

AFFAIRS OF THE NATION



WHOSE SPY WAS EPSTEIN?

READERS OF *The Phoenix* are likely aware of the unsettling parallels between the Jeffrey Epstein scandal and historical instances of child sexual exploitation, such as the

Kincora Boys' Home scandal in Belfast. The Kincora case involved the trafficking of teenage boys by MI5 to loyalist politicians and paramilitaries. The purpose was to gather compromising material

(kompromat) for potential blackmail or character assassination. MI5 also provided boys to VIPs, including Lord Mountbatten, for their personal gratification.

Mainstream media outlets have finally grasped that Epstein was involved in collecting kompromat, too.

Epstein provided former political high-flyer Peter Mandelson with large sums of money and lavish gifts. In return, Mandelson shared sensitive government information with him. Should Epstein have asked, Mandelson was in pole position to advise him about Britain's tactics for dealing with the Irish government.

Mandelson described himself as the "third man" in the dynamic between prime ministers Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. He also served as secretary of state for the north (1999-2001).

Epstein also cultivated friendships with George Mitchell, the US envoy who played a crucial role in the Good Friday Agreement, and with Bill Clinton, who was also deeply



Morgan McSweeney

involved in the peace process. Both Clinton and Mitchell were involved in negotiations involving Palestine and Israel as well.

So, who were Epstein's intelligence masters? There are some strong clues.

Epstein was initially arrested in 2006 on child trafficking charges. He received a lenient sentence after his legal team struck a deal with Alexander Acosta, then the US attorney for southern Florida. This deal drew scrutiny when Acosta was considered for the position of labour secretary under Donald Trump.

Acosta reportedly defended the agreement, claiming he was instructed to "leave it alone" because Epstein "belonged to intelligence". This information was relayed to Vicky Ward, formerly of *Vanity Fair*, by a former senior White House official.

In 2007, Epstein was represented by Alan Dershowitz. A confidential human source (CHS) informed the FBI in 2020 that Dershowitz had advised Acosta that

*Continued on page 4*

*THE BOYS behind the popular Scoop gelato operation in Dublin, have called it a day. Redmond Kennedy and Patrick Molony, who also set up a high-profile mobile crêpes business in a vintage Citroën HY convertible before going on to open the Voici crêperie and wine bar in Rathmines, D6, have just liquidated their loss-making Scoop Operations Ltd.*

*Like many in the hospitality sector, business has clearly been tough for the two boys and the latest figures for Voici Operations Ltd, for example, show accumulated losses at that operating restaurant of a not-so-sweet €383,000 at the end of April 2024.*

*A note in the accounts states that the results "indicate the existence of a material uncertainty which may cast doubt over the company's ability to continue as a going concern... The company is dependent on the continued support of its creditors, in particular the Revenue Commissioners." (This relates to the common practice during the pandemic of tax warehousing.)*

*The news is far worse for Scoop Operations, which boasted a rather scary accumulated deficit of over €870,000 at the end of December 2024, with the two boys shown to be owed €377,000. These figures were only signed off in May 2025, when Molony and Kennedy adopted a going-concern basis, "which assumes the company will continue in existence for the foreseeable future".*

*Alas, last week Michael Kennedy of Irish Insolvency was installed as liquidator.*

NADIA'S 'FUN VIDEOS'

CONGRATULATIONS TO Nadia Adan, who popped up in the Enterprise Ireland (EI)-sponsored 'Making It Work' section of the *Business Post* last weekend, although her many fans might have been disappointed by the restrained tone.

The section deals with businesses backed by EI and the article relates to the opening by the Ashford Motors car dealership of its second outlet.

The company was founded in 2020 by Adan and apparently boasted revenue of €4m last year, although the level of profitability is impossible to gauge at this stage as the only accounts filed by her new limited company only date to February 2025.



Nadia Adan

According to the *Biz Post*, Adan uses social media to promote her business: "We share day-to-day stories on social media about how people come to buy these cars and the love they have for them. People connect with that."

