

# THE GHOST



SHOT: Catherine

## Mother's appeal over 'hit'

By LYNNE KELLHER

A MOTHER-OF-NINE has made a fresh appeal for clues to the hitman who shot her 12 times in front of her children, saying: "I'm still afraid to open the front door".

Catherine Delaney McCormack, who lost her bowel and suffered bullet wounds to her leg and back, said the horrific crime was only upgraded to an attempted murder earlier this year – seven years after the shooting at point-blank range in her hallway in 2008.

Her case is set to be examined by an independent panel into alleged Garda misconduct, as she is deeply unhappy with the investigation.

The Dublin mother – who recently won the Carer of the Year award – said the legacy of the shooting at her Clondalkin home still lives with her every single day.

She said: "I get flashbacks. Noises, smells can just trigger it all off and bring it back.

### Panic

"If somebody comes randomly knocking on my door I just hold my breath and panic.

"It's terrible not knowing. I just want to know 'why?'. My life since then was destroyed. Doctors said it was a medical miracle I didn't die that night."

"The case has gone to the panel review. I have complained abo ut the Gardaí. I'm fighting the system for change."

Catherine believes she knows who could have ordered the shooting.

"Somebody out there has got to know something. He has got to have said it to somebody else. He couldn't just live with doing something like that and not telling somebody.

"I would be appealing to anybody with any information about it to please come forward.

"Then I could get closure. I was told it was a hired hitman. I had no enemies and I have never done anything wrong."

## FUNDAY WORLD

A MAN from Suffolk in the U.K. with a bizarre sexual attraction to tractors has been banned from the countryside and forced to sign the sex-offenders' register.

## Ger's creepy crawl around capital with 'The Count'

IT'S Dublin's scare city – where ghouls just wanna have fun.

And public transport is a bloody nightmare, as I found out this week when I found myself sitting on a bus next to a bunch of ghosts, zombies, 18th-century gravediggers – and Dublin's very own vampire.

My date with Dracula – aka Paddy Drac from Tallaght – was less Twilight, more Fright Night, as we took him on a guided tour of Dublin's dark side on the Gravedigger Bus.

Stopping off at haunted sites, the count told us why he loves the capital. "Bram Stoker came from Dublin, so this is officially the world's spookiest city," he said.

The bus wasn't as posh as his usual wheels. He drives a hearse for Rom Massey and Sons and got a lift to the bus stop from the funeral directors – in a coffin!

"I'm on my 25th coffin in 46 years," he told us.

The retired hospital porter at Tallaght Hospital has been flashing his fangs for charity since 1969.

### Genuine

He has given some people genuine scares – such as the time when he was riding to a gig in the back of a hearse and opened the coffin to get some air.

"We were stopped in traffic, and a woman in the back of a taxi nearly took a heart attack. I heard the taxi man saying: 'It's only Dracula! I would sleep in a crypt if I could.'"

However, he had scary competition from our tour guides, who were dressed to kill – literally. And while Dublin can be hell at Halloween, the city also has a horrid history.

Our host, actor Shane Whisker, aka Disgusting Plague Victim, revealed that back in the 1500s, Trinity College was a hotbed of body-snatching, murder and disease, especially when a Plague House was set up in the grounds.

Even Dracula flinched as Shane described what it was like to walk through Dublin 600 years ago.

"The smell of faeces and urine fills your lungs. And then you get that distinct stench of death as piles of corpses fill the street, oozing pus as they decompose. They almost appear to be moving, but it is not the corpses that live, it's the flesh-gorged rats," he said.

In the 1820s, grave-robbers earned the price of a pint by nicking the corpses out of Glasnevin Cemetery and selling them to medical students at Trinity.



FRIGHT NIGHT: Paddy Drac and Ger and (below) with American tourists Jimmy, Isabelle & Christine

By GERALDINE COMISKEY

The highlight of the tour was when the bus stopped outside Glasnevin Cemetery and a lad showed us how to rob a grave.

After all that we needed spirits – the liquid kind.

Luckily, we were right beside Kavanaugh's – aka The Gravediggers pub. We stayed for pints, hoping to catch a glimpse of the resident ghost, a bearded gent believed to be one of the publican's ancestors.

There was an eerie chill in the air as we stopped at Kilmainham Gaol, one of Dublin's most haunted places.

Back in the days before digital cameras, an English couple got a scare when their photos came back from the chemist. Lurking in the background was a ghostly figure, believed to be Grace, the lover of 1916 Rising martyr Joseph Plunkett.

Scariest still was the true tale of 'The Dollacker', a sex-monster wearing the

head of a pig, who terrorised prison guards and women passing by the Black Dog Gaol, near St Audeon's Church, in the 18th century.

At one point Shane called up his spirit, adding: "Maybe you'd like to hold hands with a person near you – you wouldn't want to be possessed by one of the demons from Hell!"

### Screams

A mysterious figure ran aboard the bus to screams and laughs. We were also assaulted by smoke, strobe-lighting and scary sound effects.

With six professional actors and the tricked-up bus for a stage, it is the ultimate live theatre.

But while the stories are scary, the actors are playing it for laughs.

"We've had people leave the bus which is mad, because we don't aim to scare. We see it as entertaining," said Shane.

Americans Christine Boardner, her daughter Isabelle (14) and Christine's boyfriend Jimmy said it was "funnier than we expected".

It was more treat than trick for two of the passengers, Derek Walsh and Lorraine Carroll, who were celebrating their birthday on the bus.

Extreme Ireland boss Keith McDonnell and Hidden Dublin's Aidan Murphy came up with the idea for the tour, which was launched by Tourism and Transport Minister Michael Ring in 2012.

The bus leaves College Green every evening (except Christmas and New Year's Day) at 7.45 pm and the tour takes two hours.

It's not suitable for under 14s because of the swear words and slightly naughty innuendos. Private tours can be organised in advance. As the double-decker is usually packed, it's best to book at [www.thegravedigger.ie](http://www.thegravedigger.ie) Tickets €25 include free drink.