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Conor Lally

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awaits the oil slick

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poet or peacock?

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Weekend Review

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A pimp's family business



CONOR LALLY
Crime Correspondent

T.J. Carroll's recent conviction gave an insight into prostitution in Ireland, but the case did not reveal the full extent of his empire — brothels in almost every Irish county and an emerging business in South Africa — or the ruthless control he exerted over women who worked for him

BY THE TIME police in Wales arrested T.J. Carroll on a December morning in 2006, the largely unknown Cardiff man had amassed wealth that would have been the envy of even the biggest drug dealers in Ireland. He'd built an international property portfolio and housed seven-figure cash assets. Not for him the high-risk, high-reward world of drug trafficking and debt collection down the back of a pub. He specialised in acquiring the poor and vulnerable, and made one of thousands of euro weekly from his many brothels across the Republic and the North.

He was aided by his wife, Shamela Clark, a former prostitute from South Africa who in 10 years had raised and once won by the name of Carmen. He also trafficked his daughter from his first marriage, Tania, into the business. All three were jailed in Wales in February last because they pleaded guilty, the full reality of their empire was never revealed in court.



Photo: Muttar; ring: T.J. Carroll, his wife Shamela Clark and his daughter Tania Carroll on CCTV

den in court. The Irish Times has since spoken at length to many senior security sources in the Republic, Northern Ireland and Britain whose investigation brought down T.J. Carroll. They have revealed how foreign women were effectively lured into one slavery in brothels in 40 locations across Ireland (see map, right), and forced to make cash to hand up virtually all of their earnings.

Some men have also revealed their just before T.J. Carroll was jailed he was about to open brothels in South Africa especially for career fast money there for next month's World Cup.

Born on March 26th, 1961, Thomas John Carroll was originally from St Malina, by the river Barrow in south Carlow. He later settled in Bagninstown, Co Carlow, married and had three children.

In the mid 1980s he established a business supplying business to pubs and clubs in the southeast before branching into prostitution. At first, he joined forces with an established prostitution organiser in the southeast who later fled Ireland when a rape allegation against him emerged during 2004. Carroll quickly turned gang boss.

In 2005, he organised foreign prostitutes from apartments across Waterford, Westford and Carlow, presenting a Garda raid when a number of women complained of being beaten by Carroll's associates in two over-night stays.

Carroll fled to Galway where he quickly established himself again, targeting vulnerable women who wouldn't go to the police. He ran Shamela Clark, who was then in her 20s and working as a prostitute. The two became lovers, had a son and married after Carroll divorced his first wife. In September 2006, Carroll and Clark were arrested in Galway when €225,000 cash was found in properties linked to them. Under questioning they admitted controlling prostitution, according to Garda officers.

T.J. Carroll said people of his blood never get: "In most rapes and child molestations, it gives people somewhere to go." Believed to be



Violence and voodoo: why the women couldn't just quit

T.J. Carroll used threats against family members and voodoo rituals to intimidate his sex workers

"The most vulnerable and easy to control of the hundreds of women who worked in T.J. Carroll's brothels were the young Nigerians.

The families, mostly in rural Nigeria, were approached by people known to them, with a promise of education or a job for a female member of the family in her teens or early 20s. "The understanding would be that when they got to UK, Europe, Ireland, wherever, they'd need to work for a while to save back the tuition fees for their passage," says one source whose investigation work helped bring down T.J. Carroll.

Before leaving Nigeria, voodoo rituals were performed to "bind" the women to their traffickers.

One woman told Irish investigators that before leaving Nigeria a voodoo doctor had made her "swear that I will pay back the money or I am going to die". She was then forced to not a heart take from a blue chicken and the hair

and nails were cut as part of the ceremony. "It was very clear they had real fears as a result of the rituals," says one source.

The women or girls — two Nigerians found working in a brothel in the Republic were aged just 15 and 17 years — were told or made to believe Europe from Africa that they could then find a better life in the UK.

The women had no idea where they were and with money, had nowhere else to go.

A number of men — Irish-based associates of Carroll — controlled the brothels, ensuring that no customers were turned away, if the women did not comply with customers' requests during their 12-hour shifts in the

brothels — from 10am to 1am — they were threatened and beaten.

If they did not have total compliance from the women, Carroll's associates would make contact in Africa with agents of the original trafficking gangs. The gangs would travel to the women's families and separate them because of the "difficulties" their young female relatives were causing in Ireland.

One Irish security source says: "In some cases the women knew they were put on the phone to their relatives back home to be told: 'we've been assaulted and it's going to get worse for us'. The attitude was 'you must work to pay this debt'."

The women's lack of education, poor English, illegal status in Ireland and limited life experience — plus the threat of violence from and control by their traffickers.

The constant mixing of the women between brothels around Ireland also threatened them and made it difficult to develop deep friendships with other women, which could have empowered them in time.

