

*"What's more alarming to me is people who've been here for years and years are packing up. Families are moving. You've had the community people who set up business and their families, they're going."*

**Nollaig Cleary**  
New York Gaelic Athletic Association

## Irish Immigration Slips Into Reverse

*As Post-9/11 Security Increases Pressure on the Undocumented, Emerald Isle Offers Haven*

By MICHELLE GARCIA  
Washington Post Staff Writer

NEW YORK — By now the shipping container carrying Jonathan Langan's material life in the United States has arrived in Ireland. The plush green furniture, his American flag and the construction tools of his trade are all gone from his Queens apartment.

Langan, a lanky, red-haired Irishman, was bidding a final farewell to his adopted country. He didn't leave for want of work — his fledgling construction company was booming. Success was his problem. The more prosperous his company became, the more Langan feared he would get snared by immigration agents.

"You don't want to give off red flags because you're not supposed to be working," said Langan, 24, who lived illegally in the United States for three years. "It's too dangerous, what happens if you get caught."

The green is draining out of the Irish immigration boom that revitalized neighborhoods across New York over the past two decades. Fear of getting caught in a post-Sept. 11 net coupled with the booming economy in Ireland is drawing thousands of Irish back to the Emerald Isle. Numbers vary on how many have left: The Irish government estimates that about 14,000 Irish returned from the United States since 2001, with more than half of them coming from New York. The Census Bureau reported that between 2000 and 2004, the Irish population throughout the United States shrank by 28,500 people, to 128,000.

A more vivid picture of the exodus is the Gaelic downtown of the northern Bronx, on the border with Yonkers, where green signs and shamrocks decorate store windows.

The Padded Wagon, a popular moving company among the Irish, shipped 30 containers to Ireland in the past three months, each containing the possessions of an Irish family. The Irish games — Gaelic football and hurling — have suffered losses. More than 200 players returned to Ireland in the past year, said Seamus Dooley, president of the Gaelic Athletic Association, which has its games at Gaelic Park in the Bronx.

Last month, the Irish minister for social affairs visited New York, to unveil "Returning to Ireland," a guide for Irish preparing for a permanent return trip. "A travel agent was saying they had sold 1,700 one-way tickets to Ireland," said Geraldine McNabb, an Irish-born naturalized citizen, while she sipped a cran-



Jonathan Langan, left, loading his belongings with his uncle, Michael Tierney, is returning to Ireland despite Langan's success with a new construction company in New York.

berry cocktail at a pub. "They're not coming back."

Post-Sept. 11 security procedures have disrupted life for the city's undocumented Irish, who number about 20,000, according to estimates by Irish officials and activists. Few experience immigration raids in their homes and job sites. In 2005 just 43 Irish nationals were deported from the United States, none from the New York area, according to U.S. immigration officials.

But federal and state policy changes, the fingerprinting of foreign nationals at airports and a crackdown on driver's licenses have made it much more difficult to hop a plane to visit relatives or drive a car. And tighter scrutiny of banking transactions to prevent the financing of terrorism has scared off families and made starting a business far more dicey.

"What's more alarming to me is people who've been here for years and years are packing up. Families are moving," said Nollaig Cleary, president of the women's division of the New York Gaelic Athletic Association. "You've had the community people who set up business and their families, they're going."

Brenda Flannagan, 31, immigrated illegally to the United States in her twenties, looking for adventure. Now she has a husband and a baby, and is looking to settle down. A trip back to Ireland to visit her parents could leave her open to discovery by immigration officials — so she is going home for good.

Raising a child will only compound her difficulties

here. "You can't drive. It will get more difficult," said Flannagan, who expects to leave in the fall. "Things like play dates and after-school activities."

With fewer immigrants pouring in, and so many Irish packing up, pub talk revolves around the question of the survival of the Irish spirit in New York. Irish immigrants poured in by the hundreds of thousands in the 19th century and again in the early 20th century.

A third wave came in the 1980s when the Irish economy tanked, and it rejuvenated Irish culture in New York, as politically inspired Irish rock and hip-hop bands worked the club scene, and Irish theater and poetry spread throughout the city.

"You have a great Irish neighborhood beginning to crumble," said Niall O'Dowd, publisher of the Irish Voice and chairman of the newly formed Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform. "Unfortunately Americans are mixing up terrorism and immigration."

The Irish, however, retain considerable political clout. Fifteen years ago, they successfully lobbied Congress to direct tens of thousands of green cards into the hands of undocumented Irish.

O'Dowd and other activists recently rallied the fighting Irish spirits at Rory Dolan's pub in Yonkers, as they begin lobbying for an immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship.

The Irish government contributed 30,000 euros, (\$40,000 at today's rate) to the effort. Tim O'Connor, Ireland's consul general in New York, stresses that the United States played a vital role in helping to stimulate Ireland's economic boom with investments.

