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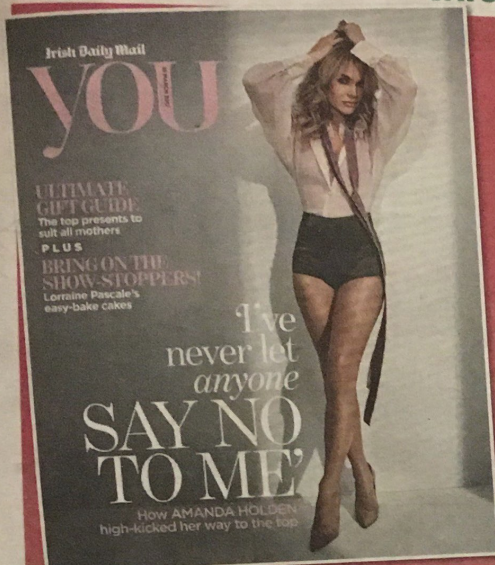
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EXCLUSIVE Woman whose love affair rocked the Church speaks of the final, happy meeting with disgraced bishop who died last week

ANNIE: HOW EAMONN AND I MADE OUR PEACE

ANNIE Murphy, whose affair with Bishop Eamonn Casey rocked the Church, has told of her joy at their being reconciled years before his death this week.

In an extraordinary interview

By **Hugo Daniel**

at her California home, Ms Murphy said she regrets the hurt caused to Casey after she revealed their romance and that they had a son, Peter, in 1974.

But she was 'fighting a monument' in the shape of the Church, she says. She also reveals she met Casey in

New York during his exile in South America, and that they were able to reconcile their differences. 'We talked for a long time... we had a lot of fun,' she says. 'There was a lot of laughter.'

Even though her battle to have their son acknowledged turned Casey's life upside down, Ms Murphy says the bishop bore her no ill-will.

Interview: Pages 8, 9 and 10



ENDA 'MAY CLING ON TO POWER FOR MONTHS' FULL STORY PAGE 6

EXCLUSIVE by Hugo Daniel

IN RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

SOME 24 years after she electrified – and divided – the nation on *The Late Late Show*, Annie Murphy still has the ability to captivate an audience. The high cheekbones, slightly unkempt hair and bright, twinkling eyes are all still recognisable as she revisits her incredible story at the kitchen table of her California home.

The 68-year-old has just learned of the death of her former lover Bishop Eamonn Casey earlier that day. She is clearly deeply saddened: wistful, philosophical, full of reminiscence.

What becomes clear, as we sit and talk through a scorching Californian day that gives way to peaceful evening warmth, is that this was a man she truly loved. For all that happened between them – in particular his denial of their son – he was, as she says, for many years the love of her life.

So does she now regret any of her own behaviour towards Eamonn Casey?

'I wish I could have been a little

‘I told him if I’m feeling threatened I’ll go to the press’

bit nicer but I was up against a monument [the Catholic Church], she says. ‘I didn’t know how to fight it, I just had to fight any way I could and it wasn’t going to be nice. I guess I became like a battleaxe.’

She says the woman who told her story, wrote a book and appeared on TV chat shows was a front she had to summon up to solve the painful saga of their relationship, and his refusal to acknowledge his own child.

‘When it wasn’t going to happen I had to get foxy,’ she says – but suggests that her hard-edged *Late Late* persona was something of an act. ‘I didn’t like that because I’m really not like that.’

Annie now lives in California with her partner of 17 years Thaddeus Heinchon, a 61-year-old artist. He sits next to her for most of the interview and laughs along with her when she jokes about her scandalous past.

The pair live happily in a trailer park in the city of Riverside, where it’s roasting hot for most of the year. She says she’s glad to have escaped the long snowy winters of Connecticut. She describes Eamonn as the love of her life until she met Thaddeus and then ‘that was it’.

Nevertheless, she happily recounts a romance that began when she went to stay with Casey in Kerry in 1973 to recover from a painful divorce.

Her revelations of their affair scandalised a nation and changed their lives forever. But now, speaking on the very day she learned of Eamonn Casey’s death, Annie Murphy gives her most extraordinary interview yet...

Eamonn and I had made our peace with each other

‘My father sent me there, I was having a rough time,’ she says. Eamonn said, ‘send Annie to me, if Ireland has nothing else it has serenity, your daughter needs it’. And it was serene. It was fun and it was beautiful.