T.J. Carroll's brothel network*



*Number of brothels per county

Garda custody pending criminal charges, the pair decided to flee to Wales. A European arrest warrant was issued for Carroll as a major investigation led by the Cardiff Organized Crime Unit was launched. But by late 2007 both he and Clark were in business again, this time from Irish dealers in south Wales, where they believed they were out of reach of the Irish authorities and under the radar of the British police.

It was here, from an old village in the tiny hamlet of Cadoxton, that they built what is thought to be Ireland's largest prostitution business, which at its height earned annual profits in excess of €1 million.

"The women used were considered so cheap," said one source. They came from Nigeria, eastern Europe, Venezuela, Brazil and other parts of South America. Some were recruited in prostitution. They had answered cheaply placed newspaper adverts for "domestic staff" and came to Ireland in the full knowledge of what they were getting into. Others, usually young, poorly educated or orphaned Nigerians, were made more vulnerable. They were trafficked into Ireland by Albanian gangs on the promise of jobs or educational opportunities. Once here, they were forced to work in Carroll's brothels on the promise of paying off the massive cost of their passage to Ireland, sometimes up to €50,000 was demanded by their Albanian traffickers.

ASSAULTS AND THREATS OF VIOLENCE WERE USED BY T.J. CARROLL'S AGENTS IN IRELAND TO CONTROL THE WOMEN. THEY WERE CONSTANTLY MOVED AROUND BETWEEN BROTHELS NORTH AND SOUTH TO DISORIENTATE THEM AND TO PROVIDE CUSTOMERS WITH 'VARIETY'.

Sources believe Carroll "did a deal" with major Dublin-based criminals involved in prostitution to keep one of the capital's biggest sex clubs out of his regional focus.

Carroll and Clark used two websites to advertise, initially, "clean" ladies in brothels across virtually every county in Ireland. They were officially based and escort agencies, but the sexual services listed actually revealed the true nature of the enterprise.

Women were advertised in, or near, bars, a few cafes and pubs, Cowi, Drogheda, July Lane, Sligo, Mullingar, Carlow, Kildare, Ennis, Carrick, Newbridge, Waterford, Tenny, Omagh, Laragh, Antrim and Belfast.

Continued on W2

MONDAY

The life of a prostitute in Ireland

Conor Lally's report continues with a profile of the woman forced to work for T.J. Carroll, and the lives lived by prostitutes in Ireland

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News Features

Astronaut combines art and science to awesome effect



SHANE HEGARTY PRESENT TENSE

We all need a bit of awe in our lives and science has the power to blow our minds

DON'T know what you see when you walk up every morning and look out the window, but I know what Scotti Negru sees. A flat, almost overbearing, in fact. Entire countries he can blank out with his death. Or even he with his death. And more often than not, he takes a picture.

Negru is an astronaut on board the International Space Station and a very popular figure on Twitter. If you follow him, you will occasionally see a stream of squares or your computer will translate the Japanese script he often writes in. But it is not about his work, it is about his images.

He is a prolific photographer. His pictures are simple – he doesn't add anything or anything other than an enthusiastic amateur – but they are stunning, showing nothing but his ability to make you stop for a moment and



The oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico photographed from space by Scotti Negru

realise how beautiful the planet is, how lucky he is and how unmissably small you are. It is a version of Douglas Adams' 'Total Perspective Vortex'. Only it makes you grin rather than go mad with nihilistic rage.

On Wednesday he posted a picture of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, in black and white, looking eerily beautiful as it stretched through miles of ocean. It is a unique image, giving a sense of his scale previously unseen and with a touch of humanity that a satellite cannot. The picture looks as if it was taken by an interested photographer rather than a disinterested astronomer.

When Negru dies it is being said that he will be remembered as a man floating 400km above your head, and that he might reply with any great of how wonderful modern technology can be, it's

on lonely, perhaps eternal journeys into deep space. And if you want, you can talk to him and he may even talk back. If you need any proof of how wonderful modern technology can be, it's

There is a reminder closer to home, though. Later this month, the people behind Trinity College's Science Gallery will travel to Finland where they will discover if they have won the European Museum of the Year award. It is on a shortlist for a prize that has previously been won by the Guggenheim in Bilbao, the Victoria and Albert in London and Dublin's Chester Beatty Library.

The Science Gallery is a remarkable venture, because it is too is a marriage of science and art, and of craft and creativity, imagination and innovation. In its 11 years, it has placed itself firmly in a small and valuable niche by appealing to every age group.

Its current exhibit, a crocheted coral reef, is a wonder in itself, both theory and science. The gallery's publicity describes it as "a complex beauty of nature and the fragility of our underwater ecosystem through a mathematical odyssey into climate change", which, frankly, sounds quite unimpressive. In fact, it speaks of its confidence in the value of what it is doing. It doesn't feel the need to talk down the science but instead feed it in.

You can join that there are school children going in there half bored by the very thought of spending a few hours at a science

exhibition, but leaving with an inkling that one day they will want to go into it as a job.

Science, of course, is not all about crocheted coral and drawing up and exhibiting attached to coffee shops. But it can be about awe, about discovery, about imagination.

