

Justice Media Awards 2020

Award winners & citations



All entries were assessed against the objectives of the Justice Media Awards, namely published works or broadcasts which:

- Promote the highest standards in legal journalism,
- Foster greater public understanding of the law, the legal system or any specific legal issue,
- Inform and educate citizens as to the roles in society of the law, the courts, law enforcement agencies and the legal profession,
- Disclose practices or procedures needing reform so as to encourage the development and modernisation of Irish laws, courts and law enforcement agencies, and/or
- Assist the legal profession, the judiciary, and all others involved in the administration of justice in attaining the highest professional standards.

The award categories are:

1. Print/online journalism (daily)
2. Print/online journalism (Sunday)
3. Print/online journalism (local)
4. Broadcast journalism (radio/podcast – national)
5. Broadcast journalism (radio/podcast – local)
6. Broadcast journalism (TV/video)
7. Court reporting (print/online)
8. Court reporting (broadcast)
9. Human rights/social justice reporting
10. International justice reporting
11. Newcomer of the year

OVERALL WINNER

WINNER:

Conor Gallagher (The Irish Times): *Ana Kriégel murder trial: The complete story*

THE JUDGES SAID:

This exceptional article tells the complete story of the murder of Ana Kriégel, the extensive Garda investigation, the trauma caused by her murder, and recounts the trial from start to finish. An outstanding piece of court reporting.

CATEGORY 1: PRINT/ONLINE JOURNALISM (DAILY)

CATEGORY WINNER:

Francesca Comyn (The Currency): *Law in a Golden Age*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- A detailed, insightful look at the modern Supreme Court.
- As well as being a thoroughly enjoyable read, this is an excellent, interesting analysis from a brilliant writer who is clearly thriving on the challenge of detailed, long-form reporting for a brand-new online platform.

Five merit certificates were awarded:

CORMAC O'KEEFFE (IRISH EXAMINER): *WHEN CRIME DOES PAY*

- An extensive, front-page examination of Ireland's fines system.
- A striking piece of reporting which takes the reader behind the facts and figures to reveal the true cost of collecting fines through the courts, and the lack of consequences for those who don't comply.

FIONNÁN SHEAHAN AND CORMAC MCQUINN (IRISH INDEPENDENT): *CONSTITUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF VOTEGATE: ABSENT TD VOTED SIX TIMES IN DÁIL*

- A series of articles on the political scandal known as "Votegate".
- There can be no doubt of the enormous impact of these reports, which take the reader from the initial revelations right through to analysis of their Constitutional significance and led to a series of Oireachtas investigations.

IAN KEHOE (THE CURRENCY): *LEVERAGING SURRENDER: HOW IBRC FOLLOWED THE QUINN MONEY TRAIL*

- An exceptional, long-form piece on why the Quinn family walked away from the largest commercial dispute in Irish history.
- This is a forensic analysis of the final twists in one of Ireland's most bitter and expansive courtroom dramas. It weaves a fascinating and intricate tale of tactical litigation and the characters at its heart.

MICHELLE HENNESSY (THEJOURNAL.IE): *HOW IRELAND DEALS WITH SEX OFFENDERS AFTER THEY ARE RELEASED FROM PRISON*

- An examination of the difficult subject of sex offenders and their re-entry to society after prison.
- This reporter shows great skill in tackling a heavy and troubling topic, delivering a

comprehensive, truly educational article that balances data, expert opinion and public perception.

PETER BODKIN AND SEÁN MACCÁRTHAIGH (NOTEWORTHY.IE): 'WE'RE BEING FED THIS LIE': EXPOSING THE MYTHS OF IRELAND'S 'COMPO CULTURE'

- A two-part investigation into the facts behind so-called 'compo culture'.
- Drilling into the data, these reporters have produced an eye-opening and important report on one of the most talked-about aspects of Irish law in recent years.

CATEGORY 2: PRINT/ONLINE JOURNALISM (SUNDAY)

CATEGORY WINNER:

Mark Tighe (The Sunday Times): *Delaney's Own Goal*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- Brilliant reporting on one of the biggest stories of 2019.
- Brave, well-written and astonishingly impactful; despite John Delaney's best efforts, this reporter simply could not be stopped as he fought for the right to lift the lid on the FAI's rotten finances.

Two merit certificates were awarded:

PATRICK O'CONNELL (SUNDAY WORLD): WOMAN WHO WAS SENT CHILD PORN AND DELETED IT IS NOW LISTED AS SEX OFFENDER

- An interview highlighting a chilling aspect of modern communications.
- This reporter has delivered an eye-opening and educational report on the distressing consequences of receiving unsolicited, illegal material via WhatsApp.

SAMANTHA MCCAUGHREN (SUNDAY INDEPENDENT): FIRST SOCIAL MEDIA CONTROLS REVEALED/IRELAND IN THE SPOTLIGHT AFTER FALLING INTO ROLE OF ONLINE REGULATOR

- The story of Ireland's new role in policing the world's largest social media platforms .
- This excellent series of reports illuminate the enormous and growing burden of regulation that Ireland has taken on in welcoming social media giants to our shores, to protect consumers from online harm.

