

SHANE UNDERTAKER TOLD DEPP:



NOT IN THE PLANS
Johnny helps carry Shane's casket



CLOSE WITH STAR

Undertaker Philly with Depp

EXCLUSIVE by KEN SWEENEY
Showbiz Editor

THE undertaker at Shane MacGowan's funeral says security plans were ripped up after his last-minute decision to tell Johnny Depp: "You are going to carry Shane's coffin."

Philly Ryan revealed he made a "split-second decision" to invite the Pirates of the Caribbean star to help carry his pal's wicker casket out of St Mary of the Rosary Church, in Nenagh, Co Tipperary, last Friday.

It led to the Hollywood actor leading mourners from the church following the Pogues legend's star-studded farewell.

Undertaker and publican Philly Ryan, a close pal of Shane's for decades, told The Irish Sun: "This story has been busting inside of me, I suppose I'd better tell it."

"Johnny Depp carrying Shane's coffin. That was never meant to happen. I'm sure Johnny is still wondering how it happened. *"But when I saw the pride on his face as he carried Shane down the church, I knew I'd made the right decision."*

However, Philly's late call had serious consequences, as inviting Johnny to carry Shane's coffin out of the church departed from detailed security plans.

He told The Irish Sun: "When Johnny turned up at bottom of the church the crowd spotted him and started roaring. His security told me, 'Now look at the trouble you're after causing!'"

One attendee recounted to The Irish Sun how an excited fan sat on Johnny's lap and then asked for a selfie before being removed. But the undertaker insisted he

had no regrets about his late decision to throw proceedings into chaos by asking Depp to carry Shane on his final journey.

Philly told The Irish Sun: "Sometimes people don't treat celebrities like human beings. Johnny deserved to carry Shane's coffin. He was his best man. He was there for the right reasons."

But the undertaker admits Depp was gobsmacked when, in the final moments of Shane's funeral, Philly came down from the altar to find him in his pew.

Philly told us: "I said 'Johnny, you are going to carry Shane's coffin'. Johnny looked at me like I'd punched him in the face. 'What are you on about?'"

"I told him, 'We want you to carry Shane's coffin'. A security man rushed over and said

'Johnny! This is not in the plan!' But Johnny told the security guy, 'No, I'm going to do this'."

"The security were still dead against it, but by then I had Johnny's elbow on the coffin. No one expected Johnny to carry Shane's coffin."

"It was never in the plan. The next time I saw Johnny's security was at the cremation the next day and I never looked at them. They were ready to pull my head off!"

Global superstar Johnny jetted in specially for Shane's service. He read part of the Prayers of The Faithful at the service, which was hailed as the greatest send-off in Irish history.

It saw mourners dancing in the church as Glen Hansard and The Pogues sang the group's biggest hit, Fairytale of New York. A

recording from Bono, who could not make the mass, was played. Music stars Nick Cave, Imelda May and Liam O Maolai also gave emotional performances.

And ex-Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams delivered the first reading of the service at the request of Shane's wife, Victoria Mary Clarke.

But for Philly, watching Depp carry his pal's coffin from the church topped everything else.

He added: "I knew Johnny and Shane's relationship over the years."

"Their relationship was beyond celebrity. It was true friendship. He so deserved to carry Shane's coffin from that church." *ken.sweeney@the-sun.ie*

I said Johnny, you're going to carry the coffin FUNERAL SECURITY PLANS TORN UP



60TH BIRTHDAY

Shane with Victoria, Depp & Prez