

IRISH OPEN AT TRUMP'S DOONBEG A BAD LOOK FOR GOLF

Justine McCarthy
Opinion



I was first prescribed an antidepressant by a GP in 2011 during a very difficult spell. I vividly remember her quipping, 'It's the one Princess Diana was on'

Emer McLysaght
Arts&Ideas



HOW WILL BUDGET 2026 HELP YOUNG FAMILIES?

Cliff Taylor
Smart Money

US on brink of fretful future as Americans reel from shock of gruesome assassination



Keith Duggan
Washington Correspondent

FBI releases footage of potential suspect as intense manhunt continues for killer of Charlie Kirk

September 11th will forever be a sombre date across the United States but, as yesterday's commemorations reflected on that terrible event from the distance of 24 years, an intense manhunt continued for the killer of prominent Trump loyalist and conservative activist Charlie Kirk.

The 31-year-old was shot to death at a public event on Wednesday. Not for the first time, the US seemed caught between a harrowing past and a fretful future.

The horrifying assassination of the Chicago-born self-styled Christian conservative and provocateur of the liberal agenda occurred as he spoke to a college gathering of 3,000 people in Utah. The shock and condemnation swirls with vengeful discourse and concern over how political leaders navigate the poisonous ideological atmosphere in the months and years ahead.

Because Kirk was the star of the organised "American Comeback" tour in the open-air arena at Utah Valley University, hundreds of camera phones were trained on him and captured the gruesome seconds when a single bullet fired from a high-powered rifle ended his life. In a terrible irony, Kirk, who was a steadfast advocate for the Second Amendment right to bear arms, had just been asked a question about just that subject.

"Do you know how many mass shooters there have been



A vigil is held for Christian conservative activist and Trump advocate Charlie Kirk in Seattle, Washington.

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID RYDER/GETTY

in America over the last 10 years?" came the question from the crowd.

Kirk, picking up the microphone responded, "Counting or not counting gang violence?"

And then the shot rang out. No arrest has been made, but yesterday the FBI released grainy still footage of a "person of interest", a young man of college age wearing baseball cap, sunglasses and a black long-sleeve T-shirt with an indistinct print on the front.

The FBI is offering up to \$100,000 for information leading to the identification and arrest of the person.

The manhunt draws obvious

parallels with the search last November for Luigi Mangione, who is accused of killing healthcare chief executive Brian Thompson in that year.

In a coldly furious speech delivered in the Oval Office on Wednesday evening, US president Donald Trump alluded to that killing, along with the assassination attempt on his own life in Butler, Pennsylvania last July. He placed the blame for Kirk's death on the rhetoric and actions of those ideologically opposed to Kirk's deeply conservative and western-oriented vision of America.

'Dark moment'
"This is a dark moment for America. Charlie Kirk travelled the nation joyfully engaging with everyone interested in good faith debate. On campuses nationwide he championed his ideas with courage, logic, hu-

mour and grace," Trump said.

"It is long past time for all Americans and the media to confront the fact that violence and murder are a consequence of demonising those with whom you disagree, day after day, year after year in the most hateful and

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Keith Duggan

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despicable way possible.

"For years those on the radical Left have compared wonderful Americans like Charlie to Nazis and the world's worst mass murderers and criminals. This kind of rhetoric is directly responsible for the terrorism we are seeing in our country today and it must stop right now."

To American conservatives and Trump's Muga movement, Kirk, who was married with two young children, was a folk hero. Now, he becomes a martyr of that cause.

Many millions of other Americans found his political views troubling and even reprehensible. But in the crowded world of podcasting and influencing, Kirk's distinguishing trait was his willingness and appetite to meet adversaries and to debate and engage with them civilly. That openness cost him his life. "It happened on a college cam-

pus, where the open exchange of opposing ideas should be sacrosanct," observed George W Bush, the US president on the day of 9/11, in paying tribute to Kirk. "Violence and vitriol must be purged from the public square. Members of other political parties are not our enemies: they are our fellow citizens."

But that simple truth has become lost even as the US remembered the day when it was fiercely united in its mourning and voice.

Mandelson and Mitchell 'wrote on Epstein card'

ARTHUR BEESLEY
Current Affairs Editor

The sprawling Jeffrey Epstein scandal has claimed a new casualty after the disclosure of "reprehensible" emails led to the sacking of UK Labour peer Peter Mandelson as Britain's ambassador to Washington.