CATEGORY 3: PRINT/ONLINE JOURNALISM (LOCAL)

CATEGORY WINNER:

Ann Murphy (The Echo): *Sex for Rent*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- Undercover reporting which reached the four corners of the world.
- Demonstrating true dedication to exposing wrong-doing, this reporter's investigation into landlords seeking to exploit vulnerable tenants had an incredible impact, going far beyond her local area of Cork and triggering international discussion.

The judges decided not to award any merit certificates in this category.

CATEGORY 4: BROADCAST JOURNALISM (RADIO/PODCAST - NATIONAL)

CATEGORY WINNER:

Andrea Gilligan (Newstalk): *The Law and Anonymity*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- An excellent examination of the legal meaning of anonymity and its controversial application in the most distressing criminal cases.
- This reporter has created a unique space on where experts can skillfully address complex topics and answer the questions her listeners need answers to, particularly in the wake of highly emotive, high-profile criminal cases in recent times.

Two merit certificates were awarded:

DONAL O'HERLIHY & FRANK DELANEY (RTÉ RADIO 1): *THE WHISTLEBLOWER*

- A richly-textured, atmospheric look at the fallout from the wrongful convictions for the Sallins train robbery.
- This was a wonderful piece of audio journalism, highlighting severe failings in the criminal justice system in 1970s Ireland and documenting the process of healing from wrongful conviction.

JOHN CASEY & PAT KENNY (NEWSTALK): *BEHIND THE WALLS OF MOUNTJOY PRISON*

- A special feature on the reality of prison in 21st century Dublin.
- An engaging and insightful report, bringing listeners into prison to learn more about life behind bars from everyone involved – the Governor, prisoners, teachers and more.

CATEGORY 5: BROADCAST JOURNALISM (RADIO/PODCAST – LOCAL)

Understandably, many local radio stations around the country were not in a position to enter this year due to the constraint of Covid-19. The judges decided that none of the entries met the required standard and therefore no prizes have been awarded in this category. We very much look forward to welcoming entries for Category 5 for the 2021 Justice Media Awards.

CATEGORY 6: BROADCAST JOURNALISM (TV/VIDEO)

CATEGORY WINNER:

Kathleen Harris (The Irish Times): *The push for same-sex marriage and abortion rights in Northern Ireland*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- A video report from the front lines of the battle for same-sex marriage and abortion rights in Northern Ireland.
- This excellent report features an expertly-balanced mix of law and politics and brings clarity to a complex story and highlights how human right can test the limits of devolution.

Two merit certificates were awarded:

BARRY O'KELLY, DAVID DORAN AND PAUL MAGUIRE (RTÉ INVESTIGATES): *THE ESB LEAKS*

- An investigation of one man's battle to use the Protected Disclosures Act to end an environmental cover-up by the ESB.

- Excellent investigative reporting in the public interest, which led directly to Oireachtas Committee hearings, EPA action and investigations by the ESB itself.

GERALDINE LYNAGH (VIRGIN MEDIA): *THE ANA KRIÉGEL VERDICT*

- A special report for the evening news following the verdict in the Ana Kriégel trial.
- In what must have been very challenging circumstances, this reporter's extended, sensitive report which she presented live from the steps of the court, skilfully linked the events of the day with background to the crime.

CATEGORY 7: COURT REPORTING – PRINT/ONLINE

CATEGORY WINNER:

Conor Gallagher (The Irish Times): *Ana Kriégel murder trial: The complete story*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- A remarkable portrait of a harrowing murder trial, the longest article ever published by the Irish Times.
- This exceptional article tells the complete story of the murder of Ana Kriégel, the extensive Garda investigation, the trauma caused by her murder, and recounts the trial from start to finish. An outstanding piece of court reporting.

Three merit certificates were awarded:

MARY CAROLAN (THE IRISH TIMES): *EXPLAINER: ABSENCE OF CLEAR LAW ON DATA RETENTION KEY TO DWYER APPEAL*

- An explainer of the background to a Supreme Court appeal related to a murder trial that gripped the nation.
- Designed to educate readers on the "why" and "what next", these articles set out the public-interest importance of the appeal, and expertly explain the potentially far-reaching implications for both Graham Dwyer and the State's ability to investigate and prosecute serious crime.

NICOLA DONNELLY (IRISH DAILY STAR): *JUSTICE FOR THE LITTLE PEOPLE*

- An insight into the operations of a court without solicitors or barristers.
- These reports detail the importance of the Small Claims Court, covering everything from the humorous to the heart-breaking, with the skilled hand of a highly-experienced court reporter.

