



International Headquarters
PO Box 1716 • Morristown, NJ 07962
Tel: 973-605-1991
www.iaci-usa.org

Welcome to the latest edition of the IACI e-news.

Founded in 1962, the IACI is the leading Irish American cultural organization. The IACI is a federally recognized 501(c)(3) not-for-profit national organization devoted to promoting an intelligent appreciation of Ireland and the role and contributions of the Irish in America.

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By

Raymond D. Aumack

The Piper Cub settled gently on the runway at Miami Airport. Desmond and Maria very reluctantly arrived in Miami on a brilliant late Saturday morning on the way home from their wonderful honeymoon. They decided to surprise her parents on Saturday, attend Mass with them on Sunday morning, and fly out early Sunday afternoon to Philadelphia.

The taxi pulled up to Maria's parent's home, but the surprise was blown. Louisa saw them from the window and she and Eva ran out screaming with joy. Their luggage had wheels and the sisters wheeled them up the walkway. Maria carried a shoulder strap bag loaded with gifts for her family.

Her Mother shrieked with joy in the doorway and greeted Maria with hugs and kisses and then squeezed Desmond as tightly as she could.

Maria was going to blurt out their plans but decided to wait. Juan Carlos came down stairs to see what the ruckus was all about and was overjoyed to see Maria and Desmond.

After settling down, Maria told her parents that they had a wonderful time in Key West and in Summerland Key. They would stay overnight, have dinner and breakfast after Mass, and fly to Philadelphia in the early afternoon.

Oh, I almost forgot. We brought gifts for everyone. "Really," screamed the young sisters. Each girl received two hand-made jumper skirts each with a different sewn-in Key West scene. Her mother received a mosaic dish with a Key West scene.

They gave her father a hand embossed leather folder for carrying his important legal papers.

"They have amazing crafts available in the Keys," said Maria. "They are just filled with artists of every discipline."

"Well this bag is filled with cards and gifts for you."

"Oh Mom! I expected guests to donate our gifts to the church for their immigration assistance fund."

Desmond said that they would acknowledge the gifts and send the money to the church.

Juan Carlos asked Louisa to open the door to his office that was filled with gifts.

"My goodness," said Maria. "We didn't plan for this. Dad, could you ask people in your office to pack these up and send them to us. We'll reimburse you for the postage."

"Desmond, where will we put these?"

"We'll figure something out. You have to concentrate on studying for your orals."

"The first week in March, two weeks from now, and I start back to teaching tomorrow."

"You can sign the 'thank you' notes as Doctora Maria Elena Costo Dowd and Senor Desmond Dowd," her mother joked.

Sunday was a beautiful day, though one of mixed emotions for Ana and Juan Carlos, Their daughter would no longer call their home hers as well. She was setting off to found a new family. The Sunday Mass was joyful

with everyone making a big fuss over Maria and Desmond. Breakfast at the Costo home was nostalgic with aunts, uncles and cousins dropping in. The breaking point was the tearful farewell at the airport. “Mom, Dad! We’ll be back, I promise. When we get a home with more room, we’ll arrange for all of you to visit.”

“Vaya con Dios,” they said as, Desmond and Maria prepared to board the plane that would take them back to Philadelphia.

They settled in at Desmond’s cottage that evening. Neither was hungry and Desmond found two cans of chicken soup in the cabinet.

“Desmond, I’m sorry for all this chaos. Wasn’t it wonderful when we didn’t have any?”

“That is how the world started, my dear one. The Spirit floated over the chaos and declared that it was good. We’ll get through everything and within a month, all will be settled. We’ll just take it one step at a time.”

The next morning, after Maria left for school, Desmond started a “to do list.”

1-Find a three-bedroom apartment

2-Find storage locker facilities

3-Make a list of moving companies to consider.

His first call was to Father Fred. “Desmond, welcome home! How is Maria? It is so good to hear your lilting brogue again. How was the honeymoon?”

“Maria is fine. She stumbled out of here at 7:00 AM. I want her to concentrate on studying for her orals. I am off today, so I am doing legwork, on the telephone, to get our lives in order. Do you have any vacant apartments in the parish that you know of?”

“It just so happens that I do, Desmond. The parish has a five-bedroom, three bath house that I am considering selling. When we had nuns here, it was their convent. There is a brand new, updated kitchen, all new bathroom fixtures, gas heat, central air-conditioning. There is a working fireplace, a library, and rustically beamed ceilings. John Garvey takes care of the snow and leaf raking. There is a sizable room the first floor that can serve as an office for Maria, if she has no objection to a stained-glass window. It was once the chapel.

“At what rent?”

“Fifteen hundred a month.”

“Fred, the standard is more than double that.”

“I know the standard. The house doesn’t have a mortgage. Our staff will take care of any maintenance issues, The best feature of a deal for me, would be to have you and Maria as tenants.”

“Ok! I’ll bring Maria around after school. Fred, I would love it if you could guide her to making the decision. I don’t want to pretend to be boss the second week we are married. Meanwhile, ask your attorney to draw up papers for a one-year lease with a first option to purchase at the end of the lease. By the way, this is contingent on you accepting a rent of \$2500 a month”

“OK, I appreciate that. It will help me to get this past the trustees and the parish council.”

Point two, thought Desmond, with a heated garage, we won’t need a locker for storing gifts.

Point three was a call to Manny Bookbinder.

“Hi Manney!”

“Well praise God! You are a newly married man and you have reached home safely.”

“Ah, yes, It was a wonderful wedding. We had a great honeymoon at Key West. The Costo family are wonderful and I miss them already.”

“Well you lucked out to find Maria. She is a wonderful person.”

“Theresa taught everyone Irish dances to Spanish music. The festivities were lively. We’ll prepare for the do-over and your role as the best man.”

“Will Fr. Fred try to make me a Catholic?”

“Manny, you have got to believe, as I do, that God is very pleased with you. Remember, that Jesus is my boss, and he lived and died as a faithful Jew. And you already know that Fr. Fred loves you just as you are. I’ll see you tomorrow at 11:00 AM.”

Desmond fell into his favorite chair to doze and pray

The previous week was rather eventful for Garvey Consulting Associates. Theresa’s wine and cheese party to launch her business unit was a huge success. More than 150 people just from Philadelphia businesses attended, and it turned out to be a marvelous ”Meet and Greet.” About eight guys asked Theresa out to dinner after the party. She graciously thanked them but told them she was engaged and introduced them to John who was amused by it all.

