

# MISSION

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Photo: Melissa Mannion

## *General meeting decides not to hold gym membership referendum*

*By Richard Manton*

On 9th March, a general meeting of the Students' Union was called to discuss the proposal for universal gym membership. The meeting decided that the issue would not be put to a referendum this academic year.

The meeting was called by Clubs Captain, Eric Coleman-Brockie, by gathering a petition of 200 student signatures. The proposal called for a €100 increase in the student levy to cover universal student gym membership in NUIG and the meeting discussed whether a referendum should be held immediately.

Coleman-Brockie argued that the proposal should be put to referendum immediately and (should it pass) be introduced immediately. SU President, Peter Mannion, argued that the idea is premature and that the issue should be revisited in the future.

Coleman-Brockie raised points such as the possibility of further increases in student fees next year resulting in decreasing student numbers, the urgency of gym access and the possibility that if the referendum is not held immediately, that it may never be held.

## *Connolly, Healy and Grant elected to SU Exec* By Méabh McDonnell

On Friday 11th March, Emmet Connolly, Conor Healy and Brian Grant were elected to the Students' Union Executive 2011/12 in the positions of President, Education Officer and Welfare Officer respectively. The total number of votes cast was over 3,300 - a higher poll than that of last year and potentially the highest ever.

VP / Welfare Officer was the first of the positions to be counted, with Brian Grant, Conor Keane and Abby Noyce as the three candidates. Following the elimination of RON, the candidates stood with Grant at a considerable lead, Noyce in second and Keane in third position. After the decision was made to eliminate Keane, his votes were transferred over to Grant and Noyce. The transfers gave Grant enough votes to reach the quota and he was deemed elected.

The count to elect the VP / Education Officer followed. This was the election with the largest amount of candidates - five: Conor Healy, Conor Stitt, Conor Kelly, Paddy Melia and David McLoughlin. The first count saw Stitt, Healy and Melia within 150 votes of one another. The decision to eliminate RON, McLoughlin and Kelly was taken, those having the lowest amount of votes. Following the distribution of their transfers, no candidate reached the quota, and therefore the next lowest polling candidate, Melia, was eliminated and his transfers distributed between Stitt and Healy. Although in second place on the first count, Healy benefitted from transfers and was deemed elected on the third count. Finally, the count of the votes for President took place. The first count placed the candidates in the following...

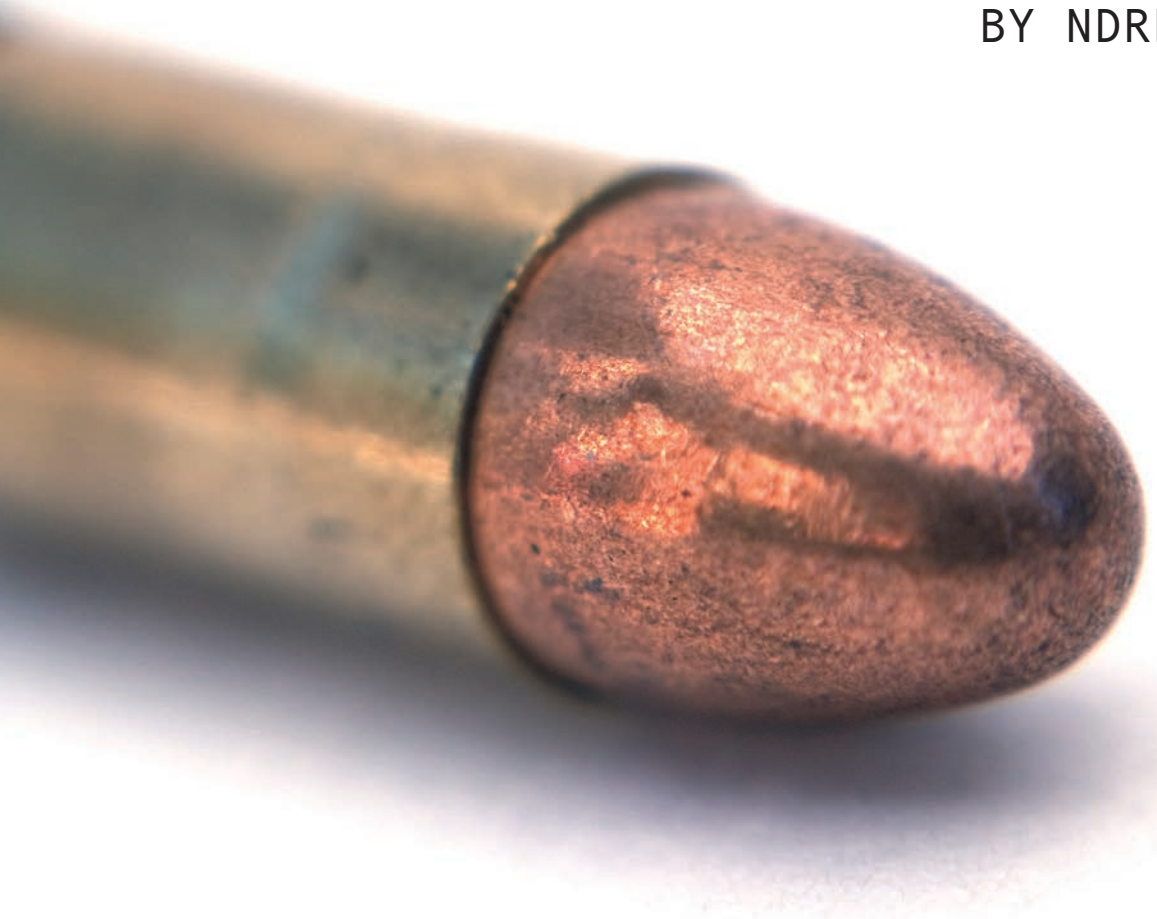
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# THE GHOSTS OF REVENGE

