



Caio Benicio IMAGE: Eimer McAuley/The Journal

DUBLIN

# 'It was pure instinct': Brazilian Deliveroo driver tells of moment he stopped Parnell Street attacker

The 43-year-old dad of two saw the incident unfolding, got off his bike, and used his helmet to stop the attack.

11.25pm, 23 Nov 2023 ↗ 439k



**Eimer McAuley**  
Reports from Dublin

DELIVEROO DRIVER CAIO Benicio was on his motorbike this afternoon, on a job, when he saw a man with a knife attacking a young girl on Parnell Square East.

Immediately, the 43-year-old Brazilian dismounted his bike, took off his helmet, and hit the attacker with it.

"I didn't even make a decision, it was pure instinct, and it was all over in seconds. He fell to the ground, I didn't see where knife went, and other people stepped in," he told *The Journal* tonight.

“I have two kids myself, so I had to do something. I did what anyone would do. People were there but they couldn’t step in because he was armed, but I knew I could use my helmet as a weapon.”

Tonight, all of Benicio’s thoughts are on the five-year-old girl, who he saw brutally attacked, and her condition.

“I am praying, it’s all I am thinking of. I saw her in the ambulance, she looked so vulnerable, I had to go with gardaí then. I am waiting for news about her. I am hoping,” he said.

“If a child didn’t survive, I would always think, I could have been faster. I chose to have surgery on my knee recently, it made me slow to get off the bike, could I have been faster?

“If all the victims survive, I will be thankful that I was in the right place, at the right time,” he said.

He added that a creche worker who was with the children did all she could to try and protect them.

Now Benicio is exhausted – all day he has been running on adrenaline. He doesn’t know where his bike is as he left it at the scene inside of the Garda cordon. However, he’s not worried about it; he’s worried about the victims.

“I remember it all in flashes now. It was over in seconds it seemed,” he said.

Benicio came to Ireland for work after his restaurant burned down in Brazil. He hopes his children can come here one day.

He was saddened to see the chaos on Dublin’s streets tonight – with anti-immigrant sentiments being expressed by rioters and far-right actors.

“It looks like they hate immigrants. Well I am an immigrant, and I did what I could to try and save that little girl,” he said.

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Cliff Nolan with a customer.

#### DUBLIN RIOTS

# Owner of Independent Dublin bike shop raided in riots 'emotional and in shock'

Cliff Nolan is in his second year of business and has been robbed of thousands of euros worth of stock.

4.15pm, 25 Nov 2023 ↗ 78.4k 💬 175



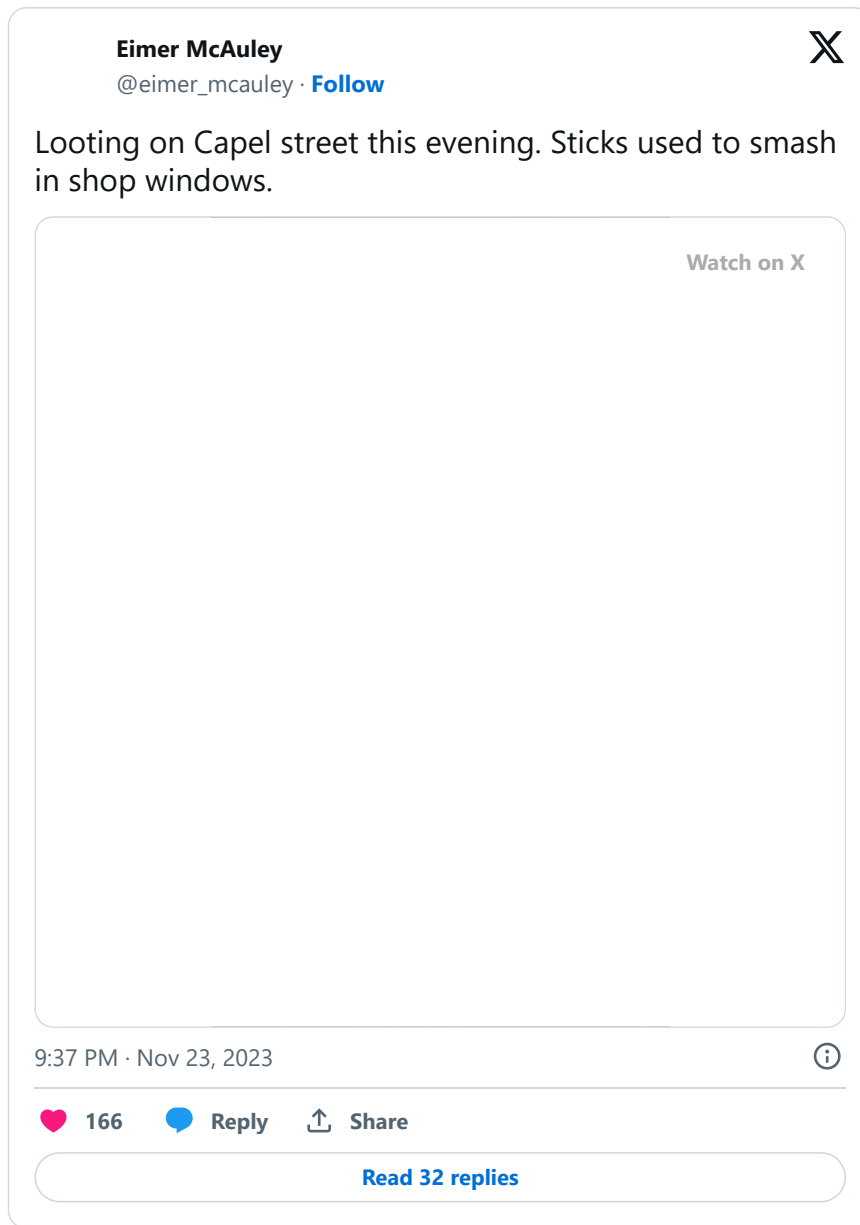
DUBLINER CLIFF NOLAN, 38, got a call from a friend on Thursday night who let him know that his independent bike shop on Capel Street in Dublin city was being robbed.