The following day, the phone never stopped ringing. Everyone had a major problem that required Garvey solutions.. Theresa asked about half of them if they could meet at her office. Others she would visit and started to make appointments for everyone. Before they were overrun, Susan and Theresa would have to establish intake procedures.

She ran into Maeve’s office and beseeched “HELP.” Maeve called both Dave and Michael. That would keep the fire out for a while.

Susan volunteered to be their backup.

Things were looking very good for Garvey consulting.

Maeve immediately called the building owners and rented the space in the building that was used for the Wine and Cheese Party.

Maeve, Susan, Theresa, and Dave designed three office spaces for private consulting, ten soundproof workstations, each with a telephone, and a lounge area with comfortable seats, a conference room and a kitchen as coffee/tea station.

Susan immediately called the telephone company and an office furniture supply facility to rent furniture including a portable kitchen, until they became more aware of specific needs. The building owner guaranteed that the offices and soundproof work stations would be ready by the close of business the next day. Telephones would be installed the following day.

Dave apologized. “I never thought we would have that kind of a rush of business.”

Maeve laughed, “Theresa and Susan have that magic touch. I just wonder how long it will be until we have a surge like that again.

Michael assured them that he wanted to help but reminded Maeve that he was going to Indianapolis every two weeks to provide legal services for a large aluminum company and a law practice to oversee. Each visit to Indianapolis was two days with an overnight.

Hugh Quinn, the consulting accountant, was fascinated by the bookkeeping. There were three lines of income streams and a column of expenses, all within the business model of the company. Dave Garvey carefully watched the financials for his daughter's company.

Theresa remained as cool as a cucumber. She was a classical mystic. She was always grounded and never let herself get overwhelmed by the chaos around her. This did not go unnoticed by her fiancé, John Garvey, who seemed to fall ever more deeply in love with her every day.

Theresa started her day with early Mass at St. Paul's. She picked up an egg sandwich and three coffees and was at the office even before Maeve and Susan. They always shared coffee and conversation before work began. All three had the gift of prioritizing the tasks of the day. Their chaotic company ran smoothly and was highly profitable.

Theresa was insistent that she wanted master's level psychologists doing their training. Maria was a terrific resource through her contacts at St. Joseph's University, even though she was really busy with her job at the high school and preparing for her oral exam, the last step for her doctorate.

Maria had a break and called Desmond who was enjoying his last day off. "How are you adjusting to real life," she asked?

"Quite well. I have had a busy morning. Can you come right home after work? I have already done food shopping. There is something that I want us to do together. I'll have you back studying by 4:30 PM. Will that work?"

"Yes, of course!"

"He then called Father Fred and asked if he could meet them at the house for Maria's decision."

On the way Maria was tauntingly curious. "This is something I came upon this morning, but I think we should make the decision together," said Desmond.

She was even more curious when they parked in front of St. Paul's Church. Desmond led her to the large home just across the street. It was a large center hall colonial with Doric columns supporting a second-floor balcony. The surprise was even greater when Fr. Fred opened the door to welcome them.

"I was calling friends this morning to inquire about available homes for sale or rent. One of those friends was Father Fred and he suggested we look at this one. He is the real estate person, so I'll turn the presentation over to him. Fr. Fred then took Maria through the house with high praise for the features and benefits."

Maria was ecstatic over the prospect of the entire chapel for her office and certainly didn't mind the stained-glass window.

"How do you like it," asked a nervous Desmond?

"What's not to like," asked Maria?

"I recommend that we rent the house for a year and at the end of the lease, we have the first option for a purchase. Is that alright with you?"

"Is it alright with Fr. Fred?"

"Absolutely," said Fr. Fred. "I am very pleased to have you for tenants."

“Saturday is February 14st, Valentine’s day. You can have it beginning today.”

“Maria is studying for her doctoral orals in two weeks, so I’ll be the one coordinating the move.”

“Before you move in, we’ll paint the place for you. Just give us an idea of the colors.”

“Don’t let it become a distraction but what colors do you prefer.”

“Let me think about it for a day,” said Maria. “Meanwhile, they can start on white ceilings.”

“Oh! I almost forgot,” said Father Fred. We have a lot of furniture that we bought for the nuns. It is top of the line. They left it behind when they moved on. I would be relieved to give up the storage cost.”

Desmond laughed. “If you looked at my cottage, you would think, hermitage. I have books stacked all over the place, a couch and a bed. I was embarrassed to bring Maria into it. When she came back, I knew that we would have a life together. We’ll pay you a fair price for the furniture.”

John and his father, labored over the computer in Dave’s office. They were searching for the e-mail that Dave received that set up the attack on their lives. The defense attorney’s wanted copies of them. John already found and retrieved the e-mail that was sent to him. “I found mine by going back to the approximate date that I received it. Bingo, here it is. The return address is a made up one used the shield the sender. We’ll give them what we have and let them figure out where they originated. Now all we have to do is wait for them to call us.”

Brigid, Dierdre, and Theresa had been called in to expand their depositions. Further investigation suggested further questions for the women. Brigid told her investigator that she has little memory of the events. She was knocked to the ground, she thinks by Theresa. I didn’t know they had guns until the one who was shot by Dierdre pointed his gun at my husband. I was terrified for him. In the space of seconds, Dierdre threw herself over Dave and shot the assassin. It seemed like it was done in a single motion.

Dierdre told her story. She was in the shadows protecting the family and didn’t see the assassins because they were protected by the darkness and some bushes. “When they jumped out to grab the family, Theresa reacted instantly, disarming the assassin on the left-hand side of the group as you are looking out to the field. I saw the guy in the center of the group with a gun. He is the guy I tackled injuring and disarming him, I heard Theresa shout ‘gun’ and threw my body on top of Mr. Garvey. At the same time I drew my gun and fired. Theresa had pushed him hard enough to disrupt his aim and the bullet went through my hair, striking John who had subdued the other attacker. The fifth guy ran, and the FBI brought him down.”

“It doesn’t seem possible that you could do that,” said the glaring investigator.

“Sir, I am a combat veteran. I served with the Marines and spent most of the five years in combat. My assignment was Search and Rescue. Each mission was highly dangerous. I was well trained for the work. However, I worked with my team to train for every eventuality. In combat, a millisecond, can be the difference between life and death.”