I went to Ireland after a bad bout, and I just fell in love with the whole place, it was beautiful. I was young, I was 24, and I met this man who was dynamic and fun.

‘And nothing was an obstacle, everything was doable. He was capable of changing your reality. I just went over to visit but he said, ‘why don’t you stay?’ and I moved to Dublin and worked at a hotel and made friends there. I really like the Irish people, they were really fun.’

Recalling the passion of their relationship, she says: ‘It was a lot of fun. It was like your feet didn’t touch the ground. Everything he did was extremely fast. He drove

so fast, I didn’t know anybody could drive like that. He was a very intelligent man.

‘Everything with him was a little bit edgy, there was a little bit of danger – I think Eamonn liked danger. Something in him liked to cut to the edge. Anybody who could drive like that was a risk-taker. He used to say, ‘you’re a chancer’, and I’d say, ‘well you’ve met your match’.

‘He was full of life. I used to say he didn’t walk, he danced; he didn’t talk, he sang. He always said if he couldn’t have been a priest he wanted to be Fred Astaire. He liked dancing, he loved music.’

Casey was, in fact, Annie’s second cousin once removed – and she had met him once as a child. None of which stopped their relationship from progressing.

‘I didn’t think of it, I fell madly in love with somebody, I didn’t know what I was doing,’ she says. ‘I was

out of a bad marriage, I’d been married two and a half years.

‘It was like flying and it was completely free – it gave me a sense of freedom and fun and laughter.’

She recalls Casey’s horror when he found out she was pregnant.

‘He said, “oh my God this is the fright of God”. He wanted me to give it up. I said: “I’ll shoot you!” I said: “If you play with me too much and I’m threatened I’ll have to go to the press. I’ll have to do something absolutely disastrous. I’ll do it.”’

Annie had Peter in the Rotunda maternity hospital in Dublin and after giving birth she nearly died from a blood clot in her leg. She remembers how desperate she felt being severely ill with the added stress of Eamonn wanting her to give up her child.

‘He was frightened, he was scared, and I was sick. It was a

very bad combination. Thrown in a paper bag, we would have killed each other.’

Baby Peter was looked after by nuns while Annie recovered. ‘I was going to kill Eamonn, the nuns had Peter in St Joe’s, which is a terrible home in Dublin. I ended up there because I was sick, I couldn’t walk. So I had to go there. That was high drama, somebody might have died and it was me – I took that personally,’ she laughs. ‘That was a rough time.’

Within two months she left Ireland with Peter. She returned to the US briefly but then moved back to Dublin with her parents and Peter when she was a toddler. She says Casey secretly put them up in a Dublin apartment and would come and visit them and hold his son.

‘It was in an apartment and nobody knew,’ she says. ‘But at least he got to know Peter. He was

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Reflective: Annie Murphy at her home in California on Monday as she learned of Casey's death. Right: Their son Peter



you're also human. 'I had pretty legs and all of a sudden I looked like someone's strangled my leg to death. I had to box in my corner. I'm not particularly proud of it but I don't know how to fight like that [in such a high stakes situation]. I wanted him to face Peter.' Ultimately, she made the now infamous call to the Irish Times and told her story. Ireland was scandalised: everything, including Annie's own life, changed forever. Yet looking back, Annie doesn't blame Casey for how he behaved. She thinks he was in an impossible situation facing a scenario he had no idea how to handle. 'There was no learning curve for him, he just crashed. So how can anybody expect him to be any different? He was a middle-aged man, grappling with problems that were more like that of a 22-year-old man, how could he do it?' She recalls her father once giving

Eamonn was playful, he could be very disarming

her his opinion of Casey's behaviour. 'My father said he was out of his depth, he was like a 16-year-old who got his girlfriend pregnant. He didn't have the data, nothing to help him with this.' Annie is adamant she did the right thing by revealing the truth to the world. Ultimately, touchingly, she now thinks Casey would probably agree. 'Well God help me — and maybe I'm wrong — but Peter got to see his father, and Eamonn got to see Peter. They loved each other, they really cared for each other.' She does think her son is perhaps more reserved than he would have been if their life hadn't been so dramatic. Peter, now 42, remains a bachelor and lives with his pet cat in Boston. Annie reveals he's not a religious man and although Casey gave him 'spiritual' guidance when they finally got to know each other, he didn't impose his beliefs on his son.