He immediately got up his live surveillance of The Bike Stop Dublin, and saw masked rioters robbing the store in real time.

“The windows on the storefront were smashed, and I have a cage inside the shop, they managed to get that off the wall as the hinges gave in, it’s a very old wall, and then they started taking bikes out.

“They worked fast, they only had 12 minutes, but they were in and out, stealing more bikes,” Cliff said.

*The Journal* witnessed the shop being looted on Thursday night, as several masked individuals used wooden sticks to smash in the shop’s windows, and then quickly began removing bikes and other items.



Ten bikes, several of them worth €4000, were stolen, as well as valuable pieces of equipment. The till from the shop was found discarded in a nearby laneway, and destroyed.

Cliff said that he and his business partner “don’t have spare stock”, and that the financial cost of the robbery has hit them hard in what should be their busiest season pre-Christmas.

“We’ve been lucky starting out with this shop, I have always loved bikes and I worked in a different bike shop before. Everyone knows that it takes a while for small businesses to start making money, but we’ve gotten good reviews, and all those little things count when you are new.

“Until now, I haven’t had to reach too deep into my own pocket, but we are going to have to. The storefront needs replaced, the shutters need replaced, the cage needs replaced, the till. The stock,” he said.

Cliff was initially in shock when he saw the damage to the shop in person, and he says he’s been on a “rollercoaster” of emotions since then.

“I was in shock, I was angry, now I feel emotional. We have weeks of this ahead of us, in terms of fixing the shop, when we should be able to focus on selling

bikes for Christmas,” he said.

The shop owners said the support they have had from other business owners on Capel Street has been amazing.

“There’s been so many coffees and pastries brought in here in the last two days. Next door gave me equipment to help with the fix up, they didn’t ask for anything in return. A friend gave us the wooden fixture that’s acting as a shopfront for now, so the support has been great.

“My niece does Twitter, and she set up one of **those Go Fund things**, and I think she showed me that it’s raised some money that will go some way to covering a portion of the costs, It’s mad to see people we don’t know helping out like that,” he said.

The Gardai have been in touch with the team at The Bike Stop Dublin, and will be calling in to investigate the break in and theft further in the coming days.

Businesses across the Dublin city centre area were broken into and looted from during the riots on Thursday night, which kicked off after a horrific security incident on Parnell Square East earlier in the day, when a man with a knife attacked three children and a creche worker in her 30s, who did her best to protect the kids.

Over 30 people were called before the Dublin Criminal Courts of Justice yesterday for charges including theft, disruption of public order, and possession of a knife in one case.

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Ahmad, from Pakistan, the manager of the Star Asia supermarket.

#### RIOTS AFTERMATH

# Shops closing early on Parnell Street as immigrant staff fear being targeted after Dublin riots

On Friday morning a customer told two Indian staff members having a conversation in Centra to ‘speak English in Ireland’.

5.50pm, 28 Nov 2023 ↗ 27.5k



SOME SHOPS AND food outlets in the Dublin city centre area where rioting and looting occurred last Thursday are still closing early at the end of each day, as multiple immigrant workers have said they “do not feel safe anymore”.

Fabricio Cordio, 28, has lived in Dublin for one year. Last Thursday afternoon, after the horrific news broke that a man had attacked three school children and a creche worker, friends began to send him videos of increasingly aggressive demonstrations taking place in the streets nearby his workplace.