"It's in the interest of both countries that we have people who have the ability to go back and forth between both countries," said O'Connor, noting that 15 percent of new businesses in Ireland were built by returning Irish.

Some Irish take their leave with optimism, looking to the jobs and construction boom in their homeland. "Everything is so good in Ireland," said Flannagan, while her husband, John, a carpenter, was at the pub enjoying "a few socials." "There's a lot of construction work for the guys."

Flannagan held her baby girl, a U.S. citizen and last link to the United States. "Maybe she can sponsor us when she's 21," she said. Then, she added, "I think the notion of coming back, by then, will be gone."

## Navy Counsel Issued Warning On Torture

Associated Press

The Navy's general counsel warned Pentagon officials two years before the Abu Ghraib prison scandal that circumventing international agreements on torture and detainees' treatment would invite abuse, according to a published report.

Legal theories granting the president the right to authorize abuse despite the Geneva Conventions were unlawful, dangerous and erroneous, then-General Counsel Alberto J. Mora advised officials in a secret memo. The 22-page document was obtained by the New Yorker for an article in its Feb. 27 issue.

A Pentagon spokeswoman said yesterday that she had not read the magazine article.

The July 7, 2004, memo recounted Mora's 2½-year effort to halt a policy that he feared would authorize cruelty toward terrorism suspects.

It also indicates that some lawyers in the Justice and Defense departments objected to the legal course the administration undertook, according to the report.

Mora said Navy intelligence officers reported in 2002 that military-intelligence interrogators at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, were engaging in escalating levels of physical and psychological abuse rumored to have been authorized at a high level in Washington.

"I was appalled by the whole thing," Mora told the magazine. "It was clearly abusive and it was clearly contrary to everything we were ever taught about American values."

Mora said he thought his concerns were being addressed by a special group set up by the Pentagon. But he discovered in January 2003 that a Justice Department opinion had negated his arguments with what he described as "an extreme and virtually unlimited theory of the extent of the president's commander in chief authority."

When the first pictures from the Iraqi prison Abu Ghraib appeared in the press in spring 2004, Mora said, he felt stunned and dismayed that what he had warned against had taken place, and in a different setting than Guantanamo Bay.

Mora retired this year and now is a general counsel for Wal-Mart.

A U.N. report issued last week called for the United States to close its prison at Guantanamo Bay. In response, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld rejected accusations of torture or abuse and said the detention facility is well-run.

DECORATE ME. FURNISH ME. ACCESSORIZE ME.

# LOVE ME.

LISTEN TO YOUR HOME.

It's your last chance to save during the final day of our Love Your Home Event.  
The more you love your home — the more you'll love the price.

ENJOY **5% off\*** with a purchase of \$1,500 or more  
AN **7% off\*** with a purchase of \$3,500 or more  
ADDITIONAL **10% off\*** with a purchase of \$6,500 or more

Love Your Home Event

And the best part — additional percentages are off our already low Winter Sale prices. At Mastercraft Interiors you're sure to find something you love for every room in your home. But remember, it all ends today. Don't miss it.

Plus, No Payment, No Interest for 6 months when you use your Mastercraft Interiors Credit Card.†

ROCKVILLE  
1428 Rockville Pike  
301.770.0400

GAITHERSBURG  
Lakeforest Mall  
301.417.9259

ANNAPOLIS  
1405 Forest Drive  
410.269.5530

FAIRFAX  
Fair Oaks Mall  
703.385.8822

ALEXANDRIA  
3155 Duke Street  
703.212.8226

**Mastercraft Interiors**<sup>™</sup>  
THE ART OF HOME FURNISHING

BE MY DESIGNER.  
Design Services are complimentary with a minimum purchase through a designer.

\*Expires February 20, 2006. Excludes Drexel Heritage casegoods and upholstery, Henkel Harris casegoods, Lillian August casegoods and upholstery, Nichols & Stone CW Collection and American Spirit Collection, Pennsylvania House casegoods, Stickley casegood special purchases, Durham bedroom specials, Lakeforest Clearance Sale, Stickleby Truckload and Rug Event at Fair Oaks and Stickleby tabloid specials. Also excludes floor sample/as-is and warehouse sale merchandise, bedding, in-stock accessories, wallpaper, cut yardage, COMs, table pads, furniture care products and Gold program. †6 months refers to deferral from date of purchase. Minimum purchase \$3500. Financing available to qualified buyers. Financing not available on prior purchases, balance due amounts or warehouse sale purchases. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer, may not be used on prior sales, or on balance due amounts from previously written sales. Delivery available at a nominal charge. ©Mastercraft Interiors, Ltd. 2006.