'Peter is kind of an atheist, but he was good and he listened to him,' she says. 'When he was little, he read Darwin, he likes all that stuff. But as far as something in the sky coming down and helping, no, he doesn't buy that. 'I used to take him to church. He liked to go to the church when we lived in New York when he was a

very taken with him, he used to crawl on the floor and chase him.' However they soon left for America again, with Annie's father telling her: 'This is going to be a catastrophe, it's going to bust at the seams. You have to get out of here.' Peter found out Casey was his dad from his grandmother when he was aged 10. By the time he was

16, with the bishop refusing to publicly acknowledge his son, he wanted to confront him. Annie also wanted to be able to afford to get wanted to be able to afford to get Peter into college. 'Eamonn would not meet Peter, he would not accept him,' she recalls. 'Peter was going to go after him but I couldn't let him do that. That's not something a 16-year-old kid can do. I had to at that point

say, 'ok, I'm after you, you have to meet Peter, we have to do this, if you do not do this, I will fight you tooth and nail.' I was trying to save the two of them.' Asked why Casey wouldn't acknowledge his son, she says: 'He was terrified. But Peter just wanted to know his father. I wasn't going to be unreasonable — when you get into these situations they become

more than they are because people become emotional, they're fighting for their territory.' Annie admits she was also motivated by some bitterness at how difficult life had been for her since Casey had abandoned them. 'I had a blood clot so I could never have another child,' she says sadly. 'That's ok — you get in this game, you've got to accept it. But

TURN TO NEXT PAGE

High winds and rough seas hamper search for R116 crew

By Darragh McDonagh

THE search at sea for the wreckage of Coast Guard helicopter R116 and its vital black box was hampered again yesterday by high winds and rough seas.

However searchers in Co. Mayo found gloves worn by missing winchman Ciarán Smith at separate locations. These have been given to his daughter, said a source.

Today the funeral of recovered crew member Captain Dara Fitzpatrick, 45, is to be held.

President Michael D Higgins is expected to be among the mourners at St Patrick's Church in Glencullen, Co. Dublin.

Search and rescue teams trying to recover the helicopter and black box were hindered by fierce conditions yesterday. R116's black

Efforts focused on shoreline instead

box is beneath about 40metres of waters close to Blackrock lighthouse off the Co. Mayo coast. The device could give vital clues about the helicopter's final moments.

The Sikorsky S-92 crashed into the sea early on Tuesday during a mission to provide cover while sister helicopter R118 was attending an emergency out at sea.

Captain Fitzpatrick was recovered shortly after the accident but she was later confirmed dead.

R116's wreckage is expected to be found at the same location as the black box, along with winchmen Paul Ormsby and Ciarán Smith, and chief pilot Mark Duffy.

Naval vessel the LE Eithne continued to conduct a sea-surface search in Blacksod Bay yesterday but all other search boats were docked as sea and weather conditions remained treacherous.



Helicopter crew: Captain Dara Fitzpatrick, Chief pilot Mark Duffy, winchman Ciarán Smith and fellow winch operator Paul Ormsby

More than 120 volunteers instead focused their efforts on a coordinated search of the shoreline led by members of the local Coast Guard.

Among the volunteers were 25 members of Dublin's Wild Geese GAA, of which missing winchman Mr Smith is a member.

The search was also supported by Bernard Lucas, husband of Coast Guard volunteer Caitriona

Lucas who perished last September. Former Dublin goalkeeper John O'Leary and the families of the other crew members are also supporting the search.

It is hoped that a three-hour window between low tides tomorrow will provide an opportunity to conduct preparatory work for the location and recovery of the black box near Blackrock. However, members of the Garda and naval diving teams have privately said it could be Wednesday before the substantive operation to recover the R116 gets under way.

The Commissioner of Irish Lights



Fierce conditions: The shore search continued in Belmullet, Co. Mayo, yesterday

ship, the Granuaile, left Blacksod Bay for Galway yesterday to collect equipment for use in the recovery of the wreckage. It will return in time for the possible operation tomorrow.

Declan Geoghegan, operations manager with the Irish Coast Guard, said: 'If you look at helicopter crashes, 92% or 93% of the time the bodies are found within the wreckage of the fuselage, it is so small.'