Some of the rioting that took place on Thursday was organised by a far right anti-immigrant faction, who were “protesting” on the assumption that the perpetrator of the attack was an immigrant.

Racist slurs and anti-immigrant sentiments were shouted by individuals who turned up at the cordoned off scene on Parnell Square East.

On Parnell Street, a Gardai vehicle was set on fire and a public order unit garda holding a riot shield was pushed to the ground.

The Taoiseach has today confirmed that the perpetrator and one of the child victims of the attack come from an immigrant background. The man who stepped in and struck the attacker, knocking him to the floor with a motorcycle helmet, was also an immigrant Deliveroo driver from Brazil.



Fabricio Cordio, 28, who works in Sampa Market on Bolton Street.

Cordio made the decision to close Sampa Market on Bolton Street early, and get himself home to safety. Since then, the shop has not returned to its normal opening hours.

“I feel apprehensive. My friends feel the same way. I can only speak for Brazilians, but we feel like we need to be careful. We are not Irish, and there is a lot of hate on the streets.

“When I came to Dublin I didn’t imagine something like this, I thought it was safe, not anymore. I’m not going out much in the evenings now,” he said.

Richard Guiney, the CEO of Dublin Town, spoke to *The Journal* about how footfall is down for Dublin city businesses, coming into what is supposed to be the busiest time of year for trade.

He said that Gardaí need to re-instill the level of confidence the public has about being safe in the city, and maintain the upped presence we have at the moment.

Separately, he said that retailers are consistently dealing with antisocial behaviour by groups of teens.

“Young teenagers seem to have been displaced by Covid and their behaviour is difficult. They’ve missed an important developmental phase in their lives, but that does need to be addressed otherwise society will pay a big price,” he said.

Thaynara, 26, is also from Brazil, she works on Parnell Street in the Latina convenience and coffee shop. The shop has closed early each evening since last Thursday.

“I walk down the street with my hood up now.





Thaynara, 26, who works in the Latina shop on Parnell Street.

“I was here till seven pm on Thursday, I closed up early and got on the bus. In the days after we had kids throwing eggs at the shop. At 6pm we are closing up now, usually we’d be open later.

“I felt safe in Dublin before. Now I am hiding my face,” she said.

Chai works in Centra further up the street. He is from Andhra in India. He was working on Thursday and Friday morning.

“We got out early on Thursday, the real trouble, like the Gardaí car being set alight and gardaí being attacked was happening on a different part of the street.

“On Friday morning I felt a little scared coming in. I watched the riots, and I knew that it was not going to be good for foreigners in this country.

“At the start of my shift I was speaking to a coworker who is also Indian, and a customer said: ‘You are in Ireland, speak English’. Usually you wouldn’t accept that, but I had seen what happened the night before. I heard that voice message someone sent into a groupchat saying ‘kill immigrants’, I’m worried about what could happen,” he said.



Centra on Parnell Street.

Chai said that Centra has been keeping an eye on what is happening in the area and making decisions on how late to stay open day by day.

“When we see a group of two or three people with their hoods up now coming in, we feel scared, because we don’t know if it could be one of the people who took part in that burning of the city,” he explained.

Ahmad is from Pakistan and he manages the Star Asia supermarket on Parnell Street. He says that the shop has a lot of regular Irish customers.

“They are good to us, and people have checked that we are doing ok,” he said.

He has lived in Dublin for ten years, and says he has never seen destruction and mayhem on the scale that he witnessed on Thursday during his time here.

“I was here until 8pm. We could see people running past to the other end of the street, we put the shutters down and got out. Anti-social behaviour on this street is not new.

“Always, we have people shoplifting, and on a few occasions we have had people running in who were being chased by a group. One man who ran into the shop was followed by several men, who beat him until he was almost dead, right on my shop floor. There has never been enough of a police presence on the street. I have been threatened with bottles, threatened with needles, and I have faced racial abuse,” Ahmad said.

However, he feels that the riots on Thursday have left immigrants in Ireland more exposed to abuse.

“This is very very bad for foreigners. Not all Irish people are doing this kind of behaviour, it is just one group of people. We opened the shop late, I was scared all day. I was thinking someone would come in and give me trouble, but we were okay.

“I feel less safe at the moment, but I heard that garda are everywhere now. They need to be on this street, because it is less safe than other streets, and we need them here. People relax when they are here, they feel better,” he said.

Ahmad added that he is closing the shop early now, and that he is always checking the street outside.

Ella Chan moved to Dublin from mainland China 19 years ago; she is the manager of the Mushashi Sushi Bar.

“We saw the news as it happened on our phones, so we closed the restaurant, because our staff had to get home. We are still feeling a little bit scared now, and we are still closing two or three hours early each day.

“It’s not good for business. Lots of bookings have been cancelled, and this is usually our busiest time of year. Yesterday we were the last place open on the street, even though we closed early. That’s usually not the case,” she said.

