

Alleged child rapist to lose Florida home as bank moves to foreclose

By John Breslin

FORMER Irish swimming coach George Gibney, who once faced numerous sexual abuse charges, faces losing his home in Florida after a bank launched foreclosure proceedings against him.

Bank of America lodged papers with a court to seize the \$154,000 (€105,000) apartment in Orange City near Orlando, which Gibney bought in early 2007.

Property values have plummeted and foreclosures have soared in the sunshine state since the property bubble burst.

Gibney also lost his job after a local anti-abuse group outed him as an alleged sexual abuser.

National swimming coach between 1984 and 1992, he was charged with 17 counts of sexual abuse of minors.

But a judicial review in 1994 prevented the case from going forward because of the lapse of time between the alleged offences and when the complaints were made.

Gibney was accused of sexually abusing swimmers between 1966 and 1982.

After first going to Scotland, 63-year-old Gibney moved to Colorado, then to Florida, where he bought the apartment, found work in an hotel and became a prominent member of the local chapter of the Knights of Columbanus. He lost his job at the

'Nobody speaks to him'

Marriott Hotel after being outed by the anti-abuse group, Abuse Watch, led by Irishman Evin Daly.

Protests were held outside the apartment and fliers sent to his neighbours.

Mr Daly, who organised the protests, said Gibney was still living in the apartment until recently.

'I have not heard that he has left yet,' Mr Daly said.

'We have spoken to representatives from his community and all are aware of his past - nobody speaks to him. He avoids everyone when he leaves and comes home.'

Mr Daly has also sent files to the local police, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Foreign Affairs in Ireland.

He believes Gibney should be deported or extradited back home.

However, he cannot be extradited unless fresh charges are brought against him in Ireland. That is unlikely to happen.

The High Court recently ruled against a 39-year-old woman who took a civil action against Gibney and two Irish swimming associations, claiming she was abused 20 years ago.

She claimed it happened on a swimming trip to Orlando, Florida, close to where Gibney lives.

The court ruled against the woman because nothing happened in connection with the complaint for nearly 13 years.

Gibney was originally charged in 1992 with raping seven boys and girls but evaded a trial on technical grounds.

But a second investigation was launched into his activities after four more alleged victims came forward and accused him of abuse.

In 1996, the Director of Public Prosecutions directed that no fur-

Neighbours told of former swim coach's past



Outed: George Gibney, main, and pool at his Florida home

ther prosecution should follow from that investigation, citing insufficient evidence.

Gibney left for Scotland and was reported to be coaching juvenile swimmers before he was tracked down.

He left for the U.S. shortly after, moving to Colorado in 1997 and living there for a decade before being tracked down once again.

Several civil cases have been taken against Gibney, another former swimming coach Derry O'Rourke, who served nine years for raping young swimmers, and the Irish Amateur Swimming Association, later renamed Swim Ireland.

These cases detail alleged abuse for nearly three decades, involving a couple of generations of the best young swimmers in the country.

In the case dismissed by the High

Court, the woman alleged she was raped by Gibney in an hotel on a swimming training camp trip to Florida in the early Nineties.

At the time she was 17 and considered a top prospect.

She claimed in an interview in 2007: 'He raped me there in the hotel and I remember he had his hand around my neck.'

'He said to me that if I ever told anybody he'd sue my family, and that nobody would believe me because I was a nobody and he was George Gibney.'

She was one of his last alleged victims. At the time, Olympic swimmer Gary O'Toole with others were compiling a dossier of complaints against the pair.

The fact that Gibney avoided a trial has infuriated many anti-abuse campaigners in both Ireland and the

U.S. Mr Daly, with his Abuse Watch group and One Child International, has pursued Gibney after finding out he was living in Florida.

He travelled to Ireland last year, hired a lawyer and took out advertisements asking for alleged victims to come forward. Mr Daly has also

'He avoids everyone when he's home'

questioned whether Gibney properly filled out his immigration forms, including revealing to authorities in the U.S. that he had been charged with sexual offences.

The foreclosure on his home adds to pressure on the former

swimming coach.

His employment at the hotel ceased last year after an anonymous fax was sent detailing his history.

He faces being thrown out of his home following Bank of America filing the foreclosure application with Volusia County Circuit Court on April 12.

It has also emerged that Gibney's name is being mentioned in connection with a lawsuit filed in California against USA Swimming by a number of women who claimed to have been abused by their coaches.

Lawyers for the women have been trying to find out, when questioning potential witnesses, whether USA Swimming provided any letters in support of Gibney's application for a visa to the U.S.

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Family tell of grief after two die in arson attack

A COUPLE who lost their daughter and grandson in an arson attack have spoken of their grief for the first time.

Mother-of-one Helena O'Dwyer, 25, and her nephew Ryan, five, died after a petrol bomb was thrown into their home at 3am on Sunday.

Last night Miss O'Dwyer's father Joe said she was a normal woman doing her best to rear her daughter, Courtney, who escaped the fire.

'She adored her daughter who from the moment she arrived brought love

into all our lives,' he said. 'Ryan and Courtney were like twins. They were both five and they did everything together. Now they won't be making their Communion and Confirmations together. We are heartbroken.'

Mr O'Dwyer and his wife Helena asked for anyone with 'the smallest piece of information' about the attack on Nutley Avenue, Mahon, Co. Cork, to contact gardai.

A 22-year-old man was released from custody last night following a day of questioning.



Loss: Helena and Courtney

We could be doing Moher to win wonders title, say critics

THE Cliffs of Moher are in the running to become one of the Seven Wonders of Nature but the Government is doing little to secure the title.

The predicted economic value to the State of the Co. Clare cliffs winning the title could be €685million over five years, it is estimated.

But one Clare TD claims little cash has been invested in the campaign.

Fianna Fáil spokesperson on Tourism Timmy Dooley said: 'If ever there was a case of investing a little to

secure a lot, then this is it.' Each winner - to be named later this year - could benefit by \$1billion (€685million) over five years.

'If we want to ensure that the Cliffs of Moher are named among the new seven Wonders of Nature next November, then we need to be making the case now,' Mr Dooley said.

'This would be a huge boost to the Irish economy and it is the type of revenue the Government should be looking to generate.'