This is a rather understated way of describing Adan's, er, colourful strategy for shifting motors online, often through Instagram. The glamorous businesswoman decided to adopt a strategy of posting provocative "fun videos" online to promote new vehicles that had arrived in the showroom, often dressing in sexy clothing.

Not surprisingly perhaps, the videos attracted lots of followers as Nadia turned up the heat: "I had a low-cut-top and it sounds ridiculous but it worked. People just didn't know what to do with me. They put me in a glamour model box and that's fine, but it wasn't me. I'm a businesswoman. I'm educated. I can talk the talk, plus I have my boobs on show."

Not something you read every week in the *Business Post*.

CONTENTS

- Affairs of the Nation 3. Fowl Emissions/
- Northwind 9. Last Refuge 10. Print 12.
- Pillars of Society 14. Young Blood 16.
- Scenes/Sport of Kings 17. High Society 18.
- Funnies 20. Moneybags 24. Briefs 28.

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"OH GOD. I THINK HE MEANS IT TOO!"

Continued from page 3

Epstein was affiliated with both US and allied intelligence services.

A recently declassified 2020 FBI document reveals that the CHS told the FBI that Dershowitz kept Mossad abreast of how the Epstein case was progressing.

The FBI document further reveals that the CHS “became convinced that Epstein was a co-opted Mossad agent (see previous reporting).”

More recently, Mandelson mentored Morgan McSweeney. Originally from Macroom, Co Cork, McSweeney was Keir Starmer’s Downing Street chief of staff since October 2024. Mandelson and McSweeney were key players in the manoeuvres that led to Jeremy Corbyn’s removal as leader of the Labour Party. McSweeney, who once lived on a kibbutz and has strong ties to Israel, misrepresented Corbyn as antisemitic.

Curiously, British media outlets such as the *Mail* are now suggesting that Epstein was a Russian agent. It is unlikely that Moscow could have ordered Acosta to reduce the charges against Epstein. The *Mail* was briefed by “senior [British] security officials”. In other words, the spooks are behind the yarn about Russia.

The *Mail* is also alleging that “MI6 was told that Peter Mandelson could be a risk to British security because of his connections with Russian intelligence” (7/2/26). Really?

In the House of Commons, Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey has jumped on the dubious Russia bandwagon, questioning Starmer about whether he was “concerned” that Mandelson may have been leaking sensitive information to Epstein, a “Russian agent,” adding that Poland was investigating the possibility that Epstein was working for Putin.

**NEW NEWSTALK Breakfast presenter Anton Savage must believe, perhaps correctly, that media watchdogs at Coimisiún na Meán and other media will continue to ignore his clear conflict of interest in presenting a current affairs programme. So far Savage has refused to even pledge that he will call out any conflicts arising from his coverage of issues affecting any clients of the family firm, the Communications Clinic, in which he is a 35.66% shareholder. Not even his wheeze of creating a ‘blind trust’ into which his shareholding will be placed has stirred the ethical pit bull terriers into action, judging by a kindly interview in the Irish Times recently.**

**Savage told an admiring IT journalist, Nadine Regan, that he had placed his Clinic shareholding in a blind trust. “I don’t know where it’s invested, I don’t know what’s done with it.”**

**Shares in a private company such as**

**NO LOVE LOST FOR CONNOLLY/CAMPBELL**



“...and Shep here is trained to sniff-out large amounts of cash.”

**the Clinic are not traded on the stock market and Savage is in no danger of knowing what’s done with his shareholding as nothing is “done with it” in a private company, unless the company itself is sold, in which case he certainly would know.**

**Even this – no doubt deliberately – misses the main point. It’s not the financial performance of the Clinic that creates a conflict of interest for Savage but its clients – business heads, politicians, public figures and so on – who might be Clinic clients one day and interviewees on Anton’s show the next.**

**It’s Newstalk listeners that have been blindfolded, not Savage.**



Anton Savage

**REPLAY FOR GAA V GAZA**

GAA HEADS will be hoping that the new armada being organised to lift the siege on Gaza will not help to ignite further protests from its members about its multi-million-euro sponsorship deal with Allianz due to a United Nations report linking Allianz with Israeli slaughter in Gaza.