The Government part funds the Science Gallery. It would be wonderful if, as part of a necessary attempt to encourage young people to go into science, there were versions of the Science Gallery in every part of the country, because, if our national museums acknowledge that our past is worth safeguarding for the public, then we should look at how we safeguard the future. Now, more than ever, we could all do with a bit of awe in our lives.

shane@trinityshane.com, Twitter: ScottiNegru

Falling prey to poison



Unless we tighten up and enforce laws governing the use of poisons then plans to reintroduce large birds of prey, such as the golden eagle, are in danger of failing, writes Harry McEneaney



A post-mortem is carried out at the Regional Veterinary Laboratory, Cork on the three-year-old male white-tailed eagle that was found dead in Co Kerry this week. Photograph: Golden Eagle Trust. PA: Valeriu Orlan. Below: golden eagle Conal found poisoned in Co Sligo

SPRING OF 2009 was a quiet time in Glenworth the beautiful nature park in Donegal. There were few tourists around and cold weather had brought heavy snowfalls to the valley and to the surrounding mountains of Erris, Malin and Slieve Donard.

It was a relatively quiet time of year for the Golden Eagle Trust, which is based in Glenworth. For a decade, this wildlife project has set out to reintroduce a majestic bird of prey, once native to Ireland, but extinct for the best part of a century.

But on the morning of February 18th, Lorain O'Toole, the driving force behind the trust, was catching up on routine administrative work when he was alerted to a signal from a satellite receiver. O'Toole was excited. The receiver was picking up a signal from a North-west satellite tag attached to a young female golden eagle which O'Toole had released the wild the previous year.

The tag was powered by a solar panel and had worked well from the time the bird was released in mid-July, until mid-September. Then the location stopped coming and was clear that the tag had lost power and was not recharging. But when he checked the satellite, the signal had revived. And what's more, it showed a location in Derry only a few miles away.

O'Toole jumped into his jeep and drove there. Armed with a portable receiver, he began looking through the trees. "I was feeling very positive. I kept on seeing the satellite tag at the crags and the overhangs to see if I could get where the eagle might have roosted," he recalls. "I'd only just started looking when I found it right at my feet. The bird was dead and had been for some time. The feathers of the young eagle were still attached to the solar panel and revived the signal. Toxicology tests showed that the young eagle had died of poisoning, from paracetamol, a deadly weedkiller, which is no longer legally on sale in Ireland.

EVERY YEAR, O'Toole has gone to Scotland to collect eagle chicks from Scottish National Heritage. The poisoning came a shadow over their availability. But then, just as the ripple from that event had subsided, another bird incident occurred, almost a year to the day. Another young eagle, named Conal, had made it as far as the area around Trillick Mountain in Co Sligo. But then in heavy powered satellite tag began to show the absence of movement, a sure-fire sign of trouble.

When O'Toole tracked the bird down, it also had been poisoned, this time with a cocktail of alpha-chloralose, a poison used to control vermin, and Nitroxylin, a veterinary medical product. In each case, the carcass of an animal, probably livestock, had been found with the poison – an illegal act. But under previous legislation, Government sources concede it is almost impossible to bring a prosecution unless the poison is caught in the act.

"Since that day, I have been in a bit of a catch-up, de-facto and frustrated at the poisoning of Conal," O'Toole laments. "It's weeks expressing his frustration at the lack of action and also his concern about the future availability of chicks from Scotland.

It's not only the golden eagles. In Kerry, the

problem has reached almost endemic proportions. In Allin Glen, a cock charger of a programme to reintroduce red eagles in Kerry, but a case of poisoning in recent weeks has brought to 13 the number of birds lost since their release in Killarney National Park three years ago. Another reintroduction programme, of red kites in Wicklow, has also seen birds die due to poisoning. In all, some 13 birds from those three groups have been poisoned between November 2007 and this week. Only one has survived. The sea eagles have brought in from Norway. Like O'Toole in Donegal, Moe is now worried about the future of his project in Co Kerry.

The birds have been killed by different poisons, sometimes used in cocktail form. The paracetamol has been the same, pieces of meat or the carcasses of dead animals have been used as bait. Some of the poisons can be obtained legally, others are banned outright, such as paracetamol. Others are very strictly controlled, such as carburetan, which was found in the bodies of two of the sea eagles recently killed.

THERE SEEM to be three problems with the current laws in Ireland. The first is that some poisons banned elsewhere, such as alpha-chloralose, are legal in Ireland. The second is that control on how poisons can be used may not be strict enough. It is illegal to use poison meat bait for control of grey crows and magpies. It is also illegal to use fallen livestock (such as deer or lambs) as meat bait. But current laws permit poisons to be poisoned with meat baits. This is, in any case, says the eagle trust, which made a formal complaint to the European Commission

in the summer in late 2008. The third problem is that Allin Glen cock charger of a programme to reintroduce red eagles in Kerry, but a case of poisoning in recent weeks has brought to 13 the number of birds lost since their release in Killarney National Park three years ago. Another reintroduction programme, of red kites in Wicklow, has also seen birds die due to poisoning. In all, some 13 birds from those three groups have been poisoned between November 2007 and this week. Only one has survived. The sea eagles have brought in from Norway. Like O'Toole in Donegal, Moe is now worried about the future of his project in Co Kerry.

