

Case against news firm is like a 'Chinese opera'

THE judge handling a High Court bid by the Director of Corporate Enforcement to send inspectors into Independent News & Media (INM) has said he does not know everything going on behind the scenes.

Mr Justice Peter Kelly has already put the case on hold until May while INM takes a court case aimed at stopping the bid to send in inspectors.

Yesterday, Judge Kelly said that if INM's bid fails on May 9 then the ODCE's case will restart 'within 48 hours' of that.

Director of Corporate Enforcement Ian Drennan has been investigating INM after an alleged data breach.

Just over a week ago, he took

By Paul Caffrey

the media group, which publishes the Irish Independent, The Herald and other titles, to the High Court.

Mr Justice Kelly yesterday told lawyers in the case: 'This is all like a Chinese opera being discussed between the director [ODCE] and others, unknown to me and unknown to you.'

Lawyers for a number of interested parties yesterday asked the court for access to key court documents following 'an extraordinary amount of publicity' about the case, which has been referred to affidavits from the ODCE.

Judge Kelly approved the

release of certain documents in principle - a 66-page extract from Mr Drennan's affidavit 'dealing exclusively with the data interrogation matter' - but warned there may have to be 'a certain amount of editing of affidavits' before they can be made available as requested.

Mr Drennan agreed to lodge no objection to the release of certain documents to individuals even though they have no 'legal entitlement' to the documents, the court heard.

Neil Steen SC, for the ODCE, said any documents being released to the interested parties will be handed over on certain conditions.

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Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

My child sang, with the face of an angel and the voice of a man...

AND what is this life except a constant sequence of comings and goings? From the moment of conception to when we lie still in the soil, we are coming and going, staying and departing. We form attachments and then we move on again, detaching from what we have known and loved.

As I looked at our eldest on stage the other evening, I suddenly realised that he is in the first stages of detachment.

He was singing at a concert exclusively dedicated to him and the extraordinarily talented Chloe Burke.

They opened with a moving duet of Rewrite The Stars from The Greatest Showman.

Rewrite The Stars is a beautiful melody that sings to the soul. Two people yearn to be together, their love stronger than the obstacles it must surmount:

*Fate is pulling you miles away
And out of reach from me
But you're here in my heart
So who can stop me if I decide
That you're my destiny?*

If only they could rewrite the stars, perhaps they could change 'the world to be ours'. The spirit of Romeo And Juliet hangs over it all - a spirit of thwarted love and shattered dreams. It is moving because no-one has been spared the agony of loss, of heartbreak and departures which are too tough to take.

We come and go on the merry-go-round of this strange but beautiful life. The sun shines but the shadows are never too far behind. What we possess is ours but for a moment, and then it is gone - all gone.

Those of you who have journeyed with me through the years, will know all about my son's childhood. I have shared with you all our highs and lows, our sorrows and our joys. But, as I sat staring at him the other evening, I saw that what we have won't last long.

It is trite to say: 'They grow up far too fast.' A baby becomes a boy; the boy becomes a man. Life gives and takes away, and all we can do is thank our blessings for what we have had.

But what if we could rewrite the stars? What if we could change the world to be ours? What if...?

We come and we go like the proverbial ships in the night. We stay a while and then the tide carries us to distant shores. We ebb and we flow, waving goodbye and saying hello.

I watched him emerge from the safety of the womb, held him as though he were an angel. But now he sings and thinks and acts like a man. The boy is still there but he is getting harder to see.

We all dream of rewriting the stars, of taking control of life so that it can hurt us no more. We all long to stem the flow so that what we love can no longer be taken away. We all dream and yet, as the song says:

*You know I want you
It's not a secret I try to hide
But I can't have you
We're bound to break and my hands are tied.*

We cling to our certainties for they give meaning to our lives. But nothing is so certain that it can last forever. If only we could rewrite the stars. If only.

He and Chloe sang, and we shed tears of love, pride and joy. But what parent can remain unmoved when watching a child bloom into adulthood?

Pride mingles with all those deep emotions that accompany the thought of separation.

The baby became a boy, and the boy became a man. Nothing can prevent it. There comes a time when we must simply surrender to the inevitable.

BUT that doesn't mean we are completely deprived of what we had. For when I gazed in awe at that young man singing with such passion, images of the baby and the little boy danced across the stage. Were they real or simply projections of my deepest longings?

It doesn't matter, for when I smiled they smiled back. And as he sang, they all sang with him - a chorus of voices from time's old storehouse. The Grand Old Duke of York, This Old Man, Hallelujah - I heard them all and blessed my lucky stars with a single tear.

And perhaps that is how you rewrite the stars: you behold those which pour their golden light on your past, and you count each of them.

For unlike those which flicker and fade, lucky stars shine forever.

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