“Did you attend college?”

“Yes sir. I have a BS degree in Computer Science from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. It was part of my Marine training. My teammates are both working in that area, one for Google, and the other for a California pharmaceutical company. Roche Biomedical. I am also a certified EMT.

“How tall are you?”

“Five feet, three inches sir. I weigh 115 pounds. Height and weight are irrelevant in combat, sir. You depend on your training and your team. Your courage comes from your confidence through the training. I have done that move several hundred times in combat and in training.

“While you were flying through the air you drew your gun and fired a perfect shot.”

“That is what I trained to do.”

”I see you have several marksmanship medals, the Croix de Guerre, and a Silver Star.”

“Yes sir. I also have twenty some odd combat ribbons.”

They continued to grill her relentlessly.

Are you suffering from PTSD?

“No!”

“You were in all these intense battles and you don’t have PTSD?”

“Sir, no one comes out of the intense firefights of battle without PTSD.”

“But you just said you were not suffering from PTSD?”

“That was the truthful answer to your question, Sir. I am not *suffering* from PTSD.”

“How can that be?”

“Sir, many people suffer trauma. Perhaps you have yourself. I was very well trained to deal with trauma and examined after every battle. My team and I trained together, we ate together, prayed together, and hung out together. The three of us were people of deep religious faith. In battle, we totally depended on God and each other.”

“What was the most serious battle you were in?”

“Probably the one where I rescued the French soldier. The Afghans were using a group they had pinned down as bait to get us. When we arrived at the scene and saw the layout, I assigned my partners to spread out behind the enemy. When they started to fire, I made a beeline for the international squad’s position. A wounded soldier was lying on the field in an exposed position. I radioed my team and had them lay down a carpet of gunfire at my signal. When I gave the signal, all hell broke loose. I crawled out to the wounded soldier and dragged him back to safety. The intensity of the fire forced the enemy into a retreat, my team joined us, and we completed our rescue.”

“That is quite a story. You weren’t traumatized?”

“Our courage comes from our training, sir. I knew my team would keep the enemy heads down. There was a lot of firing, but it was all over my head, just the way I planned it.”

“You received a medal from the French government?”

“Yes, I visited with the soldier at the base hospital, his name was Francoise Malaux. When he went back home he told his story. The French government was impressed, and I received their medal.”

“Did it disturb you that you didn’t receive a medal from the American government?”

“Not really. The Captain was killed in the early part of the battle and no one wrote it up. By the time they decided to write it up, the emphasis of the report was on the Captain. Our gratitude was for survival, not for medals. My team and I received citations.”

“Thank you Ms. O’Toole. If we so require it, we’ll call you again.”

“Ms. Malone, I see that you have bachelor and master’s degrees in Psychology”

“Yes, that is correct. I also have a Professional Diploma in Human Resources Consulting from U. Penn.

“You worked for the Jesuits over on the West Side.”

“Yes, that is also correct.”

“Describe what happened on the evening in question?”

“My fiancé and I were planning to have dinner with John’s parents. John has an apartment in the country club, clubhouse. I knew that John had received an email from his dad that he needed his help to move something from his car. We pulled into the parking lot and parked near the building. When we left our cars, John and his dad were looking at each other in wonderment when the thugs stepped out of the shadows. I instantly saw the gun and quickly disarmed the assassin. I saw Dierdre flash by and crunch another assailant. I saw the gun, shouted ‘gun’ as he was turning to shoot Mr. Garvey, and reached over Brigid who was on the ground and pushed the shooter, spoiling his shot, though it did hit John. However, in the same instant, Dierdre’s shot found it’s mark.”

“How long did this take?”

“The FBI estimates about 70 seconds.”

“Where did you learn martial arts?”

“At Villanova University. I liked the exercise and took the course for two years, earning a Black Belt.”

“I guess you were a terror on the streets of the West side.”

“I never had to use these skills before.”

“You took all those courses and did all that work for nothing.”

“Nothing? I saved three lives in the fight and perhaps the lives of all of us. The courses gave me strength, confidence and, a supplemental spirituality.”

“So what you did there was required?”

“Yes, it seems so.”

“You were awarded The Presidential Medal of Freedom. Do you think that will influence a jury?”

“Sir, I did nothing to seek that honor. I don’t believe I deserved it. The reason the president gave was outside the parameters determined by President Trumna when he created the honor. I have no idea how it will influence a jury. That is for you to determine.”

They had planned to meet at Green Gables Golf Club for dinner and debriefing.

Dave and John were very pleased with the debriefing. Dierdre thought they were disappointed that she wasn’t a military basket case. John laughed. “I’m sure they are. That could possibly be an avenue of defense, although it would be far-fetched,” said John.

“We’ll also give our information to Brian who will be the lead prosecutor, with Michael and Maeve,” said Dave. “I have already informed the lawyers in my firm that my children are going to be prosecutors. I want to

keep the keep the firm clear of any notice that could be interpreted as a conflict of interest. All of our attorneys personally know Brian, Michael, and Maeve. I emphasized that this was not a reflection on their skills. They work for my firm because they are the best lawyers in Pennsylvania and far beyond. I've asked them to pay attention to the case and make recommendations if they think we missed something. The prosecution won't be difficult. The evidence is overwhelming. We will have to be clever cross-examiners."

They finished off the evening with a great meal at the club. Ironically, the trial never came up in the conversation. Theresa, ever the comedienne, kept the conversation light and funny with stories of her new job and the work they were called on to do. Dierdre told the stories of her interviews with McNally's lawyers and the chronic badgering about why she wasn't a military mental case.

Dave picked up on her story immediately. "Dierdre, Theresa, and I need to have attorneys with us at the depositions. They won't badger Briget any further. "

They have already recognized that they have to be very careful with John, and that provides the reason for John to have an accompanying attorney as well. I'll speak with Brian about that."

Peggy Boyd made a nice appearance. She looked quite smart in her blue business suit. It made an impression on John as he saw her leave her car through the big bay window of his office. He decided to walk to the door so he could greet her as she came into the building.

John was very casual. He was wearing tan khakis and a blue plaid button down shirt. He had a blue blazer hanging in his office in case he had to go into the dining room or any of the member lounges.

He greeted Peggy warmly and thanks to the training of Theresa and Susan, she responded just as warmly to his greeting.

