

# LIVING

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'There was a big, dark mess in his head to do with his childhood that he never came to terms with'

- Lindsey Carlos Clarke



IN THE BLACK PATH: Lindsey Carlos Clarke photographed by Bob Carlos Clarke © The Estate of Bob Carlos Clarke

Two years ago, Bob Carlos Clarke walked out of the Priory and in front of a speeding train. The Cork-born photographer, whose work was a Marquis de Sade-style celebration of female flesh, had for years struggled with his mental health. He left behind a wife and young daughter. In the wake of a new book about his life, **Barry Egan** remembers his friend and recalls his unusual life

**L**IKE his work, Bob Carlos Clarke was at his best playing the provocateur. Killing himself in 2006 was probably his most provocative act. And his most tragic.

Author Simon Garfield's new book *Exposure: The Unusual Life & Violent Death Of Bob Carlos Clarke* paints the Cork-born photographer as a contradiction as compelling as the pornographically charged black-and-white images he left behind. When the *Daily Telegraph* called his campaign in 2000 for Urban Stone jeans "the rudest ad ever printed," Bob couldn't hide his delight about the fuss. The graphic image featured two beautiful young women in an intimate embrace with a grateful young man. I was grateful to know Bob. In the 10 years I knew him, I had a friendship of sorts with him.

The whole point of erotic photography, he told me at the time, is that it should arouse people. And if it doesn't arouse people, then it doesn't work. "I'd be more offended," he grinned mischievously, "if they didn't think it was porn." In 2002, Bob showed me a copy of a private poem by his late father, Charles. These few lines typed on yellowing paper gave me an immediate insight into the background of the most controversial photographer ever to have come out of Ireland. Entitled *A Passing Thought*, the poem read: "Give me, for choice, a millionaire's daughter/ They always f\*\*\* well and

spend money like water/ It really is practically always a fluke/If you have any fun with the wife of a duke."

Whatever about a duchess, Charlie Carlos Clarke married the Fifth Earl of Ranfurly's daughter, Lady Eileen Maud Juliana Knox, on November 24, 1914. They divorced in 1935. The following year, he married his second wife, Countess de Pretrose. Eton-educated Charles, who had gained the rank of major in the service of the Royal Buckinghamshire Hussars and managed estates for the Duke of Marlborough, was acquainted with Wallis Simpson and the Prince of Wales and the upper echelons of British society. However, he was to scandalise that very society when in the early Forties, he began an affair with his personal secretary, Myra Dora Lynn, who was 30 years his junior. He would eventually leave his wife for her in 1947.

Charles and Myra escaped the moral furore and the unwelcome press attention by retreating to Schull where their first son, Bob, was born on June 24, 1950.

"They came to Ireland to get out of the spotlight because there was a lot of attention, and my father's son by his first marriage was kicking up a lot of fuss and unpleasant stuff was coming out in the papers," Bob told me in that provocatively posh English accent of his in 2002. "So they got out of England and took a caravan to west Cork. I believe it was the very first time that anyone had ever

seen a car-drawn caravan. It created a sensation. They set it up in Schull on the cliff-tops and stayed there for a year while he was divorcing the countess."

Bob Carlos Clarke inherited the seeming love of the mischievous from his father. When Bob was 16, he posted a bullet inside an envelope to a girlfriend who had written to him to say she was going to take her own life after he ended their relationship. The note inside said: "This one's on me."

The guards in Cork didn't see the funny side of it when the girl's parents notified them. His aunt Jessie, the Marchioness of Ormonde, told his mother: "Sadly, I can envisage nothing for Robert but prison."

"It was wonderful piece of cruelty," Bob recalled to me with a wicked laugh. It was another piece of cruelty, less wonderful however, that scarred Bob's young life forever perhaps... He was shipped off to boarding school in Dublin when he was eight. He never forgot the experience. In Garfield's new book, Bob's widow Lindsey says: "I always imagined there was a big, dark mess in his head to do with his childhood that he never came to terms with. But it was probably even worse than I expected. I mean, lots of people get sent away to school. Bob hated every moment of it, and everything about it. He wrote endlessly tear-stained letters home: 'Get me out of here, this is so awful.'