Meanwhile, the release of FBI files on Jeffrey Epstein sheds light on the lengthy financial discussions the disgraced financier had with senior executives at Apollo Global Management, the US private equity firm. Apollo and another firm, Motive Partners, have financed the new private asset company, headed by GAA activist Joan Kehoe. Kehoe is chair of prominent Dublin GAA club Kilmacud Crokes and is also a member of the GAA’s national management committee, which endorsed the Allianz deal.

There is, of course, no link between Kehoe and Epstein.

Kehoe chaired Crokes recent AGM, where a motion opposing the Allianz sponsorship – which had been approved by the management committee on which she sits – was voted

down. The committee decision effectively froze any further debate about Allianz – or so Croke Park decreed. But plans are afoot across the country, and in Dublin particularly, to circumvent this stricture.

Both Apollo and Motive have links with Israeli tech and/or financial sectors in Israel. Apollo CEO Marc Rowan sits on Donald Trump’s Board of Peace, originally the entity intended to oversee peace in Gaza (see *The Phoenix* 30/1/26).

Now the Epstein files show that the disgraced financier had extensive discussions about taxation with Rowan and other Apollo executives over a number of years following his initial child prostitution conviction in 2008.

According to the *Financial Times*, in 2021 Apollo denied having had any business dealings with Epstein and hired legal firm Dechert to examine the claims. Dechert cleared Apollo of actually doing business with Epstein but subsequently added riders saying that some of its statements then were “more nuanced than might appear at first glance”.

There is no way that Kehoe could have known about the links between Epstein and Apollo and she has nothing to fear from such information. Her Apollo backers, however, will be most concerned at the new information linking its CEO with Epstein, especially given the accusations now emerging of Epstein’s links with Israeli intelligence.

Again, nobody is accusing Kehoe of any underhand behaviour in her role as chair of Crokes – one of the biggest GAA clubs in the country – or on the GAA management committee. But given the multi-million financial backing Kehoe’s new venture has secured from the two US companies with Israeli links, the potential for a conflict of interest in her different roles is apparent.

However, when *The Phoenix* asked several times if she had considered absenting herself from any role on the management committee or at Crokes’ AGM due to a potential conflict of interest, Kehoe declined to respond.



Marc Rowan

## AFFAIRS OF THE NATION

TREVOR WHITE'S  
FOOD POVERTY

FAIR PLAY to Trevor White on his latest outing in the pages of the *Irish Times*, headlined: "The Michelin razzmatazz makes me queasy". Not many people who trouser a six-figure salary from a charity they set up and whose father was for years synonymous with fine dining in Dublin would have felt comfortable delving into the world of "food poverty".

Little Museum of Dublin (LMD) founder and curator White ("a genius" no less, according to Sarah Carey) has made quite the impact with his popular tourist venue, which operates out of a splendid Dublin City Council property on St Stephen's Green. The museum is one of the top tourist attractions in Dublin and recently underwent a €4.3m renovation funded by the taxpayer.

LMD relocated to a smaller building on nearby Pembroke Street while the works were carried out but, despite this, the recently filed accounts show that income increased to €1.7m (including capital grants) and the profit recorded for the full year to the end of December 2024 was a hefty €634,000, leaving the accumulated surplus topping €2m.

In 2024, Clever Trevor's remuneration was cut back from almost €130,000 to €110,000, possibly related to the reduced scale of the operation. Not everyone in LMD is on big bucks, however, and there are plenty of staff employed under the Community Employment Scheme.

The museum board is chaired these days by former Holles Street master/CEO Rhona Mahony, although a couple of high-profile names exited when the refurbished museum opened last July, including former Labour Party adviser Ed Brophy and Green Party number two Hazel Chu. Last month, Dublin legal-eagle John O'Donoghue joined the board.

With everything clearly going swimmingly in his own charity, Trevor took the opportunity last week to contrast chatter about swanky restaurant awards with the lot of the 3,000 people who queued last Christmas for charity



Trevor White

food parcels from the Capuchin Centre. *Irish Times* readers were told: "We are fascinated by Michelin and completely bored by food poverty."

