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McCourt Refuses To Authenticate Photo

By Ron Kirwan

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Angela's Ashes author Frank McCourt is not prepared to have his cover photo of Leamy's schoolboys independently examined to prove if it's genuine or not.

Former classmate Paddy Malone claims he has the original and has challenged Frank McCourt to prove his is genuine.

But now his solicitors have been told the Pulitzer Prize winner won't oblige. In a letter to a firm of Limerick solicitors last week, publishers Harper Collins say his agent Molloy Friedrichs has confirmed that "Mr. McCourt is not willing to accede to your clients request to establish the authenticity of Mr. McCourt's picture".

The new Yorker, who lived for a time in Limerick's lanes, claimed he used an original of 18 Leamy's schoolboys on the cover of his multi-million bestseller.

But old Clare Street resident Paddy Malone, who sat beside Frank McCourt in third class at Leamy's School, says he is convinced the author used a copy of the original picture in his possession, part of which was printed in the Limerick Chronicle during the 1970's.

"I know that copies of the paper were sent to the United States and I believe they used that for the cover," he said last year when challenging the author to prove he used his own photograph and not one belonging to Mr. Malone.

According to the author, the picture was in his mother's possession but he is refusing to hand it over now for verification.

The letter received last week was signed by Kim Daw, legal advisor with Harper Collins and Adrian Bourne, editor-in-chief. It is also co-signed by the author's US agent.

"My picture was torn and has the exact wear and tear marks as the

picture on the cover of Angela's Ashes. If the photograph used was, as Frank McCourt claims, in the possession of his poor mother, surely it would have 37 boys and not 18 and he would be prepared to have it tested," said Mr. Malone.

"I'm prepared to put my picture up for any inspection."

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