

President Biden, Could I Have Just Six Minutes of Your Time to Discuss My Husband's Death?

Naoise Connolly Ryan's husband Mick Ryan and 156 others were killed when a Boeing 737 Max crashed six minutes after take-off from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on March 10, 2019

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Dear President Biden,

I imagine your focus will rightly be on the 3,500 people who died during decades of violence in Northern Ireland as you visit Ireland to mark the 25th anniversary of the [Good Friday Agreement](#).

I want to draw your attention to the fact that a tenth of that number, 346 people, were criminally killed by American company Boeing — not over decades, but in a short five-month period in 2018-19. My husband was one of them.

In both cases, many of the families of the dead are still looking for justice. But, whereas in the past, many politicians in the North were prevented from even talking to the media, Boeing executives walk the streets freely. Former Boeing CEO, Denis Muilenberg, even got paid a \$80 million (€73m) severance package when he was fired from Boeing after the two crashes.

I wrote to the Tánaiste Michéal Martin to request a very short meeting/call with you to discuss a matter of great importance, and one you will keenly understand due to your own personal loss in the past, the death of my spouse, Mick, at the hands of the Boeing Company.

In fact, I was only looking for six minutes of your time. This is how long it took for a Boeing 737 Max plane to crash after take-off in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, killing all 157 passengers on board. I understand you have a packed schedule on this trip, so I thought that if you don't

have six minutes perhaps you could spare two minutes to read this.



I would have preferred to do this in person, but I would still like you to read about my late husband, Mick Ryan, who was the Deputy Chief Engineer for the United Nations World Food Programme. He worked in some of the most dangerous countries in the world, bringing aid to those most in need.

He worked in places such as Afghanistan and Liberia during the Ebola outbreak, but it was his work in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, during the Rohingya refugee crisis where all his abilities and skills were really put to the test. Mick had the vision to understand the risks faced by the refugees and how engineering lay at the heart of the solution.

Mick also had the leadership skills to navigate his way through an array of impediments, uniting three of the largest UN agencies into one platform in a race against time to save lives. He saw the good in everyone and was able to cut through the bureaucracy to bring people together for those who needed the most help. His motto was to set egos aside, see the good in each other and work together.

President Biden, I would like you to read of our ongoing battle for justice and how a secret sweetheart deal during the final two weeks of the Trump administration inflicted further pain and suffering on victims' families, including mine. I want to let you know that some relatives have refused to accept the "blood money" from this secret deal (Deferred Prosecution Agreement - DPA) and we are continuing our fight for justice in the courts.

In October last year, the [US district court agreed that we were crime victims](#) under the Crime Victims Rights Act (CVRA) and that the US Department of Justice should meet and confer with us.

The US Attorney General, Merrick Garland, should treat us in this case as he once treated the victims and families of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing in which 168 people were killed. He worked very hard to protect their rights. In fact, as lead prosecutor in the case, his handling of the case was described as 'flawless'. He made time and space for the families and victims, often reaching out to them personally.

So what has changed since then? And why have the tables turned in the Justice Department

to work against victims' rights, instead giving preferential treatment to the criminals?

Even though US district court judge Reed O'Connor said Boeing had committed "the deadliest corporate crime in US history", he said he was [unable to ensure justice for the victims](#). Boeing pleaded not guilty last February to a charge of defrauding the US to get regulators to approve the safety of its Max 737 jet, although they earlier accepted full liability.

I, therefore, want to make a direct request to you, President Biden, to ask for your support to help us to lift a sealing order in our civil cases which prevents us from sharing critical evidence with the US Department of Justice that clearly shows the former and current CEOs of Boeing knew the planes were unsafe prior to the two crashes.

The Deferred Prosecution Agreement prepared by the Department of Justice and agreed with Boeing gives Boeing executives immunity from prosecution. So even though the Department of Justice told us when we met with them in Washington last November that if we have any new information we should come forward and share it with them, we are prevented from doing so because of this sealing order.

Judge O'Connor's decision not to reopen a plea deal that allows Boeing executives go free is now being appealed to the fifth circuit court. The families are unified in their commitment to pursue justice at all costs and will continue to fight to have the deal struck down, to have our rights as crime victims under US law properly recognised, and to seek justice for our loved ones.

Help us to bring transparency and accountability to this case by helping us to lift this sealing order. Help make public the quarterly reports Boeing has to file with the Department of Justice under the Deferred Prosecution Agreement.

Just like the families and victims in the North and those of the Oklahoma City bombing, we want the truth, justice and accountability. We know this is something that the US and, in particular General Garland, can deliver if the will is there. Mick and the 345 other passengers deserve this, but we need your help. The question is, are you willing to help us?

Respectfully,

Naoise Connolly Ryan (widow of Mick Ryan)

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