She was filled with confidence and poise and John received that message. John had a sofa in the office and comfortable chairs designed just for discussing business matters. He invited Peggy to take one of the chairs. He asked how she was feeling in such a way that she had the impression that he really cared. She shared that she had come through her ordeal and was ready to open a new chapter in her life. That she looked forward to seeing him again and excited about discussing the possibility of employment with him.

Again, John had received the message of confidence and self-possession.

That combined with the charm with which she presented herself, convinced John that this was the person he was looking for.

He didn't read Peggy's resume. He didn't do anything that would interfere with the communication track that they had established.

"Your most recent job was at Denny's. Tell me about your work there."

"My title was Senior Office Manager. What that meant in reality was that I had to respond to the beck and call of the executive administrators. But the most interesting part of the job was helping the other employees. Denny's did not pay well so the support staff was weak at best. I had to learn their responsibilities in order to help them. Susan was in graduate school when I started and she gave me a lot of help learning what the bookkeeper was supposed to be doing, the work of the IT person who didn't know how to turn on the computer, the sales and marketing support staff who consistently flirted with the salespersons. I felt that my job was not only to help them do their work, but to prepare them for their next job."

"The executives did not know how to read me. I was busy; I was happy; and I was productive because my staff became serious and productive. I left after the incident with my husband. I thought of it as somehow a failure on

my part. I have since learned that wasn't the case. Thank God for Fr. Fred and Susan who never abandoned me but kept a distance from her father. I'm sorry. I am off the track. I enjoy working and I enjoy helping my workmates without hovering over them. I learned a lot about what makes a work environment run smoothly and efficiently leaving room for flexibility and fun."

"Let me take you around the club so you can see how we operate." He led her out the receptionist desk.

He introduced her to Katie Morgan, the receptionist. "This is the heartbeat of the organization. He introduced her to the bookkeeper, Madeline Stone, the IT person, and the secretary, Mary Taglia, who does a lot of odd jobs including being your assistant."

Down the hall was a much larger office and that belonged to the banquet manager. He introduced her to Jane Ryan, a strikingly beautiful Black woman in her early 20's. Peggy congratulated her on her coming marriage, a greeting that Jane really appreciated. "You will be working with Jane very intensely for the next six weeks. She will teach you everything you will need to know. Which basically means helping people decide what they want and balancing that against what we can provide. The hardest part of the job is remembering the names of the members and learning their backgrounds. We can respond to almost every need. One of the biggest club events is a New Year's Eve banquet, including fireworks. We also contract for a Fourth of July outdoor picnic and fire work's display, John's favorite event. We do wedding receptions, Bar Mitzvas, Baptisms, Confirmations, and First Communion parties, birthday parties, anniversaries, and other events like that. This is a family club."

"Thanksgiving is a big day. You won't get dinner until the evening on that day. We have a food stand at the pool and the tennis courts during the summer. Everything you need to know for every kind of event is detailed in a folder. You are free to add to it for posterity. Also, the whole administration staff meets with John each week. Those are fun meetings because everyone helps each other do their job even better. John takes a great deal of pride in the operation of the club and it shows."

"John you keep referring to me as part of the team. Does this mean I have the job?"

"Peggy, I hired you ten minutes after you walked into the building. Let's go down to my office and work out the particulars."

"Thank you, Jane. I look forward to working with you and learning from you."

"I look forward to it as well. I hope you will pardon me if I get distracted."

"My daughter is marrying John's brother in three months. We will both be distracted."

"Wow! Good for them. I saw that on the schedule and didn't make the connection. It will be nice to have the mother of the bride as the Banquet Manager. You can help them keep it under control."

As they walked back to John's office, he mentioned that the chef was off today, and he wanted to take her through the kitchen when that staff was around.

Also, the grounds keeper, the starter and the golf pro were all in Florida for a month. Peggy would be interacting with them as well. There are food and drink stands on the course.

"Peggy, this is a big job and I feel confident you can handle it. I learned it from the staff meetings and Jane will tell you my likes and dislikes about how the operation runs. You know how Denny's runs. Well this club has the same kind of operation with a lot of tentacles on an elegant level. It is a restaurant on steroids. You can wear casual clothes during the training period. We only dress up if there are members going to be around or for greeting members who will be clients. You will have to help Michael and Susan plan the details of their reception. That should be fun. As demanding as our work can sometimes be, it should be fun."

The salary reflects the demands of the position. You will start at \$75 thousand. You will have a 401K, a good health plan, the same one I have. There are perks and I'll fill you in on those when our accountant comes in. How does that sound to you?"

"I should look confidently at you and say that it is alright for starters. But I am stunned. That is an executive salary."

"Yes, because you are one of the four or five on the executive team that run this club. I want to have the best club and the best employment experience for my staff in the Philadelphia and south Jersey area. That is what we have now, and I want it to keep growing. I'll have our accountant draw up the contract. You are on the payroll as of now. You get paid on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month."

"Thank you, John. What time do I start tomorrow? "

"Be here about 9:00. We have coffee and a breakfast here and start work about 9:30."

She stopped at Susan's office on the way home.

"He hired me. I am an official executive on the management team. The people are nice. The work sounds exciting and demanding as well. I can't believe the salary."

Everyone was quite excited by this news. Theresa gave her big congratulatory hug. Maeve was very pleased and hugged her as well.

"He said he hired me ten minutes after I walked into the office. We hadn't even started talking about work yet."

"John is the witch in our family," said Maeve "He has the gift of insight, the Irish call it 'fey.' He sees and understands things in a way that we don't. He doesn't even realize that, and he is terribly smart. He loves managing the club and prefers it to the million dollars a year he could be earning as a corporate attorney. My father and brothers take advantage of his insight and skills whenever they think they need him."

"I never thought about him in that way," said Theresa. "He is fun and playful all the time."

"Oh yeah! A little like a leprechaun. That is why you and he are a perfect match."

"You think I am a leprechaun?"

"No! Just playful and funny. And, thank God, very serious about all this work."

"He is marvelous with the computer. I was with him when he discovered all the drug money."

"Don't mention that. The story is that the money was discovered by an unnamed investigator working for my dad. Now that is true, but Dad doesn't want John involved any further. Remember, the cartel lost almost a billion dollars and they are surely not happy about that. We don't want any more reprisals."

"Well thank you for all your help. Apparently my confidence, thanks to you, was the winning point. I have to go. I'm meeting Janet for lunch."

