

LIMERICK

**POST**

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**Tantamount to kidnapping**

THOSE among us who are blessed with having a little furry friend in our homes know only too well the happiness and comfort they bring. And as couples increasingly delay having children to later and later in their lives, the place a dog is beginning to enjoy in Irish households is becoming all the more cherished, becoming in essence, replacements for babies. For many people, cats and dogs are now as important and as loved as our own children.

And so it is with horror that we learn following the theft of a Yorkshire Terrier pup this week (See page 7) that to steal a dog is not an offence. Your only hope really can be that if your dog is stolen, pray that he was wearing his collar at the time. Only then, apparently, can the perpetrator be brought to answer for the crime of larceny.

But while there are admittedly many problems facing our legislators at present, protecting our furry companions should surely be put on the agenda at least. Considering the fact that pain on the loss of a pet can be tantamount (for some) to losing a child, there are those among us who would say that there is no difference between stealing our dogs and kidnapping our children.

If there is to be any link between the punishment and the pain suffered by the victim, then surely, legislation to, at the very least, criminalise the stealing of a dog, should be introduced.

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**Intimidation laws****McCourt blames Bishop for ban on church scenes**

By Marie Hobbins

LIMERICK's Pulitzer-award winner, Frank McCourt, whose top-selling book, *Angela's Ashes* is due to go on general release later this year, is accused by Minister of State, Willie O'Dea TD of "stirring things up in order to boost his upcoming film."

The Minister was referring to McCourt's assertion in an article carried by the *Los Angeles Times* that permission to film in the Redemptorist church had been refused by the Order.

The author also claims that although the Franciscan Order was the most favourably disposed towards filming, all of the city's other churches and Bishop Donal Murray ruled this out.

Speaking from New York on Monday to RTE broadcaster, Joe Duffy, McCourt appeared philosophical about the issue.

"I can understand the Bishop's ruling on this and I'm definitely not anti-clerical - the required church scenes were subsequently shot in an Oblate church in Dublin," he told Joe Duffy.

Saying that during previous visits to the city he had felt the Redemptorist Order would not object to filming scenes

within their Limerick Church, McCourt added:

"However, that was before they read the book and then there was a backlash, like there was from people on the streets of Limerick who told me to my face that I had disgraced the city."

Asserting that the author's remarks at this-time were calculated to gain publicity for the film version of his work, Minister O'Dea said Limerick had bent over backwards to facilitate the film-makers and that there had been huge pride among city people that both the book and the film were-making Limerick known on an international scale.

"There had been a certain amount of resentment over aspects of the bestseller but also a great deal of pride that one of our own had made it to the top of the international booklist," said the Minister.

During the radio interview with Joe Duffy, McCourt said the £25million film, which had been expected to premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in April will, in fact be premiered in New York on September 21

Praising the film's casting and in particular the role of Robert Carlyle as his father, McCourt admitted to being

disappointed that

Liam Neeson, "whose mother lives next to my Aunt in Ballymena," did not get the role of my father."

Asked by Duffy why the star of Michael Collins did not secure the role, McCourt said "he is too big a star and they weren't prepared to pay him what he looked for."

McCourt who is currently finishing his second book, "which is mostly about my teaching in New York," said:

"It finally hit me that the whole era of Limerick, written about in *Angela's Ashes* was over when I couldn't find a lane in the city, nor a scabby nose or a shawly woman." Pointing out that the Bishop does not have control over the Religious Orders in the city, diocesan secretary, Fr Michael Wall said he felt his office had been entirely co-operative with meeting requests from the film crew.

"Requests to provide facilities at St Munchin's and St Joseph's churches were met by us and Dan Baragry of the Redemptorist Order here didn't make the church available - his reason is: 'the church is sacred space - we don't allow it to be used for commercial purposes.'"

**DIARY DATES****THURSDAY 11**

**WORLD** Day of the Sick has theme Hope in the Face of Suicide; ceremonies in churches citywide.

**LAST** day of Tridium in Lady of Lourdes Church, 7pm.

**CONRADH** na Gaeilge is calling a public meeting re use of the Irish language in Limerick during Seachtain na Gaeilge, March 10-17. Sa Chistin, 8.30pm; T: 417895.

**LIMERICK** City Gallery of Art at City Hall, Merchant's Quay continues The Perfect Family exhibition; sculptures and installations by Janet Mullarney.

**FRIDAY 12**

**NOSTALGIC** Melodies is the Ard Scoil Ris Parents' Association fundraising concert at UCH; with Ronan Tynan, Marie Walshe, Voices of Limerick Choir and The Barrack Street Concert Band. 8pm, tickets at 331549 and Savins.

**SCRIBBLERS'** Writer group meets at Nestor's Cafe-Bar, O'Connell Street, 11.30am.

**ADULT** Children of alcoholic and dysfunc-

5pm; £3 first

tion. **HAPPY** Together the 8pm Belltab Club feature, n 1997 by Hong based director Kar Wai. £25 for season; £20 319866.

**AIFREANN**

Gaeilge, 10.30 failte roimh ca Eaglais N. Micheal, Den St.

**MONDAY 14**

**THE** Cripple Inismaan (play) Martin McDonou Players under actor John A. Mu direction. Bel nightly at 8pm.

**LE** Trio de Guilde Paris, prese by the Depart of Languages Cultural Studies, play in City I Merchant's Quay 8pm. Tickets £5 £3.

**TUESDAY 16**

**ARTSPEAK '99** sends visual artist Mullarney talking King John's Castle 8pm; £3. Organised Corporation Belltable.

**WEDNESDAY 17**

**LIMERICK** Support Group carers of schizophrenia meet at Garda Club, Sex Street, 8pm; fi Wednesday mont Contact Cynt 416166

**BIBLE** meetings held in Villiers Sch North Circular Ro