

ABUSE SURVIVOR TELLS BRAVE STORY OF ESCAPE



MONSTER

Orme regularly battered Samantha

EXCLUSIVE by **STEPHEN BREEN**
Crime Editor

A BRAVE woman who was beaten and strangled by her ex-partner exposed his evil actions by documenting them in a secret folder on her phone.

Samantha Lavin, 26, waived her right to anonymity to reveal how her encrypted notes outlined Patrick Orme's sickening assaults and coercive control between 2016 and 2018. During her terrifying ordeal, Samantha also recorded images of bruising to her body after she was beaten by the thug.

But Orme's abuse is now at an end after he received a two-year sentence, with the last six months suspended, at Castlebar Circuit Court, after subjecting Samantha to a "cruel, degrading and violent regime" during their relationship.

Orme, 27, from Derrynamuck, Ballina, Co Mayo, who also accused his former partner of being a "liar" before pleading guilty to three counts of assault causing harm, is now being held in Castlereagh Prison. Following his sentence, Samantha spoke for the first time to reveal her trauma.

She said: "I was beaten, strangled and thrown against a wall – but I am now out the other side.

"Just when the bruises would heal, he would give me fresh ones.

"We were only teenagers when we met and I didn't know anything about controlling behaviour. I always tried to see good in people.

Violence was escalating

"He also tried to destroy my character by telling everyone I was a liar but, in the end, he pleaded guilty because he'd no other choice due to the evidence against him.

"The outcome of the court process is vindication of my decision to come forward and my focus now is on rebuilding my life.

"Even if one woman speaks up about coercive control my decision to come forward will have been worthwhile."

Samantha also said: "I kept the folder on my phone because I had absolutely no idea when this abusive behaviour was going to stop.

"His violence was escalating and, although he kept saying sorry after every attack, I still kept these notes.

"My willpower was broken down due to his controlling behaviour, but when I finally left him and came forward, I knew I had the evidence to prove that I was telling the truth all along."

At Orme's sentencing hearing, Judge Eoin Garavan said: "His anger grew and the level of violence grew. The images of some of the injuries caused were horrific.

"Ms Lavin was subjected to a cruel, degrading and violent regime.

I was beaten, strangled and thrown against a wall, but evil ex won't silence me any longer

I accept that she is now an entirely different person.

"This man is a thug. He fully deserves prison and is the author of his own misfortune.

"He bullied and savagely assaulted her repeatedly.

"Her actions in coming forward can give hope to others."

The former couple met in 2015 when he was 18 and she was 17.

It wasn't until September 2016 when Samantha started to notice signs of his controlling behaviour.

And then it wasn't long before

Orme's abusive behaviour eventually turned to violence.

On one occasion in August, 2017, she was punched multiple times in the ribs, thrown against a wall and strangled.

The coward then jumped on top of her and grabbed her throat before she passed out.

On other dates that month, she was again punched and pinched on the arms and legs.

The abuse continued in July and August of that year before Samantha ended the relationship as she

punch" she has ever received and

suffered headaches two weeks after the unprovoked attack.

And in June 2018, she was again strangled and lifted off the ground by her throat.

The coward then jumped on top of her and grabbed her throat before she passed out.

On other dates that month, she was again punched and pinched on the arms and legs.

The abuse continued in July and August of that year before Samantha ended the relationship as she

punch" she has ever received and

said: "I did not want to go to my birthday party covered in bruises.

"I had spent far too long covering my bruises to family and friends.

"Even when I had ended the relationship there were multiple occasions when he would park his car across from mine.

"I do not live in Ballina now, however I still have this anxiety that I could come across someone linked to him."

He also tried to lie by telling me that my new partner was cheating on me and this was another form

of intimidation. The most difficult psychological effect I have suffered is feeling unsafe around men.

"I was constantly told by him that I was ugly and no one else would have me, but my determination to continue with the case has been completely vindicated."

The assault victim also paid tribute to the Garda investigation team, led by Det Garda Michael McGrath from Ballina Garda Station, for their support during her ordeal.

She added: "I can't commend the Gardaí enough for the way they han-

dled this case and they were with me every step of the way."

And she also praised her family and friends for their support after her decision to come forward.

She added: "I have had great support over the last six years and I would really like to thank all of my family and my friends for being with me all the way until the end of the judicial process."

The Co Mayo woman has also urged domestic violence and coercive control victims to contact Gardaí or other support groups including

Women's Aid for help. Samantha said: "It's extremely important that women of all ages, especially teenagers who might not be aware of controlling behaviour before it leads to violence, seek help at the earliest possible stage.

"It can be a very long and difficult road – but it is worth it in the end when victims are listened to and justice prevails."

Samantha also received praise from Sarah Benson, CEO of Women's Aid. Ms Benson said: "We would like to strongly commend the courage and

resilience of Samantha in pursuing this case and also in using useful strategies to gather evidence.

"Her actions are something that our national helpline explains to women about the need to document abuse in safe ways – because they can make all the difference in getting successful prosecutions."

● **Anyone who feels they are the victim of domestic violence and coercive control should contact Women's Aid freephone 1800 341900 or visit www.toointoyou.ie for further information.**

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Brave... Samantha gathered evidence to convict abusive Orme



● BRUTE CAGED OVER VIOLENCE



BANGED UP

Orme is currently languishing in Castlereagh Prison

● SAM STORED LOG ON PHONE



Cops... under attack

Assaults on gardai hit record numbers

By **JOHN KIERANS**

A RECORD 459 gardai were injured while on duty last year, new figures have revealed.

Many were hurt during the Dublin riots last November and it represents the biggest increase in violent attacks since records began.

In 2022, 347 cops were injured in the course of their duties, while the figure was just 266 in 2021, 223 in 2020 and 226 in 2019.

Justice Minister Helen McEntee is hopeful tougher sentencing, introduced in November, will halt the rises.

She said: "We increased the maximum sentence for assaulting emergency workers from seven to 12 years' jail.

"It sends a very clear message that attacks will not be tolerated."

She was responding to a written parliamentary question from the Aontu leader and Meath TD Peadar Toibin.



Surgery... scheme

336 ops abroad at cost of €11m

By **JOHN KIERANS**

A TOTAL of 336 Irish people have had surgical operations abroad so far this year at a cost to the State of €11.1million, the HSE has revealed.

Patients opted to do so under the Treatment Abroad Scheme as procedures were not available in this country or in the time normally necessary to get it done here.

It didn't specify the type of procedures.

But of those who applied, 29 people had their applications declined.

The HSE said Germany, Sweden, Belgium, Italy and France treated the most Irish patients.

It also revealed that 1,189 patients received treatment under the Cross Border Directive.

To qualify, you must be an Irish resident and entitled to public healthcare in Ireland.

A service user must pay for any healthcare they get abroad but can apply for reimbursement.