"Great! I'm having a girl's night next month at your club, Mom. Everyone will have the opportunity to meet Janet. Check your scheduling book. Michael is our sponsoring member."

Desmond Dowd thought he had a quiet moment to himself. He sat in his big, comfortable chair with his daily meditation book, Sacred Space, by the Irish Jesuits. He had just gotten to the end of the Gospel reading for the day when the house phone, the one that never rings, clamored for his attention. He answered greeting the caller, and his daughter simply said, "Hi dad, this is Rosellen."

“Rosellen, thanks be to God you called. I worry about you, think about you, and pray for you every day.”

“Well maybe they worked. I found my way back to you. Dad, I’d like to come home.”

“You are most welcome.”

“I read that you are married.”

“I am. Maria Costo Dowd is my wife. She is easy to love, and you will love her too. She is a fascinating woman with a fascinating story. She is taking her doctoral oral exams in defense of her dissertation next week.”

“Will I be in the way?”

“Not at all. In fact, having you here might break the anxiety. I’m sure she will want some time for studying.” “Is there room for me at the cottage?”

“If you don’t mind sleeping on the couch for a couple of days? We leased a five- bedroom house that is currently being painted. We planned to start moving in after Maria’s exams on Tuesday. When can you get here?”

“Sometime tomorrow.”

“My work schedule is 11:00 and I get home about 9:30. Maria goes out about 7:00 AM and is home usually by 3:30. She is asking for Monday and Tuesday as personal days. Her dissertation has been accepted for publication. So she is very confident about her exams. She does have a couple of professors on her committee that don’t agree with her, but they will just make things a little difficult for her and that is what she preparing for over the weekend. Her study could be the key to revolutionizing the way English is taught as a second language.”

“Is she an immigrant?”

“She is a Cuban refugee. The family fled with almost nothing when it became known that Castro was planning to assassinate her father.”

“We’ll talk more, and I’ll tell you her story when you get home.”

“I like the sound of that word. It hasn’t been part of my vocabulary for a long time. Then I’ll tell you my story. It may take more than a couple of hours.”

“My hope is that it will take the rest of our lives.”

“You and mom were so good, dad. How come I didn’t catch that?”

“Some things take more time. We all have paths to choose and some of them are really easy. Others are filled with crags, rocks and thorny bushes. Some of us are loved by warm puppies. Others of us deal with snakes and rats. A great poet once wrote there were two paths. He took the one less travelled. We all choose something. Every step I took, I was able to grow, I lucked out when I loved and married your mom. Our greatest joy was when you were born. You were our joy as a child. Sadly, we could not provide brothers and sisters for you. You felt you had to take a different path than your mom and I took. We never stopped loving you. Sometimes the only tool we have to work with is unconditional love. Don’t ever think that we ever stopped loving you. Maria is not your mother, but she will love you with all the intensity that I do and that your mother did.”

“Does she know my story?”

“Yes, as much of it as I know.”

“I’m in Detroit. I will fly to Philadelphia tomorrow.”

“Give me the flight number and the estimated time of your arrival. I will arrange for an Uber car to bring you home. I’ll probably be at work, but the key will be under the front door mat.”

Maria phoned on her break just before Desmond left for work. He gave her a thumbnail sketch of the conversation with his daughter.

“Desmond, that is wonderful. We have a new beginning and now so will she. It will be an exhausting mess for a couple of days. It will be an exhausting mess for longer than that, but we’ll get through it. I’ll see you tonight.”

Desmond walked out of his front door to get to his car. He was distracted by a singing bird on the branch of tree in his front yard. He waved to the bird and then mentally thanked Mary, Rosellen’s mom, for arranging the events of the day and the future.

That evening when Desmond came home from work, He brought soup and chicken francais dinners with him. He opened a bottle of chilled white wine.

“Are you ready to take a break?”

“Desmond, I am finished. I am ready. I love the work I did but if I keep delving into it, I will grow to hate it. I’ll peek at a few things over the weekend. I’m looking forward to meeting Rosellen. I’m looking forward to moving into our new home. They allowed me to take Monday and Tuesday off. I just won’t get paid for them because I took my allotted personal days to go to Florida to get married. I have the rest of the week to relax and concentrate on getting to know Rosellen and thinking about our new home. It will be a pleasant distraction.”

“I told Fr. Fred to hire day workers and that I would pay them, \$15.00 an hour. Every room should be finished by tomorrow. They can bring the furniture in on Thursday.”

The Uber driver made a smooth connection with Rosellen at the airport and delivered her to Desmond’s cottage as instructed. He carried her bags to the door, and she gave him a five-dollar tip. As he pulled away she lifted the welcome mat, Caed Mille Faltia, (a thousand welcomes) and picked up the key to let herself into the house and dragged her bags in.

She plopped herself in Desmond’s big recliner, closed her eyes, and tearfully rejoiced at being home. Rosellen had never lived in Desmond’s cottage but did crash there from time to time.

She started to doze and was asleep when Maria let herself in.

“Hi Rosellen, I’m Maria.” Rosellen had difficulty getting up out of the oversized chair. Maria extended her hand and helped her rising seem easy. She then hugged her and softly said, “welcome home.” Rosellen, an abuse victim, was totally taken back by Maria’s gentleness. She was more accustomed to punishing indifference

Maria held her hand and looked at her. “You are the spitting image of your mom.”

“My mom was beautiful and just radiated goodness.”

“And I see a beautiful woman struggling to find the goodness in her life to radiate That is why you are here, am I right?”

“Totally!”

“Come inside to the kitchen and I’ll put a kettle on for tea.”

“Congratulations, Maria, on your marriage to my dad. How did you meet him.?”

“There is a group of us who go Mass together every Sunday and go out for a long brunch afterward. I was one of the originals and your dad asked if he join us on his Sunday off. It was early summer, and I was free from school. The following day, your dad called me and invited me out for a picnic. He took us quite a distance into the mountains to a favorite lake for our picnic. Meanwhile, riding in the car for a distance we talked, and talked, and talked. We had a very enjoyable picnic and a marvelous day. I was suddenly in love. Every hormone in my body was alive. There was a chirping bluebird that seemed to follow us and your dad, with his Irish mysticism, thought that was your mom setting us up. He kissed me and that sealed the deal. This is the man I wanted to love as long as I lived.”

“That is a beautiful story.”