"His mother, Myra, didn't want Bob to be sent away to school," added Lindsey. "In fact, she thought it was the most terrible thing. And then she had Andrew, who was eight years younger than Bob. So Bob went away to school, got home and found somebody in his nest. He never got over it, never. He used to do terrible things to Andrew — terrible, terrible torturous things. You know, nail him into a box and roll him down a cliff. Wished he was dead."

The sad fact is, Bob is dead. On March 25, 2006, the mercurial Cork man (who is hardly known in Cork), who had been attending the Priory for three weeks, checked out of the hospital in south west London, before walking a short distance to a railway track at Barnes where at 11.33am he threw himself in front of the train to Windsor.

Lindsey visited the railway crossing with a girlfriend who burst into tears. "I just felt absolutely nothing," she says. "What I realise is that he must have done it in a split second. Bob had fantastic timing, and he must have had split-second timing because you have to go over the barrier and then into the train. It's two jumps."

Bob's 16-year-old daughter, Scarlett, discovered a quote by Bob from one of his books after he died. It read: "For the purposes of deification an early and appropriate death is essential. If you want to qualify as a legend, get famous young, die tragically and

Continued on page 3

FROM THE AUTHOR OF THE DAVINCI CODE

**TOM HANKS**  
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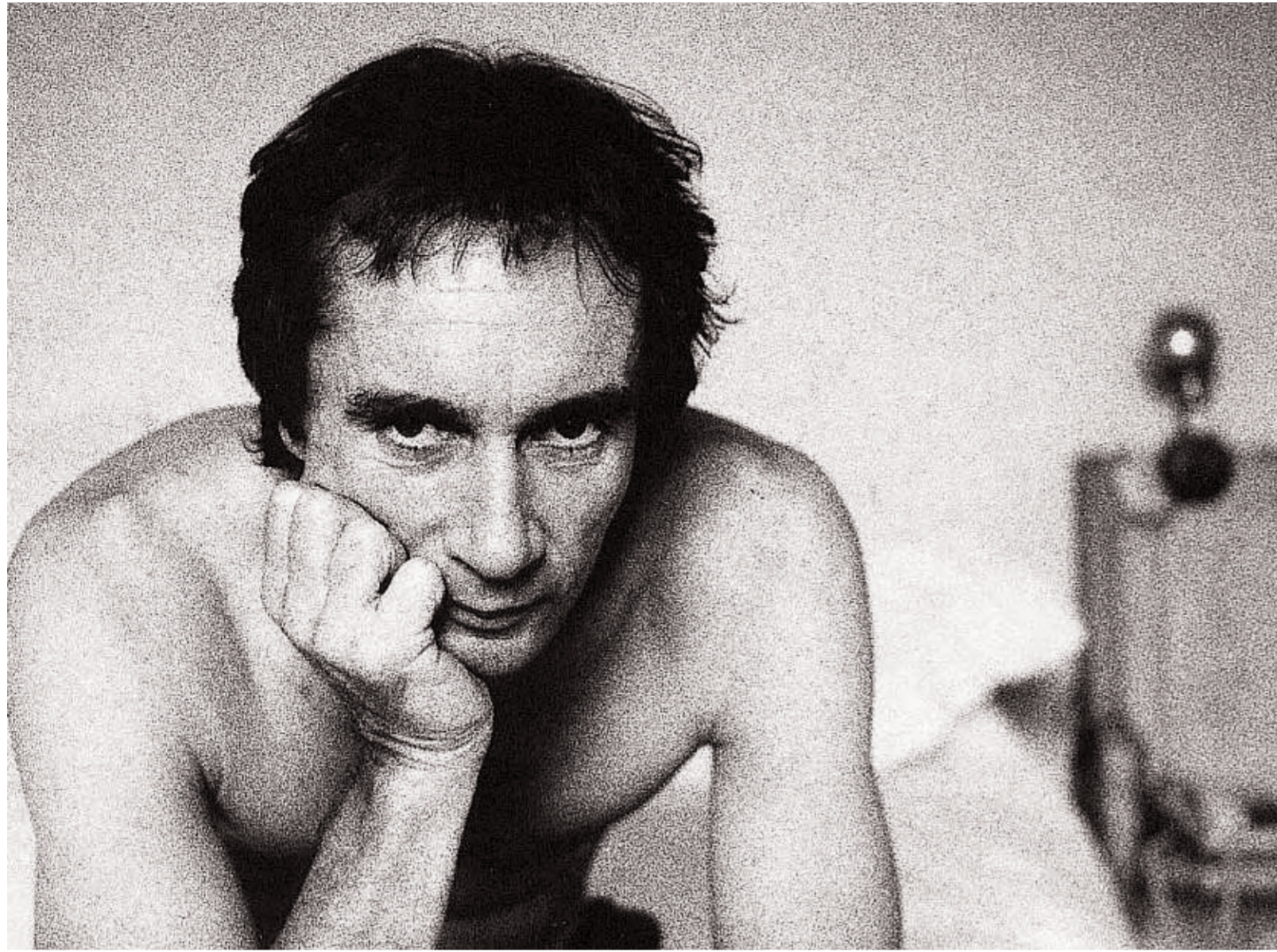
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**AT CINEMAS MAY 14**