SHANE PHELAN (IRISH INDEPENDENT): *TUSLA'S RACE AGAINST TIME TO PREVENT A HOMICIDAL TEEN'S RELEASE INTO THE COMMUNITY*

- Exclusive reports on a series of urgent hearings to determine the future of a deeply troubled teenager in care.
- This reporter's expert handling of a harrowing case, the difficulty of which exceeds anything the care system dealt with before, highlights serious gaps in Ireland's mental health legislation and the very real consequences.

CATEGORY 8: COURT REPORTING (BROADCAST)

CATEGORY WINNER:

Frank Greaney (Newstalk): *Unravelling Boy B's lies*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- A series of reports on one of the most intricate aspects of the Ana Kriégel murder trial.
- These excellent reports focused on the complex prosecution case against Boy B, which relied heavily on eight Garda interviews. They carefully detailed the evidence from those interviews in this reporter's signature balanced, listener-friendly style.

One merit certificate was awarded:

FERGAL KEANE (RTÉ RADIO 1): *ANA KRIEGEL TRIAL*

- Comprehensive daily reports on the evidence presented in the Ana Kriégel trial.
- These excellent reports were the first to bring the full details of the trial to a mass audience each day, expertly delivered a short time after evidence had ended for the day, including lengthy direct quotes from witnesses.

CATEGORY 9: HUMAN RIGHTS/SOCIAL JUSTICE REPORTING

CATEGORY WINNER:

Michael Clifford (Irish Examiner): *Deaths in Irish Prisons*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- An examination of the deaths of two vulnerable men in Irish prisons.
- Asking searching questions about this troubling and complex issue, this reporter brings his experience and insight to highlight failings in the criminal justice system which had devastating consequences.

Four merit certificates were awarded:

CIANAN BRENNAN (IRISH EXAMINER): *'WHEN THE STATE DOES SOMETHING, IT'S LEGAL' - PUBLIC SERVICES CARD*

- In-depth reports on the subject of heated discussion at every level of Irish society.
- This entry compiles several months of incredibly comprehensive reporting on the Public Services Card, across the spectrum of data protection law, human stories, Freedom of Information requests, and much more.

GRÁINNE NÍ AODHA (THEJOURNAL.IE): *PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ASKING THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WHAT THE DESOUZA RULING MEANS FOR THEM*

- An insight into the real-life implications of a high-profile citizenship ruling in Northern Ireland.
- Using Freedom of Information legislation, this reporter has delivered an excellent examination of the questions and anxieties the DeSouza ruling has thrown up for Irish citizens living in Northern Ireland.

SORCHA POLLAK AND MARK HILLIARD (THE IRISH TIMES): *DIRECT PROVISION: THE CONTROVERSIAL SYSTEM TURNS 20*

- An in-depth look at Direct Provision 20 years after the system came into operation.
- This excellent long-read article introduces a major piece of work by this paper on Direct Provision, providing a historical overview of how the controversial system has developed over the past two decades.

ÓRLA RYAN (THEJOURNAL.IE): *FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION: EXPLORATION AND*

ANALYSIS OF THE PRACTICE IN IRELAND AND KENYA

- Extensive reporting on a serious human rights violation in Ireland and overseas.
- Demonstrating extraordinary commitment to shedding light on female genital mutilation, and the work being done to protect women and girls, this comprehensive series is as enlightening as it is distressing.

CATEGORY 10: INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE REPORTING

CATEGORY WINNER:

The judges decided not to award an overall prize in this category.

Two merit certificates were awarded:

MICHAEL CLIFFORD (IRISH EXAMINER): *THE IAN BAILEY MURDER TRIAL*

- A series of reports from Ian Bailey's French trial for the murder of Sophie Toscan Du Plantier.
- An ancient French law, permitting the prosecution of crimes against French citizens abroad, brought this reporter to Paris to cover the *in-absentia* trial, and highlight the major differences in the Irish and French criminal justice systems.

MICHAEL DOYLE (IRISH SUN): *GOOD MOLLY! HOW DID THIS PAIR WIN MURDER APPEAL?*

- A court report from the United States as a father and daughter fought their convictions for the murder of Irish man, Jason Corbett.
- This clear, concise article from the North Carolina Court of Appeals details how Molly Martens and her father Tom won their appeal, and why certain evidence was excluded from the trial.

CATEGORY 11: NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR

CATEGORY WINNER:

Dominic McGrath (TheJournal.ie)

THE JUDGES SAID:

- This newly-minted journalist delivered excellent coverage of complex Brexit legal issues just weeks into his career, followed by a series of high-profile legal stories and explainers.

Two merit certificates were awarded:

AARON MCELROY (NORTHERN SOUND RADIO)

- A young reporter displaying excellent local news sensibilities and knowledge how local stories fit into the national context, as well as the balance and accuracy required for high-quality court reporting.

ROSANNA COONEY (SUNDAY BUSINESS POST)

- A stand-out piece by a new member of this prestigious newspaper team, in which she meticulously pieced together complex evidence from Ryanair's case against its outgoing chief operating officer to deliver an extraordinary insight into the inner workings of the airline.
-