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A cash transfer receipt found in a brothel raid in the North that linked TJ Carroll to his prostitution business

A pimp's family business

Continued from W1

When prospective customers ring to reserve a woman, the Irish mobile phone numbers were answered in Wales by Shamika Clark – up to 200 calls a day between 10am and 1am. She would direct the men to the brothel, where they would be charged three or four calls in an effort to open for undercover detectives. The men would be charged €160 for 20 minutes and €260 for a full hour, with "surveys on request". Women were not allowed to refuse a customer.

Most of the vast man generated in the brothels – in apartments rented from unscrupulous landlords by well-dressed women – were collected by Tom Carroll. The former law student was just 22 when the first go-in-land. He electronically transferred cash to her father's account in Wales and money was also made in Wales by Tom Carroll via car ferry in 2007 alone, the auctioneer said each month of €1.3 million. A one point, TJ Carroll had €554,000 in a single Credit Union account.

Business properties, nine in all, were traced in Wales, Cyprus, Bulgaria, South Africa and elsewhere. A number of the subjects of police coordination proceedings. The South African properties, near Johannesburg, were used to use as brothels that would be opened for the World Cup and kept in business thereafter.

THE FAMILY BUSINESS came unmasked when the PSNI's Organised Crime Branch in late 2007 began making law enforcement advertisements for evidence of human trafficking, and an ongoing Garda operation simultaneously disclosed.

A raid on one brothel in December 2007 struck gold. Paperwork for a cash transfer from one of the women to TJ Carroll was found with his name on it.

Two African women found on the premises agreed to be taken to a safe place by detectives and interviewed. "They genuinely believed they might be killed," said one source.

When the PSNI contacted the Garda, it said TJ Carroll was under long-term active investigation by the force's Organised Crime Unit, which had a wealth of information on the target. The UK's Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) was brought in to aid the complex multi-jurisdictional investigation.

Garda and PSNI detectives continued their surveillance of TJ Carroll's brothels, and questioned customers who were leaving the premises. The more than 2000 that had been confirmed that the mobile numbers on the websites were linked to the properties, and they were being used to pay for sex. Electronic surveillance also revealed that the scores of mobile numbers advertised on the websites were being answered in north Wales. Twelve women who worked for Carroll also gave

THE LEGAL POSITION ON POISONS

Alpha-chloralose, paracetamol and carburetan are restricted to poisons active Schedule 1 Part 2 of the 2002 Poisons Regulations. Such poisons may only be sold under the supervision of a registered pharmacist or registered chemist or by sellers licensed by the HSE.

Paracetamol (brand names: Tylenol, Panadol) is the OTC (over-the-counter) drug for marketing and use as a pesticide.

Troloxidol is a veterinary medicine product registered by the Irish Medicines Board. Troloxidol is authorised for the treatment of Troloxidol and other infections as directed. Available without prescription.



IN GLENWASH, O'Toole and I walk up one of the green-painted roads and deep into one of the valleys. High up one of the slopes, there are the white signs of a man – small triangles and other devices scattered around the opening of a cave. There is a breeding pair of eagles there. The female is from the very first batch introduced to Ireland in 2009.

Over a decade, O'Toole has seen more of his waking time raising this programme to his Golden Eagles as he has seen more of his other birds of prey. But they are anxious to be back for their native sky and the way they use thermal wings to soar to great heights. From the first chicks hatched in Glenworth, the population has spread the entire Donegal and the north east.

O'Toole had hoped the poison eagle in Sligo would have opened a new route south along the western seaboard. Now, like he, he was shocked about the failure of a mission to which he has dedicated much of his adult life.

A raid on a brothel in 2007 struck gold... the kingpin had been identified

TJ Carroll was arrested in his car a short distance from his home. "For a man with a known propensity for violence, he came quietly," said one source.

At the same time, the Garda raided nine brothels in this country, taking a number of women into custody and arresting seven people suspected of running the logistics of the enterprise in the Republic. Criminal charges are imminent against at least one of Carroll's close associates in the Republic.

TJ Carroll and Clark were jailed in February for seven and 3.5 years respectively for controlling prostitution and money laundering. Tom Carroll was jailed for two years for money laundering. Charges of trafficking against TJ Carroll and Clark were not pursued when they agreed to plead guilty to the other charges.

However, in his court records, Judge Neil Blaker QC at Carrick-O'Connell Court said: "It is more than coincidental that several of those Nigerian women will suffer of dreadful coercion and will end up working for you. You were willing to pay other to collect money from them, who were prepared to use force and violence to keep them in prostitution."