# The Big Story

Colm O'Gorman's escape from a vacuum of horror  
Interview, Page 4



## The darker mind of Bob Carlos Clarke

From page 1  
dramatically and never underestimate the importance of your unrepeatable, irreplaceable, iconic photographs."

Dark of thought, Bob was more than at home in his dark room. When he photographed a beautiful young woman, he would think, "she'll age and crumble and yet I'll have her in my camera for ever". In 2004, in a bar in Chelsea before a Britney Spears concert he told me he didn't want to become an "old fart". He seemed frightened of getting old. One theory advanced as to why Bob killed himself was that he was depressed to be growing old while all his models always seemed to stay 21. He was becoming an old fart. "We saw Terence Donovan about a month before he killed himself," Lindsey said of the photographer who hanged himself in his study in November 1996. "And they'd given all sorts of reasons what they think happened there. But Terence had also come to the edge of a situation where he was no longer the happening photographer who could dance with the girls. But Bob could really have been the grand master. I remember Scarlett saying, 'If only Daddy would calm down, he would be so cool.'"

When Helmut Newton died in 2004 after leaving an iconic LA hotel and losing control of his Cadillac and crashing into a wall across the street — Bob told me: "If I could live that long and die in a Cadillac at the age of 83 coming out of Chateau Marmont — I can't think of anything cooler."

Cliche or not, he was Ireland's answer to Helmut Newton. He photographed a topless Caprice in black-leather gloves and a black mask, Rachel Weisz in rubber, Jordan suspended semi-naked by her ankles from the studio ceiling. Bob Carlos Clarke's work was a celebration — a dark Marquis de Sade-style celebration, albeit — of female flesh. He was 16 when he was first introduced to the pleasures of the flesh. This carnal introduction was generously provided by a Catholic girl two years his senior, in the cabbage patch on the Ardmore Cliffs.

"I enjoyed all two minutes of it," Bob told me over lunch in London in 2004. (Bob was always a pruriently entertaining lunch companion.) The red-haired Dublin girl in Cork for her summer hols was, he told me, "slightly brazen, upfront, none of this wilting Protestant shit. It was a relief." They arranged another rendezvous in the Metropole Hotel in Cork city the following week. The room cost

a pound which, said Bob, was lot of money for a young boy in 1966.

