

Author Hannan to stir up fresh McCourt row with new book

McCabe killers to stay in jail

By IAIN DEMPSEY

GOVERNMENT sources were this week insisting that the killers of Det Garda Jerry McCabe will not be released as part of the IRA's decommissioning deal.

Speculation was rife in Limerick following this week's historic move by the IRA—who announced that they had destroyed a large part of their arsenal in a bid to save the peace process—that the Adare killers would be released as a result.

While the family of Jerry McCabe refused to comment this Wednesday morning, it is well known that Mr McCabe's widow Ann is determined that her husband's killers should not be released early under any circumstances.

But some commentators are saying that a condition of the latest move is that all IRA prisoners be released, as discussed under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

Minister for Justice John O'Donoghue spoke on local radio in Kerry this Wednesday, re-iterating the Government line that Mr McCabe's killers are not eligible for release under the agreement.

A Department of Justice source said: "The Government stance on the issue hasn't changed. There is no way they are going to accede to Sinn Féin's wishes on this one."

At the time of going to press there was nobody available at Sinn Féin for comment.

Four men are currently being held in Castlereagh Prison in County Roscommon for the manslaughter of Jerry McCabe.

They are Pearse McCauley 34, from Strabane, Co Tyrone; Michael O'Neill 46, of Lisheen Park, Patrickswell; Kevin Walsh 42, of Lisheen Park, Patrickswell, and Jeremiah Sheehy 36, of Abbey Park, Patrickswell.

Mr McCauley and Mr Walsh got 14 years each, Mr Sheehy 12 years and Mr O'Neill 11 years.

A fifth man, John Quinn 30, of Faha, Patrickswell, was jailed for six years for conspiracy to rob.

By EUGENE PHELAN

CONTROVERSIAL writer and broadcaster Gerard Hannan will later next month publish a new book which claims that Frank McCourt's allegations of his mother's sexual relationship with her first cousin was "unlikely."

"No this is not an anti-McCourt book. There is a complete section given to the brothers McCourt, but essentially it is a history of Limerick storytelling from the days of historian Maurice Lenihan to Patrick Bard of Thomond Hogan, Kate O'Brien, Sean Bourke and Jim Kemmy," the author said this week.

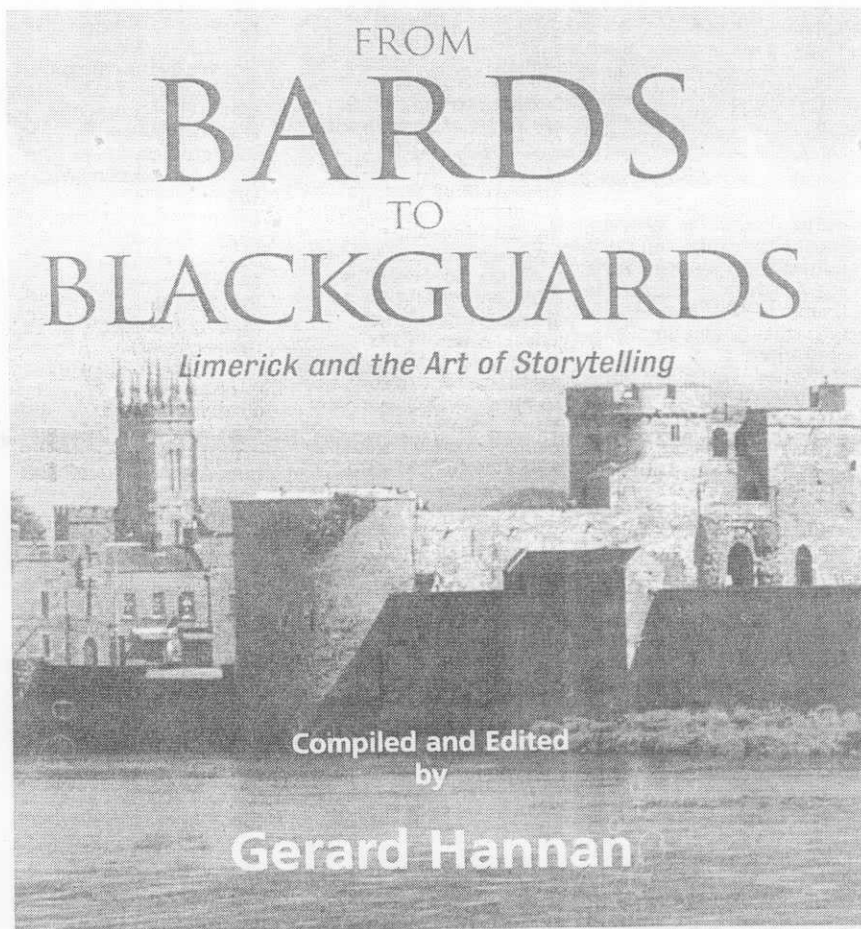
The book, *From Bards to Blackguards*, will hit the bookshelves from November 10, with the author feeling that this is the best of his work to date.

In many ways it seems Mr Hannan is obsessed with Frank McCourt and has carried out extensive research to show errors in his Pulitzer prizewinning book *Angela's Ashes*.

In 1997 he published *Ashes* and two years later *Tis in me ass*, in response to Frank McCourt's novels that were worldwide bestsellers.

Mr Hannan has been a long time critic of Frank McCourt and it is his chapters on the McCourt brothers which will receive most attention from critics and readers.

He says that he proves in his new book many "fabrications" in *Angela's Ashes* "including new information that disputes Frank McCourt's allegations of his mother's alleged sexual relation-



Ger Hannan's latest book, *From Bards to Blackguards*, which will be published in November

ship with her first cousin, Laman Griffin, and new evidence that Frank McCourt was never resident at the addresses he given in his account of his life.

He writes at length about his favourite Limerickman Richard Harris, who is described as the

quintessential local storyteller.

"I gave as much space, if not more, to Harris as I did to McCourt but I am sure that won't protect me from the pro-McCourtiers who see me as an opportunist and a failed cashier on the author's success," he said.

And he denied making money on Frank McCourt's coat-tails.

"I have heard stories that I am worth thousands of pounds and that I am cleaning up, but all I have to say to that is that I wish my bank manager knew something about it," said Mr Hannan.

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