Greally noted that McWeeney's release date from his current sentence is January 2019. She suspended the final 18 months of the five-year term, meaning he will spend an additional six months in jail.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

Learn to lean on others, as a child would

MRS Dooley stands, raises her hands and the boys begin to sing. It is a preparation Mass for our middle son's First Holy Communion which he shall make in May. By the time the hymn is over, there is hardly a dry eye in the church.

The words are so simple and the melody so sweet. The boys and girls sing with such purity, innocence and tenderness. From the mouth of babes, we hear a hymn of love that will sustain them for a lifetime.

Before she agreed to train the children's choir, neither my wife nor I had ever heard the hymn. Then, one evening, she played it and we were profoundly moved by its heart-warming words. When she first conducted the children and they sang this song, it was like listening to a choir of angels.

Cares Chorus is a perfect expression of trust and faith. No creed or dogma, just that perfect trust that children have in everything. It cuts to the core of religious faith in a way that renders it luminous. The children sing, the tears begin to flow and you realise why 'the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these'.

*I cast all my cares upon You /
I lay all of my burdens down at Your feet.*

And any time I don't know just what to do /

I will cast all my cares upon You.
These are simple words of pure surrender. They invite you to let go and trust that all will be well. Abandoning your cares to providence may, at first, seem careless, but life tells a different story.

Hearing the children sing this, is to rediscover the trust that we all possess in the early stages of life. That is why, no matter how many times I listen to them, I can barely contain my tears. The beauty of their gentle harmonies is matched only by the truth of what they sing.

When children are worried, they offload their burdens upon their parents. We are glad to take their worries and reassure them. No child should have to carry the weight of their small crosses.

Why, then, can't we do likewise? There comes a time in everyone's life when the burdens stack up, the pain becomes unbearable and we descend into despair. It is then that most of us seek to solve our problems on our own steam.

This little song teaches that, sometimes, we have no other option but to let go our difficulties. Sometimes, we are just too tired, too burdened by our agonies to summon up any more strength. Sometimes, we just have to hand them over.

'Any time I don't know just what to do, I will cast all my cares upon You.'

To do that takes courage and a degree of trust so uncommon in today's world. And yet, what comfort awaits those who muster up that courage.

The mountains of our lives can often seem insurmountable. We are told that all we need to remove them is faith the size of a mustard seed. That sounds like wishful thinking until you realise that each problem contains the seed of its own solution.

We cannot remedy any situation in a haze of anxiety or worry. How much greater our difficulties become when we are worried sick. But when we let go of care and worry, when we place it in the hands of providence, we invariably see a way forward.

Most of our dilemmas are magnified by distress. No life is free of cares, concerns and burdens. However, these only become truly mountainous when intensified by stress.

They stand and, as they begin to sing, you understand all this so clearly. The tears flow, not from sentimentality, but because the true beauty of faith and trust shines so spectacularly. In their tender voices, you hear a power that can remove any mountain.

We could, of course, dismiss all this as childish fantasy. Sadly, this is how much of society now regards faith and the security it offers. That is why so many people now worry themselves to death.

There is nothing childish or fantastical in letting go the stresses and strains that hold us captive. In so doing, the problem is seen for what it is and, as the mist dissipates, a solution shines through. Moving a mountain through trust simply means casting away your cares so as to see clearly.

AS they sing, they smile and sway. Mrs Dooley and a small group of boys provide the harmonies. In this precious moment, you understand why we are urged to have the faith of a child.

It is not that adulthood corrupts, but that, in losing our capacity to trust, we succumb to suspicion and strain. We become a slave to stress and forget that this is the source of most of our problems. Instead of letting go our cares, we fight against life in an effort to gain some relief.

In listening to those children, we somehow see the light after wandering so long in the dark. We see that the answer to life's difficulties is found in a simple surrender of the heart. It is true that problems will not magically disappear, but when you no longer carry the weight of worry, they somehow seem less threatening.

She stands, raises her hands and they start to sing. The heavens open and a light fills that little church.

It shines from the bright eyes of those sweet children - eyes too trusting to contain any tears.

—mark.dooley@daily@mail.ie—

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