"I haven't had any Irish-women sexually since 1968, so I don't know how they've changed," he said in 2004. He told me in 2001 that he had met a woman from Crosshaven when he went home. "She was gorgeous and I said to her husband, 'If you get bored with her, can I have her?' He said: 'To marry her?' It had that straight-talking no-bullshit Cork thing and I found it very attractive."

He added that revisiting Cork — a place he had decidedly mixed emotions about anyway — brought back a lot of painful stuff from his childhood. "But the bad experiences made me who I am. Photography is a lonely thing. There is something singularly solitary about being a photographer," he said, adding that "a photographer is basically a loner. When I shoot a beautiful girl, it is my way of keeping her."

Bob once said he began to truly grasp the power of woman-ankind when he "was ripped from the bosom of his family in Cork for the first time for a long and bitter taste of all-male educational institutions. Of course I missed my mother and father desperately, but more significantly," he said, "I was to encounter so few females for the next 10 years that I actually began to look out for them, like a train spotter. In fact, sightings of attractive females were like spotting UFOs, rare, remote and very brief. From that interminable decade I can recall in detail every Close Encounter of the Woman Kind, for it was such encounters that sustained me, and reminded me that there was a life beyond boredom and brutality."

He saw the first glimpses of that life proper — and a possible career among woman-kind — at the various Cork Agricultural Shows in the late Sixties. Charles Carlos, who had an agricultural company, put the company's sexiest secretaries, recalled Bob, "on the shovels of the biggest tractors and put them up in the air for the crowd and the photographer for the *Cork Examiner*." All the girls wanted their picture taken. He also recalled watching the visiting starlets putting for the photographers at the Cork Film Festival during the Sixties.

None was quite so glamorous maybe as one blonde he briefly befriended before her death in 1997. In March that year, Lady Diana dropped by his Battersea studio one day with a mutual friend. Her eye was drawn to

a characteristically rude picture of a woman's derriere framed on the wall. "I recognise her bum," the princess told Bob. "I was at school with her." Within a few months, any chance Bob had of photographing Diana disappeared in a tunnel in Paris. She probably wouldn't have let him take her picture anyway. Bob's pictures tended to be too controversial. When he photographed teenagers in heated congress at uppercrust balls in London in 1994, the uproar was international.

He said he felt like a cross between David Attenborough and a peeping Tom. "But later, my camera became a time machine, returning me to a place where my own experiences were just as tragicomic and passionate." (He was referring to — among other things — boarding school at Wellington in England where he and the other boarders would take turns at the bathroom keyhole to spy on a housemaid taking her bath. "Sonia was a voluptuous, raven-haired 18-year-old. On Friday nights, after lights out, she'd take her weekly bath in the brightly-lit bathroom adjacent to the spartan dormitory I shared with a dozen of my fellow prisoners.")

Back in 1994, the *Sunday Independent* bought those famous black and white images of the posh teens' snog-frenzy in London from Bob. The only problem was we tinted them a la Andy Warhol. To say Bob was angry would be like saying Mexico mightn't be the best place to take a relaxing holiday right now. Because I had met Bob the year before in Dublin — and got on with him — I was assigned the job of ringing him to apologise.

"You f\*\*\*ing arsehole!" he called me — and this was when he calmed down. "You f\*\*\*ing coloured in my photographs! What sort of f\*\*\*ing arsehole does that?" he screamed down the phone. He could grump for Ireland. Yet it was the start of a sometimes strained but memorable friendship of sorts. In March 2003, I tried to get Bob an interview slot on *The Late Late Show*. This was one of our own with a story to tell (a story that included the likes of Mick Jagger, Jordan, Caprice and the Princesses Diana and Margaret — the latter was at Bob and Lindsey's wedding in Mustique in a sarong). He also had recognition all over the world.

*The Late Late Show* wasn't interested. Bob said he wasn't bothered by Ireland's indifference to him or his work. I didn't believe him. I suspected he was hurt. His grumpy

bolshiness, dressed up in a sort of posh aristo accent, hid the pain in this complex man. He could seem on top of the world one minute but angry and full of inner torment and self-doubt the next. A bully one second, a vulnerable little boy the next.