## A PAGE FROM MY DIARY AS AN INTERPRETER...

### BY NDREK GJINI



25th August 2005. It was 1:20AM when my phone rang. A lady from 'Lionbridge', a translation company in Dublin, after apologizing for the inconvenience at this late hour of the night, asked me if I could take an assignment at 9:30 in the morning at Stepside Garda Station in Dublin. She said that a young man from Albania had handed himself in to the police after he killed a barman. "The detectives want to question him, but he has a very little English. We need your help please", she said. "Yes", I replied, "I'll take it". I woke up early and arrived there at 9:15AM.

A young Irish lady was waiting outside the front door of the Stepside Garda Station. "I am Kate, Kate White, are you the Albanian interpreter?" she asked. "Yes", I said. "Can you please give these cigarettes to Besnik Biba", she asked me. "I am not allowed, but I will ask the police officer to do so", I answered. A police officer waiting there on the front door announced, "Take, take them, and give to me, I will bring them to Besnik, no problem".

I spent four hours inside the Stepside Garda Station, but I cannot disclose what was said in there. Instead, I will tell you Besnik's story:

"You should go and kill Duda's son, ok, you should! You are a man now, do you listen to me or not! We can't live any more with this shame. The entire village is talking about how we are not brave enough to fulfill the obligation of Kanun. Revenge is blessed by God. Murat Duda had murdered two of your brothers. I resent being served coffee and brandy with a bullet in the cup or glass. This is shame for me, shame

for my family, and even shame for all our tribe". This was Besnik Biba's father talking to Besnik, when he was just sixteen years old.

"No", Besnik had said, "No. Never", and his eyes were covered in tears. "I can't, you know that Murat Duda only has two sons. After Murat was put in jail, one is gone abroad and the other one is my close friend, we went to school together. I can't, believe me, I can't." He stood up, walked towards the door and left. He had disappeared.

After eight months, Besnik rang his family telling them that he had settled very well in Rome. His mother cried every time she talked to him. Besnik's father was always very blunt with him. He, always blamed Besnik for the shame that he brought on the family by being not brave enough to kill one of Murat's sons. He never forgot to finish by saying that he is still being served coffee and brandy with a bullet in the cup or glass. These words were a nightmare for Besnik.

After working for many years as a builder, last year Besnik started studying architecture in Sapienza University in Rome. There he met Kate White, a first year Irish student from Dublin. They fell in love. When the summer exams were over, Kate invited Besnik Biba to Dublin for holidays. He spent nearly two months at her house.

Yesterday, Besnik got a call from his father. He told Besnik that Murat Duda's oldest son works as a barman in Johnnie Fox's pub, situated in Glencullen on top of the Dublin Mountains. He said he has arranged everything for him.

He gave Besnik the address of another Albanian man where he had to go and get a revolver "for free". He said to Besnik that he couldn't live with shame. Kanun, revenge, blood feud, killing, many of those words were fired like bullets towards Besnik's ears that night. He was feeling dizzy. The last words, he heard from his father were: "Listen to me my son, if you are not going to do this right now, I will kill myself tonight. Everything is ready, everything, Ok. You have to do it. I cannot take the shame any longer. Go. If you are my son, go now, now, Ok".

Besnik started crying. He went to a shop, bought a bottle of whiskey, and drank it. Got a taxi went to that Albanian man, got the revolver, and after that straight way to the Johnnie Fox's pub. He entered the pub, ordered a double whiskey and sat on a table. "Is there an Albanian barman working here?" he asked a young waiter. "Yes", replied the waiter pointing at a tall man behind the bar. Besnik Biba went there. "Are you Murat Duda's son?", he asked. "Yes, I am indeed", replied the man behind the bar with a big smile on his face. "I am Besnik Biba", said Besnik vociferously, and took out the revolver, shooting at him five times.

"At least my father will feel proud of me now", he murmured to himself, and ran to the taxi, which was waiting outside. He told the taximan to bring him as soon as he could to the nearest Garda Station. Besnik handed himself in, gave the revolver to the Gardaí and told them that he had just killed a barman in Johnnie Fox's pub.

When I finished interpreting, while walking towards my car, parked outside Stepside Garda Station, I saw Kate White again. She was still there outside, waiting....

Kate White was pregnant. "A baby is going to be born soon", I said to myself, while entering my car. "He will have Albanian blood, but not the Albanian 'blood feud'. Maybe, he will hold an Albanian name, but not the Albanian revenge. Perhaps he will learn the Albanian language, but not the Albanian Code of Kanun. He will never be served with coffee or brandy with a bullet in a cup or glass. Thank God for this".

I was lost, talking to myself, without even realising.