The dining establishments that end up in Michelin guides tend to be expensive and White notes that the food served up in such establishments "is very far out of reach for the majority of us".

A former restaurant critic, he would be familiar with upmarket eateries but more so, perhaps, because his father, Peter White, was the man behind the snooty White's on the Green restaurant that served up expensive nosh to well-heeled customers (including the likes of Charlie Haughey) in dreary 1980s Dublin.

Trevor, however, is more focused these days on the great unwashed, who consume plates of ultra-processed foods and end up with high blood pressure and diabetes. The omission of any discussion of the subject by restaurateurs at last week's Michelin Guide beano in the Convention Centre was, said White, "unworthy".

How long before Clever Trevor jacks in his cushy charity gig to run for People Before Profit?

FIACH  
MAC CONGHAIL'S  
STRATEGY

GOLDHAWK WOULD like to congratulate the ever adaptable Fiach Mac Conghail, who has moved another step closer to saving his bacon as chief executive of the Digital Hub Development Agency (DHDA), which was earmarked for dissolution back in 2021. At the time, the government announced that it would transfer the assets of the sprawling Thomas Street campus to the Land Development Agency (LDA) but a new strategy document has been revealed that will tie the Digital Hub to Dublin City Council and create a brand new entity where, no doubt, one Fiach Mac Conghail will be the boss.

Fans of *The Phoenix* will be familiar with Mac Conghail's impressive ability to land on his feet, as he moved seamlessly from the Irish Cultural Centre in Paris to the corridors of Government Buildings as a ministerial adviser, to the State-owned Abbey Theatre (as artistic director), to the Seanad (as a nominee of the Taoiseach), before finally landing the

€130,000 per annum DHDA gig. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the ultimate insider is also currently on the board of the Irish Times Trust.

It turns out that the Digital Hub was drawn into the high-profile row over the shutting down of The Complex artists studios in D7 last month when its lease expired and the property was put up for sale.

Artistic director Vanessa Fielding duly highlighted the "failure of the Government and Dublin City Council to secure a viable resolution for an arts organisation that has operated continuously in the north west inner city for 18 years".

The culture department has been engaging with the council in relation to the controversy and last month culture minister Patrick O'Donovan told Sinn Féin's Aengus Ó Snodaigh that his department had been is discussions "on the potential transfer of part of the site of the Digital Hub in the Liberties to the local authority... I have requested that the council consider whether any of the activities which are currently conducted at The Complex could in time be facilitated in the Digital Hub complex."

Alas, there appears to have been little progress on the initiative, while O'Donovan also noted that, in the past, an offer of Digital Hub properties "for other uses" had been rejected by the city council, which did not answer Goldhawk's queries on the matter.

According to the culture department, as the LDA does not now require all of the Digital Hub properties, discussions are taking place with other bodies "on further complementary options to implement the Government decision".

This means that the dissolution of the Digital Hub remains on the back burner five years after the decision was taken to wind it up. Instead of simply winding down, negotiations are taking place between the agency and Dublin City Council.

According to the strategic plan just published by Mac Conghail: "The aim is to steer our onward journey as we seek to pivot from being a state agency to a new standalone legal entity."

Apparently, the DHDA and council are eager "to complement the work of the Land Development Agency by leading the regeneration of further parts of the wider Dublin 8 area".

Moreover, Fiach and his board are seeking "an evolved role" over the next three years, which is "crucial to protecting the legacy work of the Digital Hub".

It could also be crucial in keeping Mac Conghail at the top table.



Fiach Mac Conghail



## THE GENTLE SAS

IN A most civilised interview with the *Irish Times* recently, three veteran members of the Special Air Service (SAS) presented a sanitised view of their regiment, claiming it had never engaged in a shoot-to-kill policy.

Conspicuously absent from their account was any mention of the controversial Mobile Reaction Force (MRF). It was established in 1971 by counterinsurgency expert Brigadier Frank Kitson. It comprised British soldiers, trained by the SAS, who conducted various tasks including assassinations.

Operating in civilian attire and using unmarked vehicles, the MRF employed weapons typically associated with paramilitary groups. Its often-reckless operations led to public exposure during a trial.

