

Jailed for hostage wife's knuckleduster ordeal

A MAN who threatened his wife with a knuckleduster and pulled an imitation gun on her while holding her inside her Dublin home has been jailed for two years.

After releasing his now ex-wife, William Harton, 41, then held a stand-off with the Garda Emergency Response Unit for a further two hours, before finally giving himself up.

During the stand-off with gardaí, Harton swallowed a several pills and took two lines of cocaine, Dublin Circuit Criminal Court heard yesterday.

At the start of his violent spree on February 16 last year, Harton had kicked in the door of his family home and dragged

By Isabel Hayes

his terrified wife Amy, a mother of three, back inside when she tried to flee, before holding her there for two hours, the court heard.

During Ms Harton's ordeal, he produced a handgun, which his ex-wife recognised as an imitation firearm that belonged to her son, who collected war memorabilia.

Harton accused her of dating other men and ordered her to unlock her mobile phone. He then put a knuckleduster to her face. At one point, Ms Harton, who had taken out a barring order against him, told him: 'Do your worst. If you're

going to kill me, kill me.'

Harton eventually released his wife when she unlocked her phone. He stayed in the house for a further two hours before giving himself up to gardaí.

Harton, formerly of Killinarden Estate, Tallaght, Dublin, pleaded guilty to one count of falsely imprisoning Ms Harton at her home in Sandyford on February 16, 2017.

He also pleaded guilty to possession of an imitation firearm and possession of cocaine on the same date. Handing him a two-year jail sentence, Judge Martin Nolan said: 'To imprison someone against their will for that period of time is a terrifying experience.'

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

A good life is making the person next to you happy

THE world is full of wisdom on how to live a good life. Walk into any bookstore and you see the shelves heaving with guides to happiness, health and inner harmony. But, in the end, it all boils down to one precious insight.

Leo Tolstoy had much to teach the world. For example, how much bloodshed might have been avoided had we listened to this: 'In our world everybody thinks of changing humanity, but nobody thinks of changing himself.' And think of how content we could be were we to heed this: 'When you love someone, you love the person they are, and not as you'd like them to be.'

Tolstoy proved his own maxim that 'the greatest truths are simple'. But even he excelled himself when he wrote: 'The most important pursuit is making the person standing at your side happy, for that alone is the pursuit of life.' A powerful truth in simple wrapping.

The pursuit of life is not to make yourself happy, but to make that one person at your side happy. It could be your child, your spouse, the postman or the person sitting next to you on the train. It doesn't matter: in that moment, the most important pursuit is to make them happy.

Why does he say, 'the person standing at your side'? Simply because you may never have dealings with another human being. The person you are with now is the only person that counts.

Think about how many people we ignore, or simply don't see, in the course of a day. We fly here and there consumed by our thoughts and distractions. We plug in and we miss out on those that surround us.

Tolstoy is asking that we plug in to life, that we notice those who walk this journey with us.

Look at people's faces and you will see a map of their lives. You will see pain, fear, anxiety and, in some, joy.

But to see a person's face - to really see it - you must cease focusing on yourself. You must look outward at those who share your space. And then, you must try to give them some happiness.

Most of us go through life searching for happiness. We look for it in food, drink, fashion and friends. We seek it in higher things, as well as in fiction and fantasy.

Tolstoy thinks we should stop looking and start giving. He thinks the key to happiness is to give it away. The great secret is that we already possess happiness, but that it can't be enjoyed until it begins to flow.

All this may sound simple but it's not easy. It takes a big shift to turn away from self to make others happy. It is much easier to keep the blinkers on and the head down.

But then, we will have missed our chance for true and lasting joy. Somehow, we all feel safer wrapped up in our problems, shielded from the world as we roll along oblivious. It all changes, however, when we make it our business to give away happiness to whomever we meet.

I was astonished when I first read Tolstoy's words, for I intuitively knew this was a game-changer. To see the person beside you - whomever they may be - as the most precious person in the world, is to begin to walk on the pathway of roses. Then, to do all that you can to make that person happy, is to fulfil life's true purpose.

IT may be only a smile, a kind word or a helping hand. It may be an act of love, a tender hug for your child or a flower for your beloved. Our only objective is to look at the person beside us and do whatever it takes to make them happy - even for a second.

Then, a miracle happens. When you turn on the tap of happiness, it flows like a river. Each and every person offers you the chance to let those waters flow. As they do so, you find that you are swimming in a tide of joy.

We can all do this without any great heroics. We can all move through our days quietly blessing and helping those who cross our path. For what greater aim could anyone have than to leave a smile where once there was pain, to conquer sadness with a little happiness?

It can begin right here and now. Look up, smile and watch as the whole world smiles back.

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THE ROYAL MOSCOW BALLET

Irish Daily Mail

ROMEO & JULIET

Tue 6th Mar 8:00pm
Romeo & Juliet
UCH, Limerick
061 33 1549 uch.ie

Thu 8th Mar 8:00pm
Romeo & Juliet
TLT Theatre, Drogheda
041 987 8560 thetlit.ie

Fri 9th Mar 8:00pm
Romeo & Juliet
Wexford Opera House
053 912 2144 nationaloperahouse.ie

Sat 10th Mar 8:00pm
Romeo & Juliet
The Helix, Dublin
01 700 7000 thehelix.ie

Sun 11th Mar 2:00pm & 8:00pm
Romeo & Juliet
Cork Opera House
021 4270022 corkoperahouse.ie

Sleeping Beauty Sat 3rd Mar
2:00pm & 8:00pm
Waterford Theatre Royal
051 874 402 theatrEROYAL.ie

Sleeping Beauty Sun 4th Mar
2:00pm & 8:00pm
Town Hall Theatre, Galway
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