“Personally I still feel safe, I like Irish people and they have always been nice to me, but what happened did worry us. We want business to get back to normal before Christmas,” Chan said.

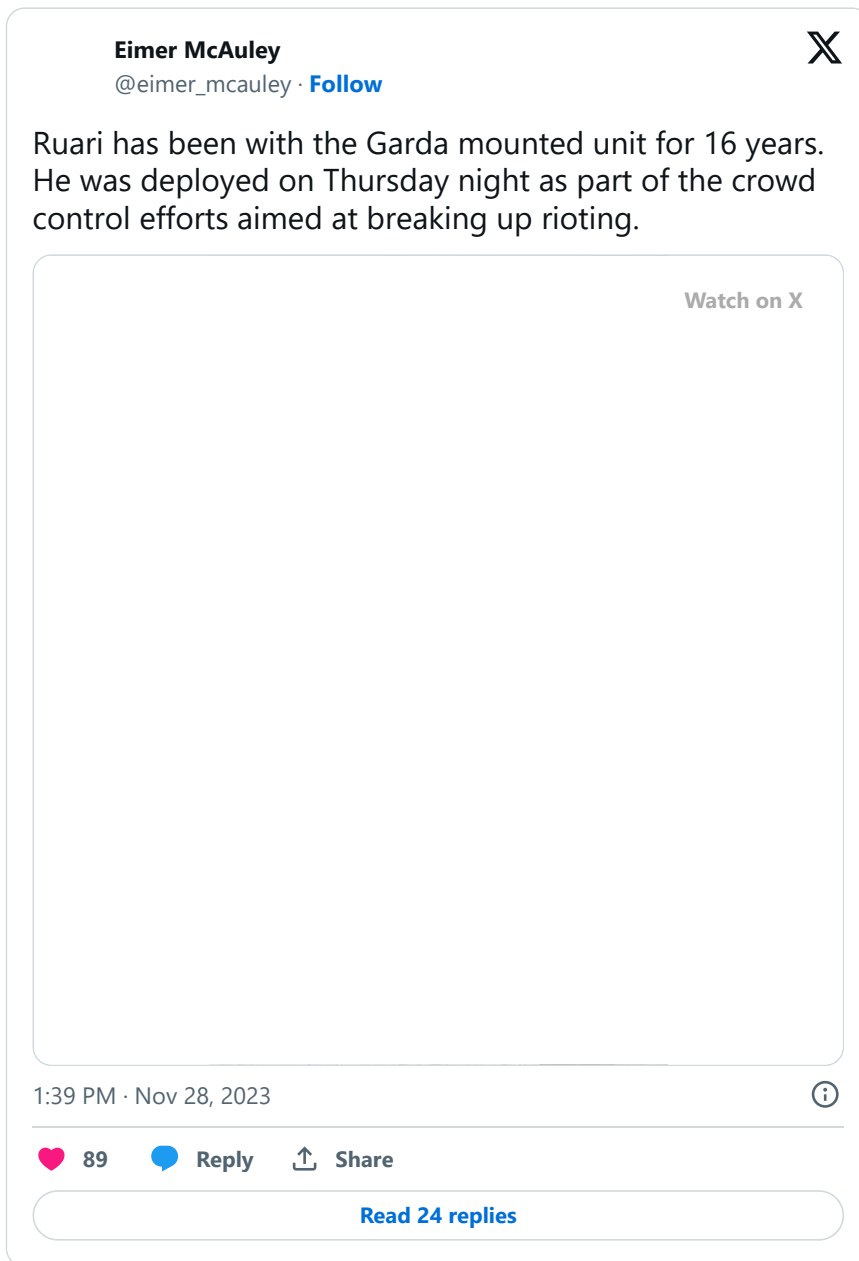
Sandy and Ben are also from China, they have lived in Dublin for years but only opened Phone Fix on Parnell Street two years ago.

Sandy said that they now have reduced opening hours, and that she feels more concerned for her personal safety in the city than she did before.

“We aren’t going out much in the evening. We stay home. We have two young children as well, so it is horrible to think about what happened to those children outside of the school [on Parnell Square],” she said.

Sandy added that she hopes the Government will support the Gardaí to maintain increased patrols in the city centre, as it has helped businesses recover from the riots.

Garda Sean Quinn, from the mounted unit, was patrolling Dublin city on horseback today.



He and his steed Ruari were deployed on Thursday night in order to assist with crowd control measures, and to split the rioting crowd up into smaller more manageable groups.

He said that Gardaí came from surrounding counties to assist those in Dublin who were trying to reassert control amidst the chaos.

Now, he says the aim of increased patrols is to make people feel safe.

“It’s something we need to see more of,” Quinn added.

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