“It gets better all the time. About eight months later he proposed, we spent about four months doing pre-Cana with one of the Jesuits at the Urban Mission. We married in my parent’s church, my childhood parish, in Florida, a week and a half ago. I am an immigrant, like your dad. We were a prosperous family in Cuba and my father opposed the Castro government. We got word that Castro had arranged for my dad’s assassination. It was with my mom and my two sisters who were babies, my dad and I rowed a dory from Cuba to a beach in Miami. We had nothing more than the cloths we wore. We had friends. My dad washed dishes and subsequently became a waiter in a Cuban restaurant while he was preparing to take the Florida Bar Exam. Today he is the most prominent immigration lawyer in Florida. My sisters are twelve and thirteen and they were among the bridesmaids at our wedding. You will get a chance to meet them all. They are coming for our Philadelphia wedding reception. We had to do this to satisfy your Dad’s many friends here.”

“Wow, that is a story. Are you citizens?”

“Yes! We all became citizens when my dad was certified as a Florida attorney.”

“Do you want to take a ride to see the house we are moving to?”

“I’d like that.”

As they left the house, the bluebird was chirping in the tree on the front lawn. Maria noticed but didn’t say anything aloud. She did say a silent prayer for guidance.

They drove the short distance to St. Paul’s and Maria drove into the driveway of the big colonial house.

Wow! Is this the house?

“Yes, it is. We were very lucky to get it. We are renting it for a year with the option to purchase it at the end if the lease.

“They painted the entire house over the last two days. It should be finished. The kitchen is new and up to date. The garage is heated. There are three bathrooms with all new fixtures. We have gas heat and central air conditioning.”

“I think your dad’s cottage could fit into the living room. Did you ever see your family home in Ireland? It is a magnificent estate.”

“Oh Yeah! I had forgotten about that. The last of the great landlords gave it back to our family.”

“You have three married uncles, a married aunt and six cousins living in it.”

“It sounds crowded.”

“Actually, if they wanted to, they could all live in the house without ever seeing each other.”

“This used to be the convent for the nuns that served at St. Paul’s.”

“There are no more nuns living in the parish?”

“No! The whole idea of ministry for nuns has evolved from teaching into a lot of other ministries.”

“You’ll laugh at my office over here. I have a stained-glass window.”

“That is spooky.”

“No, I think I like the idea. It is really unique.”

“My dissertation has been selected for publication. It is going to take a of work to change it from a dissertation to a book. I think it will be perfect for me.”

“What about dad, you said he was publishing?”

“We have a library, and once he gets it set up, we may never see him again.”

“Hello, I thought I would find you here. It is a little slow at the restaurant and Manny said he would cover for me so I could spend time with you and Rosellen.”

“What do you think of this house?”

“It’s magnificent. Can I live here, too?”

With a furtive glance at Desmond, Maria, seeing his approval said, “of course you can.”

Maria said, “let’s celebrate Rosellen’s homecoming with a Philadelphia cheesesteak dinner.”

The evening was wonderful. Rosellen would save her story for Desmond for the next morning.

Chronicles of an Irish Life – Families and the tradition of the ‘sing-song’.

For decades, the tradition of the ‘sing-song’ has been part of my husband’s Irish family. Whenever they meet up, they end the night with Irish songs – from ‘Danny Boy’ to the ‘Fields of Athenry’. Each person is expected to contribute – irrespective of their talent. It is as much about taking your place amongst your tribe than your ability to sing. What matters is that you care enough to listen to each other and know your value in the familial world. No fiddle or piano is required for this situation – your voice is the instrument and one which is revered in this social milieu. ‘Great girl’ my father-in-law encourages, even though I’ve hit the wrong note and forgotten a few words. ‘Noble call’ another shouts – evoking nervous laughter as I scan the room for my prey. Whether in a hotel lobby, a backroom bar, or inside the homes of this large family, the sing-song reigns supreme. ‘Spacill Hill’ or ‘Galway Bay’ will evoke a wistful look from one, or a barely discernible tear from another, while Yeat’s ‘Sally Gardens’ will raise a glass to the unspoken agreement that he was indeed a great Irish poet.

This New Years Night in my in-laws house, as we faced the new year, the ten of us sang songs amongst ourselves -aided by a book of ballads and a few glasses of Irish Jameson. To a person walking-by, it must have seemed unusual to see young people off their phones and patiently listening to the patriarch of this family, their beloved 92 year old grandad singing ‘Shanagolden’ without forgetting any words -when he can often forget their names. Or listening to their father belt out St. ‘Brendan’s Voyage’ – a song made famous by the great Christy Moore. He’s sang this song over the years at family get-togethers, weddings and birthdays, so that everyone knows that this is *his* party piece. They know it well, and join in for the chorus “is it right or left to Gibraltar, what tack to I take for Mizen Head’, holding back to hear him sing the punchline, ‘I’d love to settle down in Ventry Harbour, St. Brendan to the Albatross he said’. Applause and more noble calls ensue with lively but friendly banter. Even after 25 years in this family, it still amazes me to see the bonding ritual of a singing family, and the way in which a song can make a person feel valued and safe. As we go about our busy lives, facing into the new decade, and an uncertain world, no doubt we will occasionally come across songbooks in the window of a second hand book store, or hear a tune on YouTube or Spotify that could make a great party piece for the next gathering. Although we’re separated by geographical boundaries, or busy professional lives, or sadly now the nursing home, there’s always an occasion to meet up – and at the end of the evening, someone will make a sign that it’s time to listen up – the sing-song has begun. Noble call, Deirdre!

The Easter Rising – 1916 – Eirí Amach na Cáisca

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom. So began the *Proclamation of the Irish Republic*, read from the steps of the General Post Office (the “GPO”) in Dublin on **Easter Monday 1916**, by **Pádraic Pearse**, President of the Irish Republic, and Commander-in-Chief of its military forces. Analogous to the Old Testament, there was a messianic tradition in Irish literature, looking forward to the re-birth of the Irish nation in a bright new day of Freedom. Perhaps the best example of this is found in the prophetic play, “The Singer”, by Pádraic Pearse, in which the sacrifice of but fifteen men redeems the nation. Like the sacrifice of Robert Emmet in 1803, the 1916 Easter Rising provided the blood sacrifice, which resulted in **the resurrection of the national consciousness of Gaelic Ireland** and set the country on the road to freedom.