The SAS led the attempted assassination of William Black, a UDR member who had arrested MRF soldiers involved in a car hijacking. In January 1974 an SAS squad, acting on false intelligence that Black was a terrorist, attacked his weekend cottage in Co Down. Black survived but with severe injuries. Incredibly, one of the would-be assassins later visited him in hospital, brazenly displaying his SAS beret and badge.

The British government eventually compensated Black to the tune of £16,500, with armed forces minister Archie Hamilton admitting in 1990 that British soldiers had shot Black.

Britain's assassination programme also included undercover operatives like Captain Robert Nairac and Albert "Ginger" Baker, who used loyalist groups such as the UVF and UDA to carry out proxy assassinations. While the SAS denies any connection to Nairac, credible reports suggest Baker received SAS training.

During the 1980s, SAS soldiers were



Frank Kitson

integrated into a covert RUC Special Branch unit, E4A, which was implicated in a number of assassinations. Among these was the shooting of Michael Tighe, an unarmed 17-year-old, who was present in a barn under E4A/MI5 surveillance where the IRA stored weapons.

More details about the E4A emerged during the trial of a member of the squad, who had been involved in the deaths of Seamus Grew and Roddy Carroll of the INLA. His testimony contradicted the official narrative of the shooting of Grew and Carroll, prompting an inquiry into E4A, which was led by the deputy chief constable of Greater Manchester, John Stalker.

Stalker was removed from the investigation after requesting the tape recording of the Tighe killing, amid accusations of underhanded tactics to discredit Stalker.

The SAS also eliminated an IRA unit in Gibraltar, which was planning a bomb attack on a ceremonial British Army band. The SAS's official version of events clashed with eye-witness accounts, including Carmen Proetta, who stated that the unarmed unit was taken down without warning while they had their hands in the air.

Proetta was vilified in the British media, but later won a substantial defamation settlement.

## BANNON'S IRISH PLAN

FORMER WHITE House strategist Steve Bannon has been keen in recent years to platform a number of Irish right-wing activists on his *War Room* podcast, including councillor Malachy Steenson and Eddie Hobbs. But his boast of creating an Irish Maga and Trumpian equivalent is somewhat idle.

Ireland's new right is hopelessly splintered. The latest schism broke out within the Irish Freedom Party (IFP) last autumn. Two rival ard chomhairles claim to govern the party, with Michael Leahy and Hermann Kelly leading the rival factions.

After the Leahy faction held its ard fheis, Leahy talked about the "serious division within our party", a "fight for survival", a "dreadful mess" and the need to hold their

heads in order to "rescue something".

Kelly has maintained a much more bullish persona online, posting pictures from the MCC conference in Saint-Josse-ten-Noode, Belgium, in December and the Patriots for Europe (PfE) group meeting in Brussels in January. He also made much of his participation in Eddie Hobbs's Ireland Forum conference.

Kelly's prominence in the right-wing scene comes from his previous role as press officer for Nigel Farage and the similar role he now plays for Danish People's Party MEP Anders Vistisen, who is chief whip of the PfE group in the European Parliament.

Kelly spends much of his time on the continent, which has meant that, in his absence, discord has developed within the IFP. Also, while Kelly's combative style might serve him well when he is interviewed for rare radio or television occasions, it has not helped him to build a stable political project.

Despite this latest split, Kelly's penchant for factionalism has not abated. He has repeatedly made derisive posts on X about Ireland First, calling it the "Casey/Murphy gang". Both Anthony Casey and Martin Murphy were prominent members of the IFP but left after an earlier split.

Kelly also reposted a message from Derek Blighe reproaching Kerry woman Michelle Keane. She was angered that she had been excluded from a meeting of a new party, the Hibernian Party, which is seeking to unite the right. After its not so secret inaugural meeting in Mullingar, nothing has been heard of it since.

Kelly, however, has thrown his weight behind Steenson for the upcoming by-election in Dublin Central. How Steenson's new Grá na hÉireann East Wall organisation, with its Easter lily logo, will react to support from Nigel Farage's former pit bull will tell a lot about the nature of unity on the right.



Hermann Kelly





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