

# Court wants proof that murder suspect is dying

A CONVICTED IRA terrorist wanted over last year's Regency Hotel gun attack has been requested by the High Court to be brought to Dublin to be independently examined over claims he is dying.

The Irish Daily Mail can reveal that the request was made last week during a review of extradition proceedings in Belfast facing Kevin Sean Murray.

Mr Murray - dubbed the 'Flat Cap hitman' - is wanted in Dublin over his alleged involvement in the murder of David Byrne, 34, at the Regency last February.

Gardaí allege he played a 'central role' in the killing of the Kinahan cartel member.

By John Cassidy

They say he is identified on CCTV and in photographic evidence running from the hotel after the murder, along with a man dressed as a woman.

His extradition has stalled after his lawyers successfully argued that Murray, 46, has been diagnosed with the wasting motor neurone disease and he does not have long to live.

He was arrested last September by the PSNI on foot of a European Arrest Warrant.

Murray, previously of Townsend Street, Strabane, Co. Tyrone, was held at Maghaberry prison in Co. Antrim before being moved to a specialist unit

at the Ulster Hospital, Belfast. Last month, he was granted a request to live out his final weeks with his family.

During the review of his case on Friday, his barrister, Desmond Fahy, said the High Court request raised a number of issues for Kevin Murray.

'Firstly, is his ability to travel. Secondly, is his ability to communicate who he wishes to conduct the examination,' he told Belfast Recorder's Court.

Judge Patricia Smyth adjourned the hearing until this Friday for an update.

Murray previously served a prison sentence in the North for Provisional IRA terror offences in the 1980s.

# Dr Mark Dooley



## MORAL MATTERS

# Real freedom is fought for and cherished

**W**HERE are all the people of principle gone? Where are those who would, without exception, defend virtue, law and honour? At a time when democracy is but one step away from dictatorship, where are those who would sing a hymn to freedom?

In this age of self-interest, when too many put their own needs before that of the common good, the liberties we take for granted are very often left unprotected.

Having little interest in politics beyond the platitudes of 'equality', the 'plugged in' generation rarely vote or engage in public debate.

Neither do they ponder the fact that genuine freedom comes at a price, one that demands engaged and responsible citizenship.

Freedom - real freedom - is not a gift of providence. It must be fought for and cherished more than anything else we prize.

The great lessons of history stand before us as stark reminders of what happens when we opt to let freedom take care of itself.

It took less than 50 years for tyranny to choke the Roman Republic. One of my great heroes, Marcus Cicero, warned his fellow Romans what would happen if they permitted men to override the constitution. That they did so led to the usurpation of the state by those masquerading as gods.

The truth is that democracy is not the default position of human societies. It is a relatively modern invention which requires principle, statesmanship and political virtue in order to survive. This means that we must never be indifferent to the constitution, the rule of law or our political institutions.

People like Cicero and Edmund Burke saw that the greatest threat to freedom is mob rule.

For when the mob takes control, it is only ever a matter of time before a dictator is required to reassert control. Liberty is then sacrificed for a new order, sometimes without end.

I do not say that we have yet reached that point in this country, but it is obvious that democracy is under severe strain across the Western world. Populist forces have been unleashed to the detriment of everything we hold sacred. And who is to say that, sooner or later, those forces will not cause a political upheaval here?

There are many figures in Irish

politics whose loyalty to the Irish Republic is, at best, tenuous. Others have, on occasion, shown contempt for the law.

Meanwhile, their foot soldiers on social media move mercilessly against those who would dare criticise or oppose them.

It is true that, every so often, someone courageously rises to confront them. But where is our Cicero or our Burke? Where are those who, driven only by principle, will stand in defence of our democracy?

More than ever, we need people of genuine political and moral integrity. We need those who will put the welfare of their country, its laws and values, above their own personal and party interests. And we need them to speak in defiance of those consumed by ideology or tempted by the prospect of unlimited power.

In other words, we need people whose voices will rise above the din of social media and whose values will contrast with those of our celebrity culture. With power and eloquence, we need them to defend our democratic principles and to highlight what we risk in flirting with populism.

In short, we need those who will show why freedom cannot flourish when democracy dies.

In a fit of political passion, too many countries have stormed headlong into disaster. Instead of listening to the prophetic warnings of Cicero, the citizens of Rome became subjects of an empire.

**I**NSTEAD of heeding Burke's reason for rejecting their revolution in 1789, the French endured a long nightmare of terror and tyranny. And who can now deny that Hitler's power-grab was achieved, not merely by democratic means, but also because so few dared speak out against it?

Freedom is a such a fragile thing. It cannot be sustained without constant vigilance. And yet, in our age of plenty, it is but one more thing we seem content to squander.

And that, in the end, is why we so badly need a new Cicero. We need to be reminded why the constitution must always be sovereign, why the rule of law is sacrosanct and why our liberty can never be taken for granted. Most especially, we need politicians with moral courage who will defend that freedom against those who would deny it.

Either that or freedom has no future. And, if so, neither do we.

—mark.dooley@daily@mail.ie—



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August  
2017



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