Mr Mandelson featured in a 2003 scrapbook of 50th birthday greetings to the disgraced financier and sex offender which included a handwritten note from George Mitchell, the former US senator who brokered the 1998 Belfast Agreement.

Downing Street criticised "reprehensible" Mandelson emails to Epstein after his 2008 conviction for soliciting prostitution from a minor. Mr Mandelson had offered support to Epstein, saying "I think the world of you" and that he was "furious about what has happened".

The Epstein birthday book was made public by a US House of Representatives committee examining files from investigations into Epstein's abuse of girls and women.

Mr Mitchell, now 92, was known previously to have had some links with Epstein but denied any knowledge of his crimes.

New light is cast on their friendship by his inclusion in a scrapbook that also includes a suggestive note apparently written by US president Donald Trump.

"The beginning of a new year is a good time to count our blessings. Among mine is your friendship," Mr Mitchell allegedly wrote to Epstein in January 2003.

"During that time you've

been a good friend. I'm grateful for that and what I hope will be many more years of your friendship... Now that you have reached a critical milestone, I hope you will intensify your activities in the widest possible range of issues, especially in the field of science where you've already done so much."

Mr Mitchell was first drawn into the affair in 2020 when a 2016 deposition by Epstein accuser Virginia Giuffre was made public.

Ms Giuffre, a sex-trafficking victim who died in April, named Mr Mitchell among the men she was forced to have sex with by Ghislaine Maxwell.

Released documents

Mr Mitchell denied meeting, speaking with or having any contact with Ms Giuffre. "The allegation contained in the released documents is false," he told the BBC.

The Irish Times spoke with an official in Mr Mitchell's office at law firm DLA Piper seeking his comment on the Epstein birthday book but none was provided.

Still, a representative for Mr Mitchell told the Portland Press Herald that he "stands by" prior statements on Epstein.

"During the time he knew Epstein, he had no knowledge of Epstein's actions involving underage girls," the representative said. "He first learned of those actions through published reports of Epstein's prosecution in Florida. He never had any contact with Mr Epstein again."

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Lotto enabled excluded gamblers to open new accounts

MARTIN WALL
Public Policy Correspondent

More than 100 National Lottery players who had opted to permanently exclude themselves from its games were allowed, due to an inadvertent error, to open new accounts and purchase tickets collectively worth more than €3,200.

In some cases the players, who had wanted to exclude themselves from the lottery, received marketing emails from the operator.

Minister for Public Expendi-

ture Jack Chambers said in this case, which happened in 2022, the regulator of the lottery had withheld funds of €150,000 from the operator.

He said this case was one of 10 incidences of breaches of the National Lottery licence since the system was introduced in November 2014.

Lottery operator Premier Lotteries Ireland (PLI) said yesterday it fully accepted the decision of the regulator in 2022 to issue a financial penalty as a result of the incident.

It said it recognised it did not

meet the high standards of player protection to which it held itself accountable.

In reply to a parliamentary question tabled by Aidan Farrell of the Social Democrats, Mr Chambers said in 2022 the online accounts of 126 players who opted for permanent self-exclusion "were inadvertently deleted by an algorithm designed to delete closed accounts after two years (to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations) thus permitting those players to open a new account".

The Minister said 16 individuals opened new accounts, of whom 10 purchased tickets totalling €3,292 and four received marketing emails.

The Minister said the 16 accounts were closed. In addition the overall 126 deleted accounts were recreated as permanently self-excluded accounts.

"The GDPR algorithm was amended to not include accounts subject to permanent self-exclusion. Existing controls to prevent any self-excluded player from opening another account were tightened."

Mr Chambers said the regulator issued a statutory direction to the operator "which had the effect of (a) enhancing the controls supporting self-exclusion and (b) empowering the regulator to seek a financial sanction by the High Court on the operator for any future noncompliance with its self-exclusion obligations".

"The regulator withheld €150,000 in payments due to the operator and transferred this amount to the exchequer for good causes," the Minister said.

Weather

Cool and breezy day with sunshine and showers, some heavy. Highest temperatures of 13-16 degrees.

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Business This Week

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Inflation: Headline inflation in the Irish economy rose to 2 per cent in August, up from 1.7 per cent the previous month.

Sports Friday

Women's rugby: Aoife Wafer is set to return from injury to feature for Ireland in Sunday's World Cup quarter-final against France. Page 13

Golf: Patrick Reed believes it 'unnecessary' that his fellow Americans will be paid for participation in the Ryder Cup. Page 14

