

7TH AUGUST 2020

Two arrested over €3m heroin haul

Well-known figures in Irish domestic soccer questioned over 22kg seizure

CONOR LALLY

Security and Crime Editor

Two well-known figures in Irish domestic soccer have been arrested over the discovery of a consignment of heroin valued at €3 million.

One of the men has a conviction for a firearms offence involving a replica gun and is also a suspect in a conspiracy that resulted in the shooting of Dublin man Robert Delaney in 2008.

Mr Delaney has been in a permanent vegetative state in hospital since the shooting almost 12 years ago. He was working as a postman when targeted over intervening in a row outside a pub.

The suspects were arrested following a joint operation between the Garda National Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau (GNDOCB) and Revenue's Custom Service led to the multimillion euro narcotics seizure.

Gardaí believe the drugs had recently entered the country. The haul was monitored, leading to the arrest of the two suspects – aged 40s and 30s – in the Dublin 15 area.

Garda station

The arrested men were being questioned in Blanchardstown Garda station under section 2 of the Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act.

Det Chief Supt Angela Willis, head of GNDOCB, said the operation had “resulted in the seizure of a significant quantity of heroin from circulation within communities that are suffering the consequences of drug trafficking”.

In 2008 Mr Delaney, a fa-

ther of two, intervened in a dispute outside a Dublin pub. One of the men he challenged is the older suspect who is in custody over the heroin find. That man has links to people previously in the Provisional IRA.

Over a period of months after the incident, Mr Delaney was followed, intimidated and in October of that year was shot at his home in Tallaght. When a caller rang the bell to his apartment Mr Delaney looked over the balcony to see who it was and was met with a shotgun blast to the face. He suffered catastrophic injuries and has no hope of recovery.

“One of the men has a conviction for a firearms offence involving a replica gun

The gunman who attempted to murder him, Daniel Gaynor from Dublin, carried out shootings for money. Gardaí believe he was paid €10,000 to shoot Mr Delaney.

Gaynor was shot dead in Finglas, north Dublin, in August 2010. Several crime gangs co-operated to kill him because he had worked as a killer for the Real IRA.

Detectives believe the older man now in custody conspired with an older close associate previously involved with the Provisional IRA, and other men, to shoot Mr Delaney.

The man was arrested by gardaí investigating the attack on Mr Delaney, but was released without charge.