The search has been narrowed to an area of sea that measures 100 metres by 80 metres close to Blackrock, a jagged outpost of the

north-western coastline about 12 kilometres from Blacksod, Co. Mayo.

A section of the missing helicopter was discovered on the tiny island on Thursday night by the Air Accident Investigations Unit.

However, no impact marks were detected and it is possible the debris was washed ashore by the high swells.

Air accident investigators have said there is no evidence to suggest the helicopter struck the rock or lighthouse before the aircraft entered the sea.

news@daily-mail.ie

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kid. He loved the architecture, the statues, he loved the ambience. He knows a lot about the Church.

'Eamonn gave him spirituality. Religion wasn't anything Peter was going to buy because he could fight him on it, he could challenge him.'

'He's got a lot of Eamonn in him. He's gregarious, he's good with people, he's very organised. Peter's a lot of fun.'

Despite his actions with her, Annie insists Casey was passionate about his vocation.

'He loved the priesthood,' she says. 'Don't forget, he was brought up with nine other children and his father was really fanatic, he was a real staunch Catholic.'

'He was brought up very Irish. He loved people, he'd flirt with people because he loved life. Life was to be enjoyed.'

Annie believes the celibate life took its toll on Eamonn, like it would on anyone.

'It must be hard. We're human and we want what we want.' Asked if Eamonn had any love affairs before her, she says: 'I don't think so - I know that. He was celibate.'

She also thinks Casey liked her because she challenged him when most people didn't.

'I was fresh - in the sense I would argue with you if I didn't like something,' she says. 'I was crazy. I'd say, I think it's kind of scary all these mortal sins, and God and hell. He would laugh.'

'Eamonn was playful, he could be very disarming, he'd get right down to your level and he'd play

I think the experience changed him, it made him a bit more human

with you. He didn't do it to manipulate you, he did it to be part of your experience.'

Recalling a conversation with him at the height of the affair, she says: 'He said, "It's a terrible thing this thing [love]. It can own you, it's a terrible thing and you can't walk away from it, you can't back away from it. It will change me forever." I think it maybe changed him and made him a little more human, because that's a human experience.'

Annie also thinks her story might have changed Ireland, by helping it to become more accepting of the need for women to be allowed birth control.

'That sounds corny but I was a doctor's daughter and I saw people absolutely destroyed with eight kids, ten kids... I thought, oh God this is wrong.'

'I was in the clinic with them, they were pretty women and they were just wrecked. They didn't

have a lot of money. When I brought the story forward, I took them with me. The church needed to grow, it had to stretch and grow in order to survive.'

Annie also thinks Eamonn softened his views on the issue of birth control after his experiences abroad after his resignation.

'When he moved to Quito and saw different places in Africa, I think he saw the sense that the world doesn't need that many people. It's a horrible thing to do to a woman, having ten or 12 kids, it wrecks her.'

After the truth came out, Casey and Peter were able to develop a much closer bond, Annie says she did not pry into their relationship too much although they liked to talk about history and politics together.

When she looks back to the time when she revealed the news, she says that though she didn't

like being forced to become a different person, she embraced the strength that she found.

'Human beings are sneaky. I had to call up somebody in me, and she had to come out and I have to tell you I had fun with her. She was fun, she was tough, she was feisty, she was playful. It came across a little bit like the War Of The Roses, it was for a little bit.'

She recalls Casey even once said to her: 'I didn't think, you had it in you. I had no idea.'

Annie remembers the last time she saw Casey in the early 1990s. She says they talked for hours and made peace after all the drama that had led to his downfall.

She said: 'I saw him, we talked for a long time, it was many years ago, that was really the last time I saw him.'

'We had a lot of fun. I met him in New York and I talked to him



Controversial: Eamonn Casey

for hours. He came to visit me. It was funny, there was a lot of laughter. He talked about different things, I think he was doing work down south where he lived, in Ecuador. He said he liked it. He was vibrant, nothing was wrong with Eamonn.

'He looked good - he was amazingly young looking, he had really good skin.'

'He was really quick, didn't harp on anything that was negative. He said, "it's better to talk and have a laugh and remember and just go forward, and hope for the best".'

'He was just extremely positive. He wanted to clear the air, nobody blamed anybody.'

'He didn't believe in looking back. That's what I sensed. You make your peace with it - and you go forward.'