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SPECIAL REPORT
**HOW THE
GOP STEALS
ELECTIONS**



Migos

HIGH TIMES
with the THREE
KINGS of HIP-HOP

ENFRANTS
RICHES
DEPRIM

1971-2018

Dolores O'Riordan

of THE CRANBERRIES

DOLORES O'RIORDAN SEEMED IN GOOD SPIRITS the second weekend in January. On the 12th, the Cranberries frontwoman and a longtime bandmate, guitarist Noel Hogan, spoke by phone about a March tour and starting their first studio album in six years. "She was great," says Hogan.

Two days later, O'Riordan e-mailed him several fresh songs.

But those plans never came to be. On the morning of January 15th, O'Riordan was found dead in a London hotel room. She was 46. At press time, the results of an autopsy and toxicology report had not been announced, and police were treating the death as unexplained but not suspicious. The news marked the shocking end for a singer whose steely voice and lyrics about both the personal and the political made her one of the most potent stars of the alt-rock era. As U2 said in a group comment, "She had such strength of conviction, yet she could speak to the fragility in all of us."

O'Riordan was raised near the Irish city of Limerick, the youngest of seven. She idolized her dad, a farm laborer who was injured in a bike accident that prevented him from working. But there was a lot of darkness. At one point, her sister accidentally burned down the family home. Later, Dolores said that as a child she had been sexually molested by an older man. In 1995, O'Riordan told *ROLLING STONE*, "I have a lot of secrets about my childhood."

Music became her escape. In grade school, her voice stood out: "If I started to sing, then all the others in the room would stop and listen," she said. In 1990, she met a local band, the Cranberry Saw Us, and replaced the departing lead singer. They were rechristened the Cranberries. "Dolores came and sang a few songs she had written," says Hogan. "We were blown away that this small girl from Limerick had such an amazing voice. The fact that she wasn't already in a band was a miracle."

Initially, O'Riordan was a shy performer, even singing with her back to the audience. "There was no big act," says Hogan. "I think [that] resonated with people." The Cranberries were swept up in the Nineties alt-rock major-label bidding fever. Their 1993 debut, *Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We?*, begat hits like "Linger" and "Dreams." O'Riordan set her band apart with politically urgent lyrics; she wrote its biggest hit, 1994's "Zombie,"

about two children killed during a 1993 bombing in England by the Irish Republican Army. The Cranberries' ex-manager Allen Kovac says Island Records urged them not to release it. (In his telling, she ripped up a \$1 million check the label offered her to work on another song.) "Dolores was a very small, fragile person, but very opinionated," says Kovac.

But the Cranberries soon hit a rough patch. "Dolores gave so much of herself at the gigs," says Stephen Street, who produced their first two albums. "Perhaps she could have tempered her behavior and been more measured, but that wasn't her way." A 1996 tour was cut short while she dealt with exhaustion. The Cranberries adopted a punkier sound on later, less successful albums, and broke up in 2003. A decade earlier, O'Riordan had married Don Burton, a tour manager of Duran Duran; the couple moved to his native Canada and had three kids.

In 2009, the Cranberries reformed, and O'Riordan started another band, D.A.R.K., with former Smiths bassist Andy Rourke, who calls her talent "breathtaking." Her marriage ended in 2014, the same year she was arrested for stepping on the foot of a flight attendant and head-butting a police officer; a judge spared her from jail after determining she was mentally ill at the time. Last year, the Cranberries released *Something Else*, an orchestral collection. "I've had health issues the last few years," O'Riordan said. Those problems—specifically back pain from years of playing guitar—led to a canceled tour. "She did everything in her power to fix the back problem," says Hogan, "but it persisted and won in the end."

