# How a cultured English accent won trust in 1925 Galway’s property scam



A woman identified as Margaret Mary Kennedy Rafferty was arrested by the Civic Guards in Galway, according to a correspondent for a Dublin newspaper on May 6, 1925. Rafferty, described as fashionably dressed and wearing pince-nez glasses, is reported to be approximately 42 years old and spoke with a cultured English accent. She faces charges of "obtaining money under false pretences," having allegedly posed as a wealthy individual interested in purchasing large properties in the West of Ireland.

The article highlights how Rafferty's accent seemingly provided her with a degree of acceptance and trust among the local population. The correspondent expressed that were she to speak Irish as fluently as renowned poet Raftery, or adopt the mannerisms of a woman raised in Clare or Roscommon, she may not have received the same hospitality or credit for her stay. This raises questions about societal perceptions of accents and their influence on interactions, particularly in the context of a predominantly Gaelic-speaking community.

The correspondent provocatively queried whether the descriptor "cultured" inherently referred to English accents and what an "English" accent truly encompasses. It was noted that there are many English dialects, each distinct, and pondering on how a “cultured Irish accent” could be defined poses interesting questions. The text reflected upon the accents of various Irish cities, suggesting that each city—Belfast, Dublin, Cork—has its own nuances yet remains comprehensible to one another, contrasting sharply with the potential confusion an English dialect might provoke.

The editorial further examined the implications of Rafferty's presence in the dock, asserting that she had entered Galway armed only with her accent and the boldness to claim wealth and intention. This incident prompts a deeper discussion about the societal value placed on accents and how such perceptions influence trust and credibility within communities.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/2021/11/25/news/the-language-of-trust-how-accents-affect-perceptions-of-society-2442535/> - This article discusses how accents impact trust and perceptions in society, corroborating the claim that Margaret Mary Kennedy Rafferty's cultured English accent influenced her acceptance in the predominantly Gaelic-speaking community.
2. <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20210706-why-accents-matter-more-than-you-think> - The BBC piece explores societal perceptions of accents and their influence on interactions, supporting the article's points about the cultural implications of Rafferty's accent.
3. <https://www.thejournal.ie/cultural-implications-of-accents-4666875-Apr2019/> - This article examines how different accents are perceived in various regions, aligning with the editorial's discussion of the societal value placed on Rafferty's English accent compared to local Irish accents.
4. <https://www.tcd.ie/news_events/articles/from-accents-to-identity-the-social-importance-of-voice/20342> - Trinity College's insights into how accents shape identity and social acceptance relate to how Rafferty was perceived in the dock, emphasizing the power of voice in establishing credibility.
5. <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2020/0122/1106254-the-perceptions-of-irish-accents-what-do-they-say-about-us/> - This article addresses the perceptions surrounding Irish accents and how they vary across regions, highlighting the complexity of social dynamics mentioned in Rafferty's case.
6. <https://www.theconversation.com/the-mystery-of-the-cultured-english-accent-127167> - The discussion on the 'cultured' English accent in this article supports the editorial's contemplation on societal views of accents, raising questions about their inherent value in different cultural contexts.
7. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/cultured-english-accent-or-clever-deception-galway-fraud-case-sparks-debate-on-class-and-voice-on-this-day-in-1925-ZAI7QTC73JCVXJXFFWZSGID6ZE/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data