

'Vicious Puska must never be able to kill again'

Eoin Reynolds

Ashling Murphy's mother Kathleen raised a framed picture of her daughter in salute to the jury that convicted the "vicious monster" who murdered her.

Speaking on behalf of the family, after Jozef Puska was yesterday found guilty of killing the 23-year-old schoolteacher, Ms Murphy's brother, Cathal, said she was subjected to "incomprehensible violence by a predator who was not known to her.

"While we do not glory in any conviction, we recognise the importance of holding accountable those who would commit such terrible atrocities." he said.

'The judicial process cannot bring our darling Ashling back, nor can it heal our wounds, but we are relieved that this verdict delivers justice. "It is simply im-

perative that this vicious monster can never harm another woman again.

Puska, aged 33, with an address at Lynally Grove, Mucklagh, Co Offaly, had pleaded not guilty to mur-dering Ms Murphy at Cappincur, Tullamore, Co Of-

faly, on January 12, 2022. He stabbed Ms Murphy 11 times in the neck and slashed her once with the edge of a blade before leaving her to die by the side of the canal towpath between Tullamore and Digby Bridge.

room," Mr Justice Tony Hunt told the jury after they delivered the unanimous guilty verdict shortly after 2pm. It took them just over two hours to reach a verdict after an 18-day trial.

The judge commended the jury, saying: "Quite literally,

you have made sure nobody got away with murder.

There was an audible sigh of relief from Ms Murphy's family and their supporters when the verdict was read out, and the family members embraced each other.

Puska, wearing a grey

Puska, he said, will have

jacket and white shirt with his long hair slicked back,

put his head down when the verdict was delivered.

He will be sentenced to the of life imprisonment on November 17. No motive has been offered for the killing.

Mr Justice Hunt told the jury that he agreed with their verdict, having listened to the same evidence: "I'm glad you didn't waste any more of your valuable time

with Puska's nonsense, because that's what it was. He said he was not referwho have "the most difficult job in this court".

"Even a person like Puska is entitled to put forward a defence," said Mr Justice Hunt, "and it's a really difficult job defending these

Speaking of the Murphy

family, he said: "Their position is unenviable. How their child was taken away, to conenough to make you physically ill."

He added that he hoped the family would provide a victim-impact statement to the court

Outside the court, Ms Murphy's brother, Cathal, thanked the members of the "Sitting through the har-

rowing evidence at this trial will be forever grateful for their patience and resilience throughout this incredibly difficult process," he said.

Ms Murphy's boyfriend, Ryan Casey, thanked gardaí, the prosecution, and the pub-lic for the support the family

condemn gender-based brutality with visceral repul-

"Ashley was a vibrant, intelligent, and highly moti-vated woman who embodied so many great traits and qualities of the Irish people

Ashling Murphy's mother Kathleen, sister Amy, and father Raymond outside court after Jozef Puska was found guilty of murdering Ashling, inset left. Inset below: Ashling's brother Cathal speaks on behalf of the family outside court Pictures: Collins Courts

of the Murphy

"From day one, the outpouring of love and sup-

port was felt in abundance

from the Irish people both at

a national and international

level as they stood in solida-

rity with our family to both

mourn the loss of our beauti-

ful, talented Ashling and to

and its communities Mr Casey said Ms Murphy's life had a "huge impact on so many of those around her and she was the epitome of a perfect role model for every little girl to look up to and strive to be.

"She was not only an integral part of our family but she was also a huge shining light in our community, a community in which, year in, year out, she gave back as best she could," he said. It has now emerged that

Mr Justice Hunt was unimpressed with Puska's approach to the trial. After the jury had begun their deliberations, he rejected com-plaints made by Puska's lawyers regarding what they called the judge's commentary on the evidence.

He said his comments were "restrained and moderate" and that "much stronger comment" could have been made in the case regarding Puska's

"carry-on in the aftermath" of Ms Murphy's murder and his evidence in court. He said that judges have a "perfect right to give a clearexpression of their opinion told the barristers

most no expression of opinion" other than to say that Puska's testimony in court was "remarkable, which it was", and that it "differed radically from what he had previously said, which it did".