I remember one afternoon in 2004 in London asking Lindsey whether she had any regrets about marrying the maverick manchild who photographed women in increasing states of undress. Before she could reply, Bob jumped in. "Of course she has regrets. I don't think anyone who lives with someone for 27 years doesn't have regrets."

Lindsey was having none of it. "Of course I don't regret it. How could I? I could have gone with Sting..."

"You regret the time that I kicked red wine all over your carpet and all up the curtains on the ceiling!" he raged with his usual rakish charm. "You regret the time I threw a vase at your head and missed and it went straight through the window."

A year later, we met for a drink in a bar in London. I remember asking him about his views on monogamy. "We're sitting here having a beer, but if you told me that beer was going to be my exclusive tippie for the rest of my life, I'd look at my Budvar in an entirely different way," he said. "Some degree of sexual freedom and choice allows you to appreciate what you've got."

I asked if he had discussed this subject much with his wife. He shakes his head. "We don't discuss it. We don't need to discuss it because we live together," he answered. "She knows where I'm at and I know where she's at." He says that whatever he does — "and I've never been promiscuous" — in his relationship, the important thing is to have consideration and respect for his partner and an understanding of her feelings. "And then whatever you do with yourself, be prepared to suffer the consequences of your actions."

you. She's great-looking and a wonderful lover, a wonderful cook, a wonderful homemaker. She's everything. I'm her problem, she's not mine."

Later that afternoon he insisted to me that Lindsey didn't feel threatened by him



PORTRAITS: Bob Carlos Clarke, above left, by his daughter Scarlett; Bob's first wife Sue Frame, top, photographed by Bob; Lindsey and Bob, above, at home with Beano. All photos © The Estate of Bob Carlos Clarke

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## Interview

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## The man who faced his demons

Colm O’Gorman’s story is not just another testimony of childhood misery and adult acceptance. It’s also an exposure of the tacit evasiveness that held a country in a state of self-denial, bullied by authority and frozen in collective shame, writes **Emily Hourican**

**W**HEN secrets and lies have caused so much hurt, truth matters.” It’s a simple statement, and the motor behind Colm O’Gorman’s new book, *Beyond Belief*, the story of his remarkable journey from shamed, damaged, marginalised child, to a grown-up existence of dignity and decency.

On a cold, rainy Friday, in his offices on Westmoreland Street, Dublin, O’Gorman explains to me the force that drove him to write a book that was frequently as “difficult” and “uncomfortable” to write as it is to read.

*Beyond Belief* is the story of what happened to Colm as a child in Wexford, when he was abused over a period of two years by Fr Sean Fortune, the priest entrusted to protect and cherish him. The book is an exposure of the tacit nod-and-wink evasiveness that held an entire country in a submissive state of self-denial, bullied by authority and frozen in collective shame.

It is also the tale of O’Gorman’s journey towards acceptance of what happened to him, and then an outrage so blinding it inspired him to sue the Church, and challenge the State into setting up the Ferns Inquiry. And it is, perhaps even more crucially, a book full of truly radical ideas, in the way that Christ’s message of love and forgiveness, was radical. “Our capacity to love is infinite, and nothing in my life has ever caused me on any level to deflect from knowing that. Maybe that’s what gave me the resilience to survive,” he tells me.

Colm O’Gorman grew up in the Seventies and Eighties, the third of six children, a sensitive child who loved nature and the life of the Adamstown farm on which the family lived. Despite a difficult, distant relationship with his adored father, in recollection this was an idyllic time. But it didn’t last.

