



LARISSA NOLAN

Straight talking...

Luke's Law might bring back Good Samaritans

IF you missed Elizabeth Hyde's interview on Upfront with Katie Hannon, then watch it back on the RTE Player.

Broadcaster Hannon is a model of composure, but she was close to tears listening to broken-hearted Elizabeth, whose son Luke drowned in the River Lee in Cork last month.

Luke, 34, died when onlookers too busy filming his death failed to come to his aid.

Lifebuoys next to where he entered the water were untouched, while gawkers recorded Luke in difficulty on their phones and uploaded the scenes on social media.

That's enough for me to back Elizabeth's call for Luke's Law, which would make it a criminal offence to record such an accident and share it online.

We need such legislation if this is what the world has become.

A fireman told the family he had never seen anything like it in 44 years' service; people had to be pushed out of the way for emergency workers to reach Luke.

Elizabeth cried when she said: "I can't get away from the vision of it. My

beautiful child drowning, while they were just videoing. He could be with me here today if someone had tried."

At the news, she ran out on the street in her bare feet, screaming: "Someone help me, my son is dead in the river. I know he was calling out for his mum before he died."

Who stands by and watches someone die a preventable death, filming

it for entertainment? Are they thinking about it differently now?

Has it hit them in the aftermath? Or have they forgotten Luke Hyde already?

It struck deep into my heart because I know that scene. I've run in bare feet in desperation.

I grew up beside Blessington Lake, a deceptively picturesque reservoir which claims lives every year. It's a man-made lake, with currents and sudden drops.

My father witnessed drownings on it that haunted him. Before I was a

teenager, I would too. In 1989, the Summer of Sixth Class, five of us went down to the lake and only four of us came back. My cousin and schoolmate, Alan Clarke, died in front of me that day.

He wasn't far out from the shore when he said: "I'm out of my depth" and slipped under the water.

Efforts were made to save him that nearly cost another life. I couldn't feel the lake's hot stones burning my soles as I ran to get help. But it was too late.

The impact was monumental. The whole town was shocked, a community in grief. His family could never be the same again. Neither were those of us with him.

None of us will ever forget Alan.

Drowning is usually silent and swift. Too often, it's young lads, like the two friends Emmanuel Familola, 16, and Matt Sibana, 18, who drowned in Donegal last month; or Max O'Connor in the Grand Canal at Kildare last year.

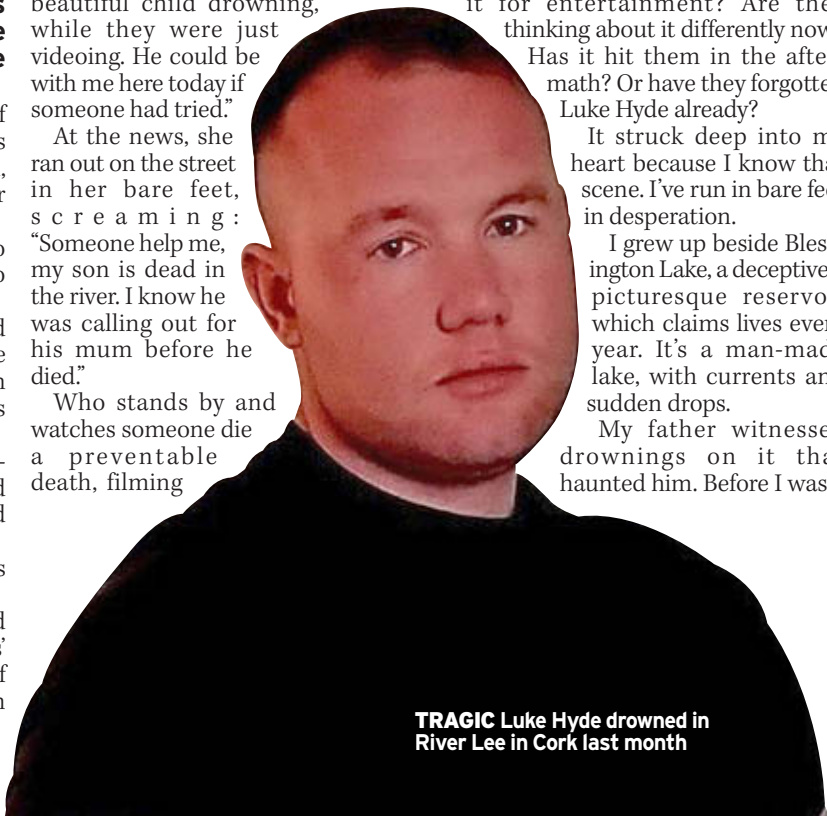
An average of 100 people a year drowned in Ireland over the past decade.

More will drown here over this summer. It's the second biggest cause of accidental death after road accidents.

It's never advisable to go into the water after someone, unless you have lifesaving skills. But you can act.

Irish Water Safety advises three actions, Shout, Reach, Throw. Shout to orientate the person back towards shore; reach with a stick or similar while you lie flat, and throw a ringbuoy or anything that floats.

Never reach for your phone to record it for likes and shares, a reaction devoid of humanity. I support the call for Luke's Law – make it a crime.



TRAGIC Luke Hyde drowned in River Lee in Cork last month

Rally puts Pressure on leaders

IF you care about housing, get to the massive protest outside Leinster House next month.

Opposition parties are organising the rally, to stand against the stealthy plan to remove Rent Pressure Zone caps.

It's good to see Sinn Féin, People Before Profit, Social Democrats and Labour coming together on this.

That Government would consider this, in a housing crisis where nationwide average rents have risen to €2,000 per month, tells you all you need to know.

The current cap is the only protection renters have against the kind of hikes that resulted in effective evictions.

The annual limit of 2% annual on rent is a basic measure to keep a lid on it. RPZs of 2% were only brought in in 2021, after rents were mad already.

It's ivory tower stuff to justify RPZ reform by saying it will attract investment into the rental market.

It shows those in power have no understanding of the housing crisis they say they want to solve. How could they? Unless you're the mug stuck paying half your wage to a landlord, it's hard to get it. If our comfortably off leaders ever had to live it for a while then they'd know.



RE-TURN TO OLD WAYS



IT'S one rule for Re-Turn and another for the rest of us.

We're the eejits running around the place to comply with this hare-brained scheme - collecting, storing, fetching, carrying, queuing and reverse vending, whenever the machines are actually working.

And for what?

Now it turns out nearly 90% of the plastic bottles and cans are being shipped around the world and not recycled domestically.

Re-Turn says the vast majority has to be transported abroad because it's not "financially viable" to recycle the containers into

new ones in Ireland. Of the 17,000 tonnes of plastic and cans collected, just 3,400 tonnes were recycled here.

What sincere environmentalist would be happy with that?

Sinn Féin's Matt Carty was right to describe it as a "scandal" that runs contrary to its entire environmental objective.

With a fleet of trucks on the road, machines in every shop and now the bottles and cans themselves being transported out of Ireland, it's counter-productive. There's no transparency on Re-Turn's finances and the company won't even release the CEO's salary.

Re-Turn seems to be hindering and not helping the environment. Pull the plug on this stupid scheme.

Lar's ZERO of the week

SKORTS Hopefully this fluffy controversy is over now, since the Camogie Association voted last week to allow players the option of wearing shorts instead.



Lar's HERO of the week

RAY GOGGINS Survival expert and ex-Irish army Ranger Ray Goggins is a formidable force on Uncharted, my absolute favourite show on TV right now. He's like the Cork Chuck Norris.