Man and woman in 50s found dead at home

Gordon Deegan

A tight-knit rural community in Co Clare was last night trying to come to terms with an "unspeakable tragedy" after two bodies were found at a home in Kilnaboy, 4km north of Corofin.

Emergency services were called to the scene at 2.30pm yesterday, where they discovered body of a man in his 50s, outside the property, while the body of a woman, also in her 50s, was found in-

Last night, the bodies remained at the scene, which preserved pending the arrival of the Garda Technical Bureau. In a statement, gardaí said they were investigating all the circumstances.

Ennis-based Supt John Ryan said: "At the moment,

Cianan Brennan

breakthrough".

personally" with the Depart-

ment of Health to secure the

building of a new 10-bed

facility on the Owenacurra

site thereby "modernising it, retaining it in the town and

addressing some of the pre-

vious articulated concerns

that it would be further

The Owenacurra closure,

first mooted by the HSE in June 2021, has been the sub-

ject of an intense campaign

removed and isolated".

we don't know what hap-pened and we are just waiting for a determination as to what exactly happened and we will be guided by the

Technical Bureau.'

The couple are understood to have two adult children who were not at the property at the time.

Fianna Fáil councillor Joe Killeen said their the "deep sense of bewilderment and sadness in the area at the heartbreaking news".

He added: "There is pro-

found shock in the area that this tragedy has come to our door and to our area. The parish of Corofin and Kilnaboy is a very tight knit com-munity with great camaraderie and great support for families and individuals and the community will come in support of the families of those who have been in volved in this tragedy." Fine Gael senator Martin

Conway described it as "an unspeakable tragedy. "The community is absolutely devastated and coming to terms with the enormity of what has happened and obviously our thoughts and prayers with the family at this incredibly

difficult time," he said. Owenacurra 'breakthrough' as HSE plans to build facility on same site

come about without the relentless pressure of our campaign", Mr Quaide said, noting that as of December 2021 the HSE had had no plans to replace Owenacurra, thus leaving east Cork with no 24-hour staffed mental health services of Mr Quaide said "serious ethical questions remain' about the transfer of the other 14 residents from

Despite the breakthrough, Owenacurra over the past 30 months. At least one of them was transferred to St Stephen's Hospital in Glan-mire, far from the Midleton area and in a facility whose standards have faced heavy criticism from the mental health watchdog.

"I'm also concerned that the HSE is pushing ahead with a 50-bed long-stay facility on the isolated grounds of St Stephen's Hospital", Mr Quaid said, a plan he described as "a clear misdirection of funding" and a policy decision in contravention of the HSE's mental health policy 'A Vision for Change'.





AVAILABLE AT SKECHERS STORES NATIONWIDE

Turtles evade capture at the Lough

Eoin English

Flippery and very, very slippery—eight turtles living in Cork City's Lough have evaded capture for the second year in a row.

Cork City Council may have to shell out for a turtle whisperer to catch them.

We need to remove them because they are disrupting the native ecosystem here,' said the council's biodiversity officer, Rosemarie McDonald. "They could be eating the eggs of the native birds here

Meanwhile, The Lough's only remaining black swan, Phoebe, has been returned to the urban wildlife sanctuary after three weeks of medical treatment

IRISH EXAMINER 10.11.23

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse S Health Service Executive Campaigners hoping to save the Owenacurra mental health centre in Midleton, Co Cork, have praised a commitment by the HSE to build a new facility on the Owenacurra Centre same property as a "major HSE chief executive Bernlonad ard Gloster has written to Cork-based TDs telling Abhann na Cora them he intends to "engage

The Owenacurra Centre in Midleton: New mental health facility to be built on the site. Picture: Howard Crowdy

aimed at keeping the centre open. Just six residents remain in the facility of the 20 present when the HSE marked it for closure.

However, the centre, which the HSE has long insisted is not suitable structurally despite other mental health facilities in Cork receiving lower compliance ratings from the Mental Health Commission has never officially closed its doors in that time.

Mr Gloster told TDs that one house has been secured in the area for three of the six remaining residents, and a second property is the subject of negotiations for purchase by the HSE for the remaining three in the same locality. Local independent councillor and Owenacurra campaigner Liam Quaide described the news as a

'major breakthrough". This multi-million euro investment would not have