



A Tragedy Waiting to Happen - The Chaotic Life of Brendan O'Donnell: The true story of an abandoned orphan who became a psychotic killer

Tony Muggivan, JJ Muggivan

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For years, Tony Muggivan urged the Irish social system to offer appropriate treatment to the desperately sick Brendan O'Donnell. *A Tragedy Waiting to Happen* is the harrowing story of his doomed attempts and the awful consequences of that failure: a triple murder.

Tony Muggivan is a farmer. One wet night in February 1989, Brendan O'Donnell entered his life and that of his family. He had absconded from Trinity Detention Centre in Dublin and had been missing for a week. He turned up at Tony Muggivan's door, dirty, dishevelled and starving. The Muggivans took him in. Tony had never seen Brendan before.

The next day, Tony began a search for help. It was clear that Brendan should be in a psychiatric unit, not a detention centre. Doctors, social workers and the Gardaí all agreed that this was the best course of action. As there was no place for him in Co. Clare, Tony took Brendan to hospitals in Ballinasloe and Galway, where they refused to admit him. Frustrated and angry, they returned home. Over the next five years Brendan began living rough and embarked on a campaign of armed robbery and mayhem in the east Clare area. It was evident he was out of control.

In 1994 Brendan murdered Imelda Riney, her three-year old son Liam and Fr. Joe Walsh. It was one of the most shocking crimes of modern times. Brendan was convicted in 1996 and died in prison in 1997 in circumstances that have never been fully explained by the authorities.

Tony and J.J. Muggivan recount Brendan O'Donnell's tragic life, and highlight the failures of the system to help a deeply disturbed boy who later became a psychotic killer. Tony had known that something awful was going to happen: for five years, he had tried and failed to get the Irish social and medical system to offer appropriate treatment to a desperately sick young man.

A Tragedy Waiting to Happen reveals the truth behind the headlines and the real Brendan O'Donnell.

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