Shortly before she died, O'Riordan flew to London, where she planned to add vocals to a new version of "Zombie" by the British band Bad Wolves. After midnight on January 15th, O'Riordan left two voicemail messages for Dan Waite, who had set up the collaboration. In them, she talked about her kids and sang a bit of the Verve's "Bitter Sweet Symphony" (Youth, who produced that hit, was working with her on a D.A.R.K. album). "She was in a good space," says Waite. She was found dead about nine hours later. "Dolores had a lot of things going on in her life over the past 10 years," says Hogan. "What made her connect with people was her honesty. There are songs I hear that we wrote over 20 years ago—and I see and hear people singing along with them." **DAVID BROWNE**



O'Riordan onstage in 1994



GEARING UP

(1) A Tribe Called Quest flannel shirt. (2) Fans outside a Kanye West pop-up in Boston. (3) A Fall Out Boy skate deck. (4) Iggy Pop board shorts. (5) Fall Out Boy's pop-up in New York. (6) Iggy Pop cap.

Music's Merch Gold Rush

As album sales have tanked, labels are creating everything from \$1,000 artist-branded jackets to punk-rock board shorts

BY DAVID BROWNE

THREE YEARS AGO, FALL OUT BOY opened a pop-up store in New York, selling T-shirts in a space that resembled a punk-rock club. When the band revisited the idea at stores in New York and L.A. this past fall, the vibe and decor were noticeably upgraded. Purple-tinted windows made fans feel as if they were walking into the cover of the band's new album, *Mania*, and among the items on sale were hand-painted \$150 denim jackets. "It's bigger now, and more money is coming through," says Chris Cornell, whose merch company, Manhead, works with Fall Out Boy, Shania Twain and other artists. "It's amazing how far it's come."

Music merchandise (T-shirts, posters, etc.), once an ancillary part of an artist's income, has become a booming business. In 2016, sales of music merch hit \$3.1 billion, a 10 percent increase from the year before, says the Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association. Retail-analytics group Edited claims that the

sheer volume of music-related items on the market has tripled in the past two years. "Music has migrated to being more digital," says Mat Vlasic, who runs the merch company Bravado, "so fans are craving something physical."

At artist-affiliated online stores, retail outlets, pop-up shops and concerts, fans are now confronted by an increasingly high-end variety of consumer choices: \$240 denim sherpa jackets (the Weeknd), \$1,050 thigh-high boots (Kanye West), and \$1,095 Canada Goose bomber jackets with collars made of coyote fur (Drake's OVO line).

As this new profit center has taken off, artists themselves are getting more involved in day-to-day operations. Taylor Swift and Morrissey opened pop-up stores in the fall, and Iggy Pop made color suggestions for his new line of Billabong board shorts. Recently, Beyoncé and Jared Leto both invested in Sidestep, an app that allows fans to buy concert merch online and pick it up at the venue prior

to a show. "Some people like standing in line," says Jesper Poulsen of the licensing firm Epic Rights. "For me, personally, it's a buzzkill."

Although some in the industry question West's claim that he sold \$1 million in merchandise in two days during a pop-up-store event in 2016, there's no question that profits can be sizable. Drake's pop-up events have brought in six-figure sales numbers. According to Panic! At the Disco's manager, Bob McLynn, 30 percent of the band's profit on its most recent tour came from merch. "Ever since CDs started going by the wayside, everyone was like, 'How are we going to make more money?'" says Cornell.

In a sign of the merch world's flourishing success, a secondary market has emerged at its margins: Fans are scooping up items at pop-up stores and reselling them online at pumped-up prices. "They're getting a couple of hundred dollars for a T-shirt that cost \$25," says Frances Wong of Sony's Thread Shop merch agency. "After our Tribe Called Quest pop-up, people were selling the shopping bags online for \$25. It was hilarious."



Kanye

FROM TOP LEFT, LEFT TO RIGHT: FEDERICO RUIZ; SUZANNE KREITER/BOSTON GLOBE; GETTY IMAGES; ELLIOTT INGHAM; BILLABONG; KRISTIN CALLAHAN/ACE PICTURES/REX SHUTTERSTOCK

IAN DICKSON/MEDIA PUNCH