FEATURED PHOTOS: THE LIFE OF A PROSTITUTE IN IRELAND, BY CORA LLOYD

Features

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PROSTITUTION IN IRELAND: PART TWO

Life inside an Irish brothel



In the second of a two-part series, Crime Correspondent Conor Lally looks at the dangerous, brutal and tragic lives of women who worked in the many brothels run by T.J. Carroll

IN FEBRUARY 2010, T.J. Carroll was convicted of running one of the largest vice rings in the history of the State. From a small house in south Wexford, Carroll, with help from his wife and daughter, managed a network of 40 brothels throughout Ireland.

However, because they pleaded guilty to various charges, the full details of how Carroll and his associates built and ran the business were not revealed in evidence in court. A number of sources and those close to the investigation have spoken to *The Irish Times* about the full extent of Carroll's prostitution business.

I would not run away and run to the police. "The witch doctor then cut my chest, my waist, my legs, my two thumbs and my hand. I was very scared because... I believed them."

"I thought I was coming for school," the said of her passage from Africa to Ireland. "I did not know anyone in Ireland to ask for help. I was very scared. Since I left the agency, I still feel the fear. I don't sleep at night. I'm afraid if I close my eyes I won't wake up. I'm afraid that I have broken the oath. My family have been distressed because I am slow at paying the [brothel's] money."

The account of a third woman suggests a life of misery in Africa, one she hoped to escape by being trafficked to Europe.

"I was eight years old when my father married his second wife, and his second wife was from South Africa. At her height in 2007, the husband generated profits of more than €1 million. Some of the women working for Carroll were experienced prostitutes who had worked in other countries and came to Ireland, mostly from South America and eastern Europe, for what they believed would be significant earnings."

Other women from more vulnerable sources were trafficked from Africa to Ireland via other major European cities.



Below left, T.J. Carroll being led from court in February. Below, a bedroom in one of his brothels that was raided by police in Wexford. Photographs: Andrew Lloyd, Axel Schmidt/AP/Getty



At this stage, the women were told they would have to work in prostitution as a means of paying off their debts to their African traffickers. €80,000 was demanded by the traffickers in some cases. Most of the women spoke little English, but no money, no idea where they were, and had no place to go to. They were placed in brothels where they lived and sex clients. Foreign women were chosen because they had no support networks in Ireland. Their services were advertised by T.J. Carroll and Clark on escort websites.

When customers in Ireland rang one of up to 80 mobile numbers on the websites, they would be contacted to a call centre and directed by phone to the nearest brothel. The call centre was run from an old vicarage in the city centre of Castleknock in Fenchurch Park, Wexford, where Carroll and Clark lived after leaving the Republic in late 2006 to avoid increasing Garda attention.

Carroll case is no exception in Ireland

THE STATES leading group prosecuting women involved in prostitution in Ireland, says many cases where the details of the operation and the violence inflicted by T.J. Carroll and his associates are shocking, they are far from uncommon.

and they are afraid to go to the police. "But really they've trapped in their minds from fear and mistrust. They are so oppressed they're not able to get away themselves and ask for help."

The T.J. Carroll case underlined not only the extent of issues of exploitation in Ireland, but also how sophisticated and organised it has become. Rowley says Dublin-based women identified as Carroll's employees of whom are still in Ireland and have various immigration statuses.

across the country. The majority are controlled in some way by Irish or foreign third parties, either by traditional pen-pal figures talking some of their savings to others charging grossly inflated fees to rent the properties being used as brothels or for providing space or websites through one or several sexual services.

"Some of the younger and most vulnerable Nigerian women were forced to give all of their earnings to Carroll's associates in Ireland. They survived on tips from punters or on whatever 'savings' they could perform without Carroll's people knowing," says one security source.

Claiming Tolkien's imagination

A conversation in a Galway city bar in the 1970s has led to claims that the geographic inspiration for 'The Lord of the Rings' is the Burren in Co Clare, writes Brian O'Connell

A CHANCE MEETING in a Galway bar led Lindonee's name to Peter Curran as a 20-year literary odyssey to prove his local area was the inspiration for one of the greatest works of imaginative fiction of the 20th century.

Lord of the Rings, and Curran believes the inspiration for Middle Earth came from author J.R.R. Tolkien's time spent in the Burren, Co Clare. Last month, Curran founded the Burren Tolkien Society, and presented new evidence which, he says, supports his claim that the

rugged Clare landscape inspired the author. Curran's interest was first sparked by a conversation he had in the 1970s. "I was in Mrs. Curran's bar in Galway, sitting down on a Saturday afternoon having a pint. On my left hand side was an antique baby cot."

For University College Galway during the 1950s, he also learned that Dr. Marjory, an expert on the Burren landscape, had known Tolkien on several of his visits to Galway's Castle. Therefore, it's possible that Mrs. Curran could have met Tolkien.

Further enquiries led him to Cora's mother, whose father, Prof. Donniam Murphy, was head of the English department at UCC during the 1950s. "She told me that it was basically the Burren in the 1950s, when her father was professor, that he would entertain visiting colonial masters. She spoke about how her family and she Tolkien became very close, and how on many occasions they would visit Dr. Marjory who was a great expert on the Burren."