On **Easter Monday, 24th April 1916** - like those who stood and fought in defense of American Liberty on Lexington Green and at Concord Bridge on the 19th of April in 1775 - brave Irish men and women took up arms to rid Ireland of its cruel invader, England. In so doing they set in motion events – the Irish War for Independence (1919-1921) -- which would inspire the unraveling of England’s vast empire, on which it could once be said that “the sun never set.”

Those who went out during Easter Week, in 1916, the Irish Volunteers (supported by Na Fianna Éireann), the Irish Citizen Army, the Irish National Foresters, the Hibernian Rifles and the ladies of *Cumann na mBan*, without regard to their own personal safety, went into the gap of danger, made the sacrifice, set the example.

For the poet William Butler Yeats, *Easter 1916* transformed Ireland - from a place where “motley was worn,” ...

“all changed, changed utterly, a terrible beauty is born.”

Among those who fought for Irish Independence were a number of **American Fenians**, the **Hibernian Rifles (Ancient Order of Hibernians (Irish - American Alliance))**, plus **veterans of the “Fighting 69th”** and a professor of mathematics, **New York-born Commandant Éamon de Valera**, of the Irish Volunteers (who would remain a major figure in Irish politics until his death in 1975). Significant support for Irish Independence also came from **Ireland’s “exiled children in America,” Clan na Gael, AOH and Friends of Irish Freedom**. Of particular note are Judge Daniel Cohalan and **John Devoy**, and, from the “Fighting 69th”, Jeremiah O’Leary, J.J. (“Ginger”) O’Connell, John T. Prout and Alexander Anderson.

When *Sinn Féin*, as a separatist, abstentionist republican party contested the general election of 14th December 1918, promising to NOT represent their constituents, or their country, in the mighty Westminster Parliament in London, but rather to set up, without foreign let or hindrance, a republican assembly which would form an Irish government for all Ireland. *Sinn Féin* won an overwhelming majority of the popular vote in all Ireland, and 73 of 105 seats, in what can only be described as a **plebiscite for independence**. The delegates who assembled in the Mansion House in Dublin formed *An Chead Dáil Éireann* (The First Dáil Éireann – Assembly of Ireland), and issued the *Irish Declaration of Independence* on 21st January 1919 (legally the equivalent of the American Declaration of Independence by the Second Continental Congress, promulgated on the 4th of July 1776). Brian O’Higgins, himself among the elected *Teachta Dála Éireann (TDEs)*, points out, in his Wolfe Tone Annual, that **Easter Monday, 1916** is regarded as **the significant date** as a consequence of the pre-existing Army Council of the Irish Republican Army – *Óglaigh na hÉireann (the IRA)*, the army of the government of Ireland virtually established, insisting upon The First Dáil Éireann recognizing, and swearing allegiance to, the **Irish Republic proclaimed in arms in 1916**, as a condition for the IRA coming under the authority of the democratically elected government formed by The **First Dáil Éireann**.

Ireland’s Freedom struggle in the twentieth century began with the
Easter Rising in 1916. †

ON THIS DAY IN IRISH HISTORY

April 22

1671 - An English Navigation Act prohibits direct importation of sugar, tobacco and other produce from the colonies to Ireland; act expires in 1681 but is renewed in 1685 and extended in 1696

1918 - A general strike takes place throughout Ireland against the British government's attempts to introduce conscription

April 23

1014 - The Dublin Norse and the king of Leinster, with Viking allies from overseas, are defeated by Brian Boru's army at Clontarf. Brian, now an old man, is killed. This thwarts the potential domination of Ireland by the Norse, but they are well established in the coastal towns, and will continue to have a major influence. Máel Sechnaill succeeds Brian as high king

1918 - The Military Service Act 18 April threatens conscription for Ireland: there is a one-day general strike in protest (except in Ulster) on this date

1961 - A census shows the population of Northern Ireland is 1,425,642; an earlier census on April 9 shows the population of the Republic to be 2,818,341

April 24

1596 - Pacificatie of Ireland drawn

1913 - Large supply of guns from Germany are landed at Larne for the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF)

1916 - On Easter Monday, the Irish Volunteers and Citizen Army seize the General Post Office (GPO) in Dublin and demand Irish sovereignty

1993 - A massive IRA bomb rips through the City of London, killing one and injuring more than 40

1998 - The Ulster Defense Association and Ulster Freedom Fighters' Inner Council - the North's largest loyalist paramilitary group - backs the Stormont Agreement, saying it secures the state's place within the United Kingdom

April 25

1185 - Henry II sends his son John to Ireland; John lands at Waterford on this date to assert control over Hugh de Lacy, but he fails to achieve this. Henry still suspects that de Lacy wants to be king of Ireland

1707 - Thomas Erle, MP for Cork city, commands the centre at the Battle of Alamanza and loses his right hand on this date; David Dunbar, later MP for Blessington, is wounded and captured in the same battle, and John Upton, later MP for Co. Antrim, distinguishes himself

1861 - William Ford, who crossed the Atlantic from Ireland by steerage, marries fellow country woman Mary O'Hern. Their son Henry Ford, pioneered the mass manufacturing of the automobile

1918 - Irish Labour Party declares one-day strike in protest over conscription act

Anglo-Irish agreements on defense, finance and trade (25 April) end the 'Economic War': the 'Treaty' ports are ceded by Britain; the Irish Government pays £10 million to settle financial claims; both sides repeal penal duties on imports

1938 - Anglo-Irish agreements on defence, finance and trade end the 'Economic War': the 'Treaty' ports are ceded by Britain; the Irish Government pays £10 million to settle financial claims; both sides repeal penal duties on imports

1946 - Birth of Peter Sutherland; in 1981, he becomes Ireland's youngest ever Attorney-General in the Fine Gael-Labour coalition government. In 1997, he becomes chairman of BP and when BP merges with Amoco in 1998 he becomes non-executive chairman of the new company. BP Amoco has a market value of about \$40 billion. Sutherland is also on the boards of ABB Asea Brown Boveri Ltd., Investor AB and Eriksson. He is chairman of the Overseas Development Council in Washington and the recipient of numerous honorary doctorates and awards in Europe and America.