In *Beyond Belief*, O’Gorman writes, bleakly, “there were two men living in our village who hurt children... they raped and abused... I was one of the children they hurt.” When I ask him now how this could have happened, why he was not better protected, he responds, “because I was five at a time when this wasn’t possible. It was 1971, child sexual abuse didn’t exist. I didn’t have anything like the level of understanding to know what was happening to me. And at that age, one of the things I knew was that grown-ups hurt

you when you’d been bad. So my experience of adults who hurt me, was that they hurt me if it was my fault.”

We are now sufficiently sophisticated in our understanding of patterns of abuse to see that there is often a kind of chain reaction, each link creating the possibility of another link.

When he was seven or eight, an older boy from the area began abusing Colm, abuse which he was by then tragically inured to “accept as normal”.

When he was 14, Colm first met Fr Fortune, then in his late 20s and already a force within the church. Loud, imposing and with a sense of the dramatic, “he was,” Colm says “known as a charismatic, go-getting young priest who did fantastic things for his parishioners and his people, despite the fact that in his own parish there was enormous turmoil because of the arrogant way he behaved towards people.” He was, O’Gorman says, very much a product of society’s need for heroes.

“We wanted our saints, our tall, energetic young priests who would lead us forward and make everything perfect for us. So we created them.”

Within two weeks of meeting Colm, at a youth group, Fr Fortune called to his house looking for him. It is still an extraordinary measure of the then power of the church, that within a week of that first visit, he could have taken Colm away with him for a weekend.

Ostensibly, Colm was to help with another youth group. In reality, that first weekend, he was told he had to share a bed with Fr Fortune as there was only one bed in the house. The priest seduced and abused him; forever destroying the innocence of belief in a benign authority, as well as that precious, fragile sense of self.

“Words like abuse are easy to use,” says Colm. “Words can’t describe the smell, the sounds, the taste of it all. Words can’t tell you how it felt. It was sordid and degrading and hateful... full of hate.”

The next day, Fortune threatened Colm that he would tell his father, still the central figure in the young boy’s life, someone he was desperate to establish a relationship with — unless he allowed the priest to continue to “help him”. In his fear, shame, self-hatred and confusion, Colm had no choice but to accept, and so it continued for another two years, during which

time the priest had all the access to Colm he required.

Fr Fortune’s power then was absolute, and he flaunted it, positively enjoying the few occasions when Colm tried to challenge him, and was triumphed over completely; sometimes physically — as when he was raped — sometimes psychologically, when no amount of protest on the boy’s part could gain him a reprieve.

Over those two years, Fr Fortune annihilated completely the young man Colm had begun to grow into, cauterising his developing interests in politics, literature and the world around him; fracturing the reality of his life so that two parallel existences ran side by side — one, the normal life of school, home, friends; the other, a ghoulish world in which he lived, alone, with what Fr Fortune was doing to him.

By the time he turned 17, Colm was depressed, lethargic, overweight and frequently bullied by his peers. The one consolation was that Fortune now lost interest in him, instead offering him money to find another, younger, boy to have sex with. It was the last straw.

Colm left home, moving to Dublin, where he lived on the streets for a while, exchanging sex with strange men for the sake of a bed at night. During this time and for some years afterwards, he had no contact with his family. His mother, a woman far ahead of her time — “she was brave and courageous, full of ideas that were

**‘The priest had all the access to Colm he required. Fr Fortune’s power then was absolute, and he flaunted it, positively enjoying the few occasions when Colm tried to challenge him, and was triumphed over completely’**

ahead of themselves, an extraordinary woman” — had become interested in yoga and meditation, finally leaving his father and moving to an ashram in India for a year with the two younger



**CHRISTIAN MESSAGE:** Colm O’Gorman says ‘Our capacity to love is infinite, and nothing in my life has ever caused me to deflect from knowing that’.

Photo: Gerry Mooney

children. His father’s business had failed and he was still in Wexford, trying to start something else.

From those hard, early days in Dublin, Colm gradually established a life, finding work, friends, a social scene



FR SEAN FORTUNE

that finally permitted him to come to terms with at least some of who he was. He was able to face that fact of his homosexuality, and began to form adult, loving relationships, but was still a long way

from confronting his own past, which surfaced only in terrible, recurring nightmares.