Curran says there is no doubt that Tolkien was in Galway, influenced by the landscape of the Burren, despite the majority of Tolkien scholars failing to make this link. Instead, it is believed

was in the kitchen with Tolkien, the professor and his wife. Dr. Marjory would have talked to them about the Burren and we know that he came here on many occasions.

Yes, Curran is not alone in being geographically drawn to Tolkien's imagination. In 2002, Scottish historian Iain Gibson claimed Tolkien's landscape inspiration was based on the south-west of Scotland. "I am convinced Tolkien came here and drew inspiration for his epic. This is Tolkien country in miniature," said Gibson. Scholar disagreed, and the debate on where or what inspired Tolkien's imagination continues.



Curran discovered that Tolkien had spent time in the Burren while he was external examiner

Curran hopes his website may promote more investigation and that, in time, the Burren might benefit from links to Tolkien

Curran hopes his website may promote more investigation and that, in time, the Burren might benefit from links to Tolkien



Inspirational landscape: the Burren in Co Clare was frequented in the 1950s by author and former external examiner of University College Galway J.R.R. Tolkien, above. Photographs: Dana MacDonnell and AP

was in the kitchen with Tolkien, the professor and his wife. Dr. Marjory would have talked to them about the Burren and we know that he came here on many occasions.

Yes, Curran is not alone in being geographically drawn to Tolkien's imagination. In 2002, Scottish historian Iain Gibson claimed Tolkien's landscape inspiration was based on the south-west of Scotland. "I am convinced Tolkien came here and drew inspiration for his epic. This is Tolkien country in miniature," said Gibson. Scholar disagreed, and the debate on where or what inspired Tolkien's imagination continues.

Curran hopes his website may promote more investigation and that, in time, the Burren might benefit from links to Tolkien

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Transcript

A pimp's family business

TJ Carroll's recent conviction gave an insight into prostitution in Ireland, but the case did not reveal the full extent of his empire – brothels in almost every Irish county and an emerging business in South Africa – or the ruthless control he exerted over women who worked for him

BY THE TIME police in Wales arrested TJ Carroll on a December morning in 2008, the largely unknown Carlow man had amassed wealth that would have been the envy of even the biggest drug dealers in Ireland. He'd built an international property portfolio and boasted seven-figure cash savings. Not for him the high-risk gangland world of drug trafficking and debt collection down the barrel of a gun. He specialised in exploiting the poor and vulnerable, and made tens of thousands of euro weekly from his many brothels across the Republic and the North. He was aided by his wife, Shamiela Clark, a former prostitute from South Africa who is 16 years his junior and once went by the name of Carmen. He also introduced his daughter from his first marriage, Toma, into the business. All three were jailed in Wales in February, but because they pleaded guilty, the full cruelty of their empire was never revealed in evidence in court. *The Irish Times* has since spoken at length to many senior security sources in the Republic, Northern Ireland and Britain whose investigation brought down TJ Carroll. They have revealed how foreign women were effectively bonded into near slavery in brothels in 48 locations across Ireland (see map, right), and forced in many cases to hand up virtually all of their earnings. Sources have also revealed that just before TJ Carroll was caught he was about to open brothels in South Africa especially for soccer fans travelling there for next month's World Cup. Born on March 26th, 1961, Thomas John Carroll was originally from St Mullins, by the river Barrow in south Carlow. He later settled in Bagenalstown, Co Carlow, married and had three children. In the mid 1990s he established a business supplying bouncers to pubs and clubs in the southeast before branching into prostitution. At first, he joined forces with an established prostitution organiser in the southeast who later fled Ireland when a rape allegation against him emerged during 2004. Carroll quickly turned gang boss. In 2005 he organised foreign prostitutes from apartments across Waterford, Wexford and Carlow, prompting a Garda raid when a number of women complained of being beaten by Carroll's associates in rows over money. Carroll fled to Galway where he quickly established himself again, targeting vulnerable women who wouldn't go to the police. He met Shamiela Clark, who was then in her 20s and working as a prostitute. The two became lovers, had a son and married after Carroll divorced his first wife. In September 2006, Carroll and Clark were arrested in Galway when €225,000 cash was found in properties linked to them. Under questioning they admitted controlling prostitution, according to Garda sources. TJ Carroll told gardaí of his illegal enterprise: "It saves rapes and child molestations. It gives people somewhere to go." Released from Garda custody pending criminal charges, the pair decided to flee to Wales.