1976 - About 10,000 people attend the Easter week commemorative rally at the GPO, convened by the Provisionist IRA, despite government prohibition

1998 - The first ever mass demonstrations against immigration laws and racism take place in Dublin, Cork and Limerick. At the same time, protests are staged by Irish people outside embassies all over Europe and the United States. Dublin edges close to a standstill as more than 1,000 protesters march from St Stephen's Green to the GPO

April 26

1718 - Thomas St Lawrence, 13th Baron of Howth, receives £215 14s 1 1/2d for the expense he incurs in building a quay at Howth for landing coals for the lighthouse

1745 - On this date, John Allen (3rd Viscount Allen), former MP for Carysfort, kills a dragoon in a street brawl. 'His Lordship was at a house in Eustace Street. At twelve in the night, three dragoons making a noise in the street, he threw up the window and threatening them, adding as is not unusual with him a great deal of bad language. The dragoons returned it. He went out to them loaded with a pistol. At the first snapping of it, it did not fire. This irritated the dragoon who cut his fingers with his sword, upon which Lord Allen shot him.' The wound occasions a fever which causes Lord Allen's death on 25 May

1756 - John Ponsonby is unanimously elected Speaker of the Irish parliament

1784 - Death of Nano Nagle, 'God's Beggar', founder of the Order of the Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary

1808 - Benjamin Burton, son of William Burton (former MP for Gowran and Co. Carlow) fractures his skull in a fall from his horse while hunting but, having apparently recovered, goes out again with the hounds and dies from 'brain fever'

1895 - The trial of Oscar Wilde for homosexuality, then a crime, begins at the Old Bailey

1916 - Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, writer, suffragist, pacifist and patriot, is apprehended while trying to stop Easter Rising looting and is later executed by the British without a trial

1999 - Former Supreme Court Justice, Hugh O'Flaherty, confirms he will give a full and frank account of his role in the Philip Sheedy affair before the Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality and Women's Rights

April 27

1696 - Act 'for encouraging the linen manufacture of Ireland': Irish linen gains duty-free access to the British market on this date

1739 - Lord Barry of Santry is tried by his peers in the parliament house for the murder of his former servant Laughlin Murphy in August 1738. They unanimously find him guilty, but recommend him to the royal mercy. The Lord Lieutenant endorses this plea, and Santry is pardoned under the great seal on 17 June. His estates, which had been forfeited for life, will be restored in 1741

1880 - The Royal University of Ireland is founded by charter

1904 - Cecil Day-Lewis, poet, novelist, critic, and Ireland's poet laureate from 1968 to 1972, is born in Ballintogher, Co. Sligo

1920 - Georgina Frost wins a legal battle to allow her to be clerk of the petty sessions for Sixmilebridge and Newmarket-on-Fergus, Co. Clare; she is thus the first woman to hold public office from central government in the UK

1923 - De Valera announces end of operations against the Irish Free State, effectively ending the Irish Civil War

2001 - Ireland's foremost literary town officially opens a permanent home for its famous wordsmiths and their works. A 19th century Georgian house, in the heart of Listowel, has become the Kerry Literary and Cultural Centre, where life-size models and audio-visual presentations help portray the personalities and output of various writers. The £1.5 million centre is appropriately named Seanchaí after the art of storytelling and in recognition of the folklore and traditions that inspire great literature.

April 28

1714 - Sir Wentworth Harman, MP for Lanesborough, 'coming in a dark night from Chapel-Izod, his coach overturning, tumbled down a precipice, and he dies in consequence of the wounds and bruises he received'

1864 - Birth of William Ellison, clergyman and the sixth director of the Armagh Observatory. On his appointment in 1918, he donates the original late nineteenth-century telescope to the Observatory - an 18-inch Newtonian reflector, made by the famous English telescope maker George Calver; for many years it is one of the largest telescopes in Ireland. During the 1920s and 1930s, Ellison and others use the telescope for observations of the planets and for taking spectral images of the stars, using a spectroscope to split the starlight into its constituent colours

1936 - The Daíl introduces a bill awarding pensions to the Connaught Rangers who mutinied in India in 1920

1998 - Some 30 years after waiting on Eamonn De Valera and literary luminaries of the day in the Great Southern Hotel in Galway, 57-year old Rita Gilligan from Bohermore is presented with an honorary MBE

by UK Culture Secretary, Chris Smith, at London's Hard Rock Cafe where she has worked as a waitress for 27 years

2000 - It is announced that 100 free bicycles will be placed on the streets of Dublin for the Heineken Green Energy Weekend. The free bicycles will be placed outside Trinity College, outside Dublin Castle and at the top of Grafton Street and will be available to anyone wishing to cycle around the city to take in the atmosphere of the Festival

April 29

1665 - Birth of James Butler, 2nd Duke of Ormonde and an ancestor of Princess Diana. The Dublin-born Irish general becomes one of the most powerful men in the Tory administration, governing England in the early part of the 18th century - from 1710 to 1714

1680 - The first stone of the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham is laid by the Duke of Ormonde

1916 - Pearse orders surrender of the Easter Rising rebels on this date. Approximately 64 rebels have been killed, 132 crown forces, and 230 civilians. 2,500 people have been wounded; the centre of Dublin has been devastated by the shelling

2001 - A monument is unveiled in Inniscarra, Co Cork, in honour of an Ulster chief who could have changed the history of Europe if he hadn't been killed in battle. Chief of Fermanagh, Aodh Mag Uidhir (Hugh Maguire) is shot dead during an ambush in 1600 at Carrigrohane before the Battle of Kinsale the following year, which sees the last struggle for an independent Gaelic Ireland fail. "Maguire was a great strategist, and some believe that had he survived, the result of the Battle of Kinsale might have been different, changing the course of European history. He was the Rommel of the 1600s," says Seán O' Ceallacháin of the Hugh Maguire Commemoration Committee

April 30

1428 - Sir John Sutton, Lord Dudley, is appointed lieutenant for two years from this date; he has some success against the various rebels

1795 - Rev. William Jackson of the United Irishmen returns from France, unaware that his travelling companion, John Cockayne, is a spy; Jackson is arrested and found guilty of high treason; he commits suicide in the dock by taking poison

1942 - Because of petrol rationing, all private motoring in Ireland is banned, and bicycle thefts soar overnight

1951 - The first demonstration of television in Ireland is held at the Spring Show in the RDS, Dublin

1970 - "B-Specials" reserves within the Royal Ulster Constabulary formed to contain violence in 1933 (but notoriously violent in their own right) are disbanded