

# Now I want to write a sitcom, says Mark

**CHRIS DUNNE**  
talks to a  
Corkman  
who is living the  
dream in LA



**H**IS second book is due out soon, but nobody could accuse Corkman Mark Hayes of lacking ambition.

"My goal is to write a sitcom," says the 28-year-old from Rochestown.

"I spent a lot of time watching sitcoms like *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and *Seinfeld*, and I thought, I could write a show like that."

Not one to take rejection to the heart, Mark adds: "I submitted a lot of scripts to RTÉ, but they reckoned I didn't have the credentials. So I decided to go and pursue my dream in Los Angeles — the land where you can live the dream. Hopefully, I thought, there I could make it happen."

Mark moved to LA two years ago and has already achieved his dream of becoming a writer.

His debut book, *Randumb: The Adventures Of An Irish Guy In LA*, came about from the random scribbles of his blog and was published last year.

The follow-up is due out shortly.

Mark obtained a degree in Commerce and German, and went on to do a masters in UCC. He worked as a translator before leaving for LA.

"I was pretty clueless at the time," admitted Mark.

"I didn't know anybody — I spent the first night in a restaurant car park asleep in a rented car."

"I hadn't a notion where to live and I just kept Googling all the time — but even doing your research, it can end up wrong."

Lots of guys would agree that Mark didn't go too far wrong when he shared an apartment with two LA models.

"That is true. Unfortunately they were both chain smokers which got to me. They survived on ice-cream and were as skinny as hell."

Mark's current flatmate is an estate agent.

"He's gone early in the morning so I have the apartment to myself, which is great," says Mark.

"It's roasting in the mornings at the moment, so I often go and lie by the pool or take a swim. It's brilliant. And because the sun shines all the time you are always in a good mood."

It was when the folks back in Cork wanted to know how Mark was getting on that the blog came about.

"I got fed up writing and phoning to them all so I started the blog," he said.

"A publisher came upon it and



**LA DREAM:** Cork writer Mark Hayes (inset), author of *Randumb: The Adventures Of An Irish Guy In LA*, is enjoying life in Los Angeles.

started reading it, and next thing I know I'm offered a deal to write a book based on my experiences here in LA. How cool was that?"

Mark also does stand-up comedy in the evenings and is a DJ.

"My neighbour is a writer. He gave me some advice and suggested I do open mic in a comedy club. At first it was horrendous — nobody could understand my Cork accent. The audience laughed at the wrong part of my joke and not the punchline."

"There were other comedians in the audience so it was very competitive."

"But I kept at it and I got better. Now I do a 15-minute slot twice a week."

"My act is like my blog — all

about my adventures here in Hollywood, so I'm taking the mickey out of myself."

"When it's good, it's very good. But when it's bad, your insides just shrivel up into a black hole and you're thinking 'Get me off the stage.'"

Mark said his accent also helps him make friends.

"People are big fans of my Irish accent, so everyone is your best buddy. Most Irish here are talented people so sometimes I pretend to be Icelandic — there's no pressure then!"

Mark has also taken acting classes and said: "Back home I'd be flicking through the channels looking at the comedy programmes, but here in LA you can go to proper acting classes and get in there. Then one things

leads to another. The chances are there."

Mark got his DJ job by chance — and a little cheek.

"I was at the gym and I complained about the choice of music. The manager asked me if I was a DJ. Even though I'd never done anything more than a playlist on my iPod, I told him yes and I offered to do it. Now I have other DJing gigs."

LA is like a bubble, explained Mark.

"Everyone is productive and hungry and you think 'I could do more' — and it drives you on."

"Sometimes I will do stand-up and a DJ gig afterwards. When I get home I'm still buzzing so it's good for me to write."

Mark said when he goes to bed, he dreams. "Then I wake up and I'm living the dream."

● See [blog:http://tricaduu.com](http://tricaduu.com).  
● *Randumb* is in all bookstores and Amazon, with the second edition due out this summer.

**HealthUpdate**  
From **Irishhealth.com**

## Ireland heads for US 'mega-obesity' rates

IRELAND IS now on track to match US rates of gross obesity, the results of a new poll by Irishhealth.com indicate.

In total, seven in 10 respondents described themselves as being overweight.



In a clear indication of the scale of Ireland's obesity epidemic, some 29% of all respondents categorised themselves as having a serious weight problem, with 24% describing themselves as 'very overweight' (obese) and a further 5% describing themselves as 'morbidly obese'.

The medical term morbid obesity describes people with a BMI (body mass index) of more than 40. This is regarded as a life-threatening condition.

Commenting on the findings of this new survey, Dr Donal O'Shea, consultant endocrinologist at Loughlinstown and St Vincent's Hospitals, Dublin, said that while the poll would generally accurately reflect the most recent official figures on overweight and obesity in Ireland, these results indicated that more people appear to be entering the dangerous 'morbidly obese' category.

Just one in four respondents described their own current weight as 'normal', while one in 25 respondents (4%) described themselves as 'underweight'.

"This costs a vast amount to the individual personally and the health service financially," Dr O'Shea commented. "If the 5% self-assessed as morbidly obese is accurate, then we have joined the US in terms of the extent of the problem at the higher end."

Dr O'Shea pointed out that usually, self-reporting surveys tend to in fact significantly underestimate people's weight problems. "I would hope that is not the case here," he added.

A major Department of Health-sponsored SLAN survey in 2008 found that more than one-third of respondents reported themselves as being overweight and 14% reported being obese.

Obesity increases the risk of a range of other conditions, from arthritis to some cancers, diabetes, heart disease, cirrhosis of the liver and risks undergoing surgery. Children born to obese mothers are at a heightened risk of dying by the age of 12 months.

In 1990, only one in 10 Irish men were obese. That figure is now officially put at one in four. In the same period, obesity in women has risen from 13% to 21%, according to the Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance (IUNA).

## Hospital death stats data to be published



A detailed comparison of patient death rates between hospitals is to be published in the near future by the Department of Health.

A total of around 12,000 patients die in Irish hospitals each year. However, comparative mortality data between hospitals has never been made available to the public.

Currently there is no information available on the death rates between hospitals for patients with different conditions or on whether death rates for individual hospitals are in line with the number of patients treated and the complexity of treatments provided.

## HSE not answering PQs in time

Nearly half of parliamentary questions (PQs) referred to the HSE about health service matters are not being answered within the official target response time of 15 days.

Sine the formation of the HSE in 2005, most PQs about the health service are not answered directly by the Minister for Health, but are passed on to the HSE's Parliamentary Affairs Division for a response.

However, statistics show that up to the end of June 2011, of the 1,072 PQs referred to the HSE for a response, only 595 (55.5%) were answered on target within 15 days.

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