A European arrest warrant was issued for Carroll as a major investigation led by the Garda's Organised Crime Unit was intensified. But by late 2007 both he and Clark were in business again, this time from Pembrokeshire in south Wales, where they believed they were out of reach of the Irish authorities and under the radar of the British police. It

was here, from an old vicarage in the tiny hamlet of Castlemartin, that they built what is thought to be Ireland's largest prostitution business, which at its height turned annual profits in excess of €1 million. "The women used were commodities to them," said one source. They came from Nigeria, eastern Europe, Venezuela, Brazil and other parts of South America. Some were experienced in prostitution. They had answered thinly veiled newspaper adverts for "domestic staff" and came to Ireland in the full knowledge of what they were getting into. Others, usually young, poorly educated or orphaned Nigerians, were much more vulnerable. They were trafficked into Ireland by African gangs on the promise of jobs or educational opportunities. Once here, they were forced to work in Carroll's brothels on the pretence of paying off the massive cost of their passage to Ireland; sometimes up to €60,000 was demanded by their African traffickers. ASSAULTS AND THREATS of violence were used by TJ Carroll's agents in Ireland to control the women. They were constantly moved around between brothels North and South to disorientate them and to provide customers with "variety". Sources believe Carroll "did a deal" with major Dublin-based criminals involved in prostituting to stay out of the capital if they stayed out of his regional bases. Carroll and Clark used two websites to advertise scantily clad "exotic babes" in brothels across virtually every county in Ireland. They were officially listed as escort agencies, but the sexual services listed clearly revealed the true nature of the enterprise. Women were advertised in, to name but a few towns and cities, Cavan, Drogheda, Athlone, Sligo, Mullingar, Carlow, Kilkenny, Enniscorthy, Newbridge, Waterford, Newry, Omagh, Lurgan, Armagh and Belfast

When prospective customers rang to contact a woman, the Irish mobile phones were answered in Wales by Shamiela Clark – up to 300 calls a day between 10am and 1am. She would direct the men to the brothels, often over a series of three or four calls in an effort to screen for undercover detectives. The men would be charged €160 for 30 minutes and €260 for a full hour, with "extras on request". Women were not allowed to refuse a customer. Most of the vast sums generated in the brothels – in apartments rented from unsuspecting landlords by well-dressed agents of Carroll's using false names – were collected by Toma Carroll. The former law student was just 22 when she first got involved. She electronically transferred cash to her father's account in Wales and money was also brought to Wales by Toma via car ferry. In 2007 alone, the authorities traced cash transfers of €1.13 million. At one point, TJ Carroll had €854,000 in a single Credit Union account. Investment properties, nine in all, were traced in Wales, Cyprus, Bulgaria, South Africa and Mozambique – all are now the subject of assets confiscation proceedings. The South African properties, four in Johannesburg, were to be used as brothels that would be opened for the World Cup and kept in business thereafter.

THE FAMILY BUSINESS came unstuck when the PSNI's Organised Crime Branch in late 2007 began studying internet prostitution advertisements for evidence of human trafficking, and an ongoing Garda operations imultaneously closed in. A raid on one brothel in December 2007 struck gold. Paperwork for a cash transfer from one of the women to TJ Carroll was found with his name on it. Two African women found on the premises agreed to be taken to a safe place by detectives and to be interviewed. "They genuinely believed they might be killed," says one source. When the PSNI contacted the Garda, it found TJ Carroll was under long-term active investigation by the force's Organised Crime Unit, which had a wealth of information on the target. The UK's Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) was brought in to aid the complex multi-jurisdictional investigation. Garda and PSNI detectives continued their surveillance of TJ Carroll's brothels, and questioned customers who were leaving the premises. Their statements

confirmed that the mobile numbers on the websites were linked to the properties, and that they were being used as brothels. Electronic surveillance also revealed that the scores of mobile numbers advertised on the websites were being answered in south Wales. Twelve women who worked for Carroll also gave statements to gardaí against him during the course of the joint Garda and PSNI investigation. Some of the women travelled around the country to identify exactly where brothels had been operating; some were open for just weeks before being closed and the women moved on. All of the evidence was pooled and given to SOCA. It was decided that because TJ Carroll and his wife had controlled prostitution from Wales, they must be charged there, even though the brothels were in Ireland. SOCA, with the help of the Welsh police, raided TJ Carroll and Shamiela Clark's Welsh home on the morning of December 3rd, 2008. Clark was at home with her two young children – one fathered by Carroll and one from an earlier union. The police found 80 mobile phones – containing many incriminating texts to customers and women – two computers, receipts for rental properties and paperwork for the purchases of nine properties. Some €20,000 in cash was also found, along with rate cards and sample adverts for “leggy, flexible, kinky” women and their sexual services which were to be posted on websites. TJ Carroll was arrested in his car a short distance from his home. “For a man with a known propensity for violence, he came quietly,” said one source. At the same time, the Garda raided nine brothels in this country, taking a number of women to safety and arresting seven people suspected of running the logistics of the empire in the Republic. Criminal charges are imminent against at least two of Carroll's close associates in the Republic. TJ Carroll and Clark were jailed in February for seven and 3.5 years respectively for controlling prostitution and money laundering. Toma Carroll was jailed for two years for money laundering. Charges of trafficking against TJ Carroll and Clark were not pursued when they agreed to plead guilty to the other charges. However, in his sentencing remarks, Judge Neil Bidder QC at Cardiff Crown Court noted: “It is more than coincidence that several of those Nigerian women tell stories of dreadful coercion and/or ended up working for you. You were willing to pay others to collect money from them, who were prepared to use threats and violence to keep them in prostitution.” Features Monday: The life of a prostitute in Ireland, by Conor Lally

