# How a cultured English accent aided a Galway fraudster in acquiring trust



The Dublin correspondent of The Irish News recently reported on the arrest of a woman named Margaret Mary Kennedy Rafferty in Galway, asserting her status as a well-dressed individual of approximately 42 years, distinguished by her pince-nez spectacles and a cultured English accent. The accusation levied against her involves the common offence of acquiring money under false pretences. It is alleged that she posed as a wealthy lady intending to purchase significant properties in the West of Ireland.

According to the report, Rafferty was able to gain board and lodging on credit, leveraging her accent to engender trust among the local populace. The correspondent speculated that if she had approached the townsfolk speaking Irish fluently or demonstrating an accent reflective of her supposed intentions to invest, she likely would not have been offered a meal, much less accommodation. The emphasis on her "cultured English accent" raises questions regarding the perception of accents in relation to social status and familiarity in the region.

The article delves into the implications of this reported incident, pondering whether the descriptor of "cultured" was assigned solely due to its English origins or if such an affiliation denotes a broader societal bias. The correspondent questions what constitutes an "English" accent, pondering its classification as a uniform standard across various dialects. The complexities of accents are illustrated through a comparison of English and Irish dialects, noting the significant diversity present within each linguistic group and the potential misunderstandings that could arise from them.

The correspondent further contemplates regional perceptions, interrogating whether accents from cities like Belfast and Dublin are esteemed over those from Cork and Clare. This inquiry leads to reflections on the Abbey Theatre actors who embrace Kiltartan, perhaps viewing their own pronunciations as the pinnacle of authentic Irish vocal culture. The editorial critiques the underlying assumptions about accent and culture, raising the notion of how Rafferty, with seemingly no substantial resources beyond a confident demeanour and an English accent, was able to garner the goodwill of the locals.

Through this narrative, the article highlights the intricate relationship between language, identity, and societal values within Irish communities, shedding light on the ongoing discourse surrounding class and accessibility in Ireland during this period.

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

## References

* <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2022/0510/1193804-accent-job-workplace-employment-career-ireland/> - This article discusses how accents can influence perceptions of education and intelligence, noting that individuals with 'posh accents' are often perceived as better educated and more intelligent, while those with working-class accents may be deemed less competent.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2022/sep/28/irish-people-have-faced-centuries-of-discrimination-why-are-lord-of-the-rings-accents-so-offensively-bad> - This piece examines the longstanding discrimination faced by Irish people due to their accents, highlighting how certain accents are associated with higher status and intelligence, while others are linked to lower trustworthiness and likability.
* <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/media/news/2022/hss/new-queen-mary-research-reveals-impact-of-accent-on-social-mobility.html> - Research from Queen Mary University of London reveals that accents significantly impact social mobility, with individuals from working-class backgrounds often facing discrimination based on their accents in both educational and professional settings.
* <https://www.newstalk.com/news/a-growing-trend-are-people-losing-out-on-jobs-due-to-their-accents-1623272> - This article highlights how certain accents are often looked down upon by employers, with individuals from working-class or disadvantaged backgrounds being most affected by accent bias.
* <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2024/0624/1361978-accents-history-irish-radio-tv-ads-received-pronunciation-advanced-dublin-english/> - This analysis traces the evolution of accents in Irish media, noting the shift from Received Pronunciation to Advanced Dublin English in advertisements, reflecting changing perceptions of social status and cultural identity.
* <https://www.irishcentral.com/culture/craic/irish-accent-is-officially-the-most-attractive-in-britain-and-ireland> - A poll conducted by YouGov found that the Southern Irish accent is considered the most attractive in Britain and Ireland, surpassing Received Pronunciation, indicating a positive perception of the accent's association with social status.
* <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