What finally forced him home to Wexford was discovering that his sister, Deirdre, then 18, was pregnant, unmarried and had moved out of home. He resolved to see her and try to help.

That journey home — to a family who by then knew about the years of abuse, and that he was gay — was the start of what Colm had longed for all his life — a loving, open relationship with his father. And it was this relationship that would give him the strength to finally tell his story and set in train the events that would change not just his life, but would take the entire country on a vital journey.

*Beyond Belief* is dominated by the actions and character of Sean Fortune, but equal and opposite to this dark force is the presence of Colm’s father, Sean, to whom the book is dedicated. The relationship between father and son is central to so much of what happens, even though much of it takes place in a tragically fore-shortened period of 10 months, book-ended by Colm’s visit

home to Wexford and his father’s death from cancer the next year.

“My father has been an influence on my life in ways I could never have imagined,” Colm says. “He loved, I think, with a huge intensity, but he wasn’t allowed, culturally or socially, to express that, so he stayed away from it. I think that was very painful for him, and created a great sense of disconnection.”

Thanks to this “extraordinarily honest, expressive, loving” relationship, Colm found the strength to launch his campaign for justice, during which he took on the State, the Catholic Church, even the Vatican, in a battle to determine just what they knew about the evil acts of those they had ordained, and what they did with that knowledge.

In March 1999 Sean Fortune was finally charged in court with 66 offences, from sexual assault and gross indecency to buggery. To each he pleaded not guilty. A couple of weeks later, while out on bail, he killed himself, thereby cruelly robbing his victims of the resolution they so badly craved. To his own surprise, Colm wept when he heard the news.

“I think in part I was so devastated because I knew then that he was never going to face what he had done, and there was just such an awful tragedy in that. I remember at the time saying, he’s become a victim himself now too, of that extraordinarily psychopathic, destructive, drive, hate-filled persona that he became. That’s not the sum of his life; he loved, and was loved, those things are also true. He’s become this pastiche, this bogeyman, and that’s tragic, and dishonest.”

Because ultimately, responsibility lies not just with the perpetrator of the abuse, but with the system that contained him.

“I question the degree to which he could have become those things had others not allowed and even tacitly supported that.

“When you look at the progression of his offending, it just becomes more and more outrageous as time goes by, because no one ever said stop. I don’t believe he could have gone so far in his capacity for evil if there had been limits. In that way, he was betrayed by the Church as well.”

Four years later, Colm O’Gorman made history by receiving the very first public

apology from the Catholic Church for sexual abuse by one of their priests.

It was the end of a 22-year journey, and the day the burden of responsibility for the abuse he suffered as a boy, was finally lifted from his shoulders and placed where it belonged. Nowadays, he is executive director of Amnesty International in Ireland, and is “happy, content; at peace with myself. I have a good life and a great family.” Finally, he has arrived at “a good place to be.”

Although his story is painful and terrible to read, O’Gorman has created a next step — not so much an ending as a new beginning — that is inspirational and moving. By refusing to see only his own hurt, by projecting that outwards and finding compassion for the society that let him down, and then by extending that compassion even to the man who so foully betrayed him, he has created the possibility of love in a vacuum of horror, and given an entire country strength to face its demons.

*Beyond Belief* by Colm O’Gorman (Hodder & Stoughton, £13.99) is out on May 14

## The darker side of Bob Carlos Clarke

From page 3

photographing beautiful young models. “The only times Lindsey and I have ever been threatened have not been with a model. Models are not really on the agenda. Models are what I do for a job. It’s like asking if the fishmonger eats too much fish. Not necessarily. He might prefer a nice fat steak when he gets home. The girls whom I’ve found attractive have very often been secretaries or other people’s wives.”

There were other women, it seemed. Lindsey appeared to know of their existence. (She certainly ought to have an inkling: Bob had been married to his first wife, Sue Frame, for two years before she became aware that he was having an affair with Lindsey.)