Violence and voodoo: why the women couldn't just quit

TJ Carroll used threats against family members and voodoo rituals to intimidate his sex workers. The most vulnerable and easy to control of the hundreds of women who worked in TJ Carroll's brothels were the young Nigerians. Their families, mostly in rural Nigeria, were approached by people known to them, with a promise of education or a job for a female member of the family in her teens or early 20s. “The understanding would be that when they got to UK, Europe, Ireland, wherever, they'd need to work for a while to pay back the traffickers for their passage,” says one source whose investigative work helped bring down TJ Carroll. Before leaving Nigeria, voodoo rituals were performed to “bond” the women to their traffickers. One woman told Irish investigators that before leaving Nigeria a witch doctor had made her “swear that I will pay back the money or I am going to die”. She was then forced to eat a heart taken from a live chicken and her hair and nails were cut as part of the ceremony. “It was very clear they had real fears as a result of the rituals,” says one source. The women or girls – two Nigerians found working in a brothel in the Republic were aged just 15 and 17 years – were told on arrival in the UK or Europe from Africa that they owed their traffickers vast sums for their passage, sometimes up to €60,000. They were sent on the last stage of the journey to Ireland, usually by plane, and given a phone number to call on arrival. This number was always

answered by Shamiela Clark. She directed them by taxi to one of her and TJ Carroll's many brothels. Prostitution was then presented to the women as their only way of paying their debts to their African traffickers. The women had no idea where they were and, with no money, had nowhere else to go. A number of men – Irish-based associates of Carroll – controlled the brothels, ensuring that no customers were turned away. If the women did not comply with customers' requests during their 15-hour shifts in the brothels – from 10am to 1am – they were threatened and beaten. If this did not force total compliance from the women, Carroll's associates would make contact in Africa with agents of the original trafficking gang. The gangs would travel to the women's families and assault them because of the "difficulties" their young female relatives were creating in Ireland. One Irish security source says: "In some cases the women here were put on the phone to their relatives back home to be told, 'we've been assaulted and it's going to get worse for us'. The attitude was 'you must work to pay this debt'." The women's lack of education, poor English, illegal status in Ireland and limited life experience – plus the threats of violence here and voodoo curses from Africa – meant they were unable to extricate themselves from their situations. The constant moving of the women between brothels around Ireland also disoriented them and made it difficult to develop deep friendships with other women, which could have empowered them in time.

Winner AV

Bill Hughes and Bernadine Carraher

Report title: "Music changes lives"

Published in: RTE, 05/01/2010

Bill Hughes and Bernadine Carraher who previously worked together for six years set up Mind the Gap Films in 2001. The company specialises in television entertainment, music, documentaries, and other factual programming.

Bill Hughes has been an independent producer since June 1985 and in that time has produced and/or directed over 1000 hours of television for the domestic market and for cable, satellite, and terrestrial broadcasters around the world. He has also written and produced all three of the TV specials featuring the Irish Tenors, LIVE in Dublin, Belfast, and Ellis Island for RTE, PBS, CBC Canada, ABC Australia, TV2 NZ, and SABC3 South Africa.

Bernadine Carraher has been an independent producer since 1990 and she has produced and directed award winning Television for Europe and the US. Since setting up Mind the Gap she has executive produced or produced all the company's major productions. She has been the series producer of "[Hands On](#)" for the past fifteen years and in that time she has also produced a number of feature length film documentaries and TV series. She holds a B.Sc (hons) from UCD and an MBA from TCD.

Summary: "Music changes lives"

The Dublin youth orchestra: Its membership comes from middle class suburbs where the children can benefit from private instrumental tuitions.

However in the last three years a new wave of musicians has changed the status quo: girls from the working class suburb of Crumlin and whose talent has been nurtured by a music project in their school inspired from the Slums of Caracas (Venezuela) where for the past 30 years every government have offered free instrumental tuition under a programme called "El Sistema".

One success story involves a young musician Edixon Ruiz who benefited from this programme and made it to the Berlin Philharmonic (one of the best in the world) as the youngest bass player.

In Dublin two schools (St Agnes and St Alton) have adopted the Venezuelan model: every child gets a free violin lesson every week. Music means the world to these children. 2 of the most promising musicians from these schools have travelled to Berlin for a master class with Edixon Ruiz (The young Venezuelan musician) and to make their own way into the biggest stage of their lives: the national concert Hall.

The national winners were selected by a national jury which consisted of:

- Mark Byrne, EAPN (NGO)
- Joe Humphreys, News Editor, The Irish Times
- Ruth Deasy, EC Representation
- Margaret O'Gorman, NIB Representation
- Ian McGuinness, NUJ