“It was about secrecy,” Lindsey says in *Exposure*. “He

said to me, ‘I don’t enjoy sex unless it’s a secret.’ I said, ‘Well, if I leave you, it won’t be secret any more, so you will have to find another secret.’” When Bob’s mother Myra, who suffered from depression (her own mother had died of cancer when she was eight and her brother committed suicide in his teens) died, and left Bob some money, Lindsey suggested that they buy a beach house in Sussex in England. The idea, she said, was to recreate the beach hut he loved as a child in Ballyquinn beach near Youghal town. Lindsey said to him, “you can have your girls in the studio but don’t ever bring one of them back here. The beach house was supposed to be pure but that didn’t last long.”

She says she loved Bob but she got no love from him. Bob couldn’t be there for her, she

felt, because Bob could hardly be there for himself. He had become something so complex and so difficult, she said, that she had begun to “mourn for him before he was dead”.

She had threatened to leave him many times. Lindsey said to him that she couldn’t live the way they were living. “And he just said, ‘Don’t bully me.’ I could never get any communication... I said to him, ‘Bob, I cannot go to my grave like this.’”

Asked by author Simon Garfield what “like this” meant exactly, Lindsey replied: “Unloved, unf\*\*ed, unspoken to, un... just robotic. I said to him, ‘What do I do in your life that you couldn’t pay somebody to do?’ He said, ‘Oh, don’t be ridiculous. People our age don’t have sex.’ I looked at him and I said, ‘That’s not quite what I mean.’ I found it very difficult to have

a conversation with him on anything at all.”

Lindsey recalled a troubling conversation in the Priory one night with her increasingly demented husband.

“He told me he was in trouble because he wasn’t going to the right classes.” Lindsey thought, “you think you’re at school. And then he started to rub my cheek one night and said, ‘Poor mummy, poor mummy.’ And I thought, please don’t do this. Please don’t do this, this is agonising, this is so painful, please don’t do this. I mean, watching somebody go completely mad in front of your eyes is just terrifying.”

The terror had started months before when Bob’s great friend, photographer Lord Lichfield died suddenly in November 2000. Bob told Lindsey that he “envied him.” At this stage, Bob’s mental



**FATHER AND SON:** Bob Carlos Clarke with his father Charlie on the water in Ireland

health had been already deteriorating and necessitated him going into the Priory a few months later. When Lindsey told Scarlett that her father was in the famous rehab hospital, the teenager wanted to know: “Is

Pete Doherty in there?”

In 2004, I recall sitting in a bar in London with Bob when an extremely beautiful and extremely young woman walked into the pub. I would be lying if I said we didn’t gawp openly. I asked Bob if he

still looks at a woman with the eyes of a boy — in the sense that he looks at the 18-year-old as a teenager but she sees him as an old man; a Nabokovian old perv.

“I look at her through teenage eyes,” he said, “and she looks at me as someone who’s possibly older than her father.”

Bob’s only child Scarlett says in *Exposure* that she remembered thinking: “I can’t imagine him being old.” She added that her father saw her growing up “and that made him feel older. As I was getting older it meant that I was going to leave.”

In the end — as in boarding school when he was eight — it was Bob who left home. Lindsey says that there’s a wooden beam that hung in her late husband’s studio — and one day she believed she was going to find Bob hanging

from it. “But I sometimes think this was absolutely on the cards for a very long time,” she says. Apropos of which, she mentions that she went to a memorial for Isabella Blow — the stylist, and the muse of hat designer Philip Treacy, who committed suicide in May 2007 — and *Tatler* editor Geordie Greig said: “Isabella always talked about killing herself and normally Isabella got exactly what she wanted.”

In 2007, on the first anniversary of Bob’s death, when the *Daily Telegraph* asked Lindsey what was the overwhelming emotion she now has about his death, her reply was illuminative: “It’s set me free.”

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