

Enda Kenny, Magdalene Laundry Apology, February 2013

Irish Taoiseach (prime minister) [Enda Kenny](#) apologizes on behalf of the Irish government to the women who were forced to work in the [Magdalene laundries](#), institutions run by religious groups, where women were forcibly detained, unpaid or mistreated, sometimes for years.

The video is from [the Journal.ie website](#). The transcript is from the [Dáil Debates \(the official record of speeches in the Irish parliament\)](#). (The Dáil record uses the spelling Magdalen.)

At the end of the speech, the members of parliament give a standing ovation to some of the remaining Magdalen laundry women, attending in the public gallery. Miriam Lord in [an Irish Times article](#) describes the atmosphere.

Enda Kenny:

I begin by thanking Dr. Martin McAleese and his team for their excellent work on this report. I thank, equally, the women who met with them to assist in its compilation. I also thank the religious orders who co-operated fully with Dr. McAleese. Together, they have helped provide Ireland with a document of truth.

The Magdalen laundries have cast a long shadow over Irish life and over our sense of who we are. It is just two weeks since we received this report, the first ever detailed report into the State's involvement in the Magdalen laundries. It shines a bright and necessary light on a dark chapter of Ireland's history.

On coming to office the Government was determined to

investigate the facts of the State's involvement. The Government was adamant that these ageing and elderly women would get the compassion and the recognition for which they have fought for so long, deserved so deeply and had, until now, been so abjectly denied. For 90 years Ireland subjected these women and their experience to a profound and studied indifference. I was determined because of this that the Government, and this Dáil, would take the necessary time not just to commission the report but to study it and, having done so, to reflect on its findings. I believe that was the best way to formulate a plan and strategy that would help us make amends for the State's role in the hurt of these extraordinary women.

I am glad that so many of the women themselves agreed with that approach, and I am glad this time of reflection gave me the chance to do the most important thing of all, which was to meet personally with the Magdalen women and to sit down with them face to face to listen to their stories. It was a humbling and inspiring experience.

Today, as their Taoiseach, I am privileged to welcome some of these women to this House, many of whom have travelled long distances to be here. I welcome every one of them to their national Parliament, to Dáil Éireann. What we discuss today is their story. What we address today is how they took this country's terrible secret and made it their own, burying it and carrying it in their hearts here at home or with them to England, Canada, America and Australia on behalf of Ireland and the Irish people. From this moment on they need carry it no more, because today we take it back. Today, we acknowledge the role of the State in their ordeal.

We now know that the State itself was directly involved in over a quarter of all admissions to the Magdalen laundries, be it through the social services, reformatories, psychiatric institutions, county homes, the prison and probation service and industrial schools. We have, in fact, decided to include

all the Magdalen women in our response, regardless of how they were admitted.

Dr. McAleese set out to investigate five areas in particular: the routes by which the women entered the laundries; regulations of the workplace and State inspections; State funding of and financial assistance to the laundries; the routes by which the girls and women left the laundries; and death registrations, burials and exhumations. In all five areas there was found to be direct State involvement.

As I read this report and as I listened to these women, it struck me that for generations Ireland had created a particular portrait of itself as a good living and God fearing nation. Through this and other reports we know this flattering self-portrait is fictitious.

It would be easy to explain away all that happened and all we did with those great moral and social salves of "the culture back then", "the order of the day" and "the terrible times that were in it". By any standards it was a cruel, pitiless Ireland distinctly lacking in a quality of mercy. That much is clear, both from the pages of the report, and from the stories of the women I met. As I sat with these women as they told their stories it was clear that while every woman's story was different each of them shared a particular experience of a particular Ireland that was judgmental, intolerant, petty and prim.

In the laundries themselves some women spent week, others months, more of them years, but the thread that ran through their many stories was a palpable sense of suffocation, not just physical in that they were incarcerated but psychological, spiritual and social. Their stories were enriched by an astonishing vividness of recall of situation and circumstance.

Here are some of the things I read in the report and they said

directly to me:

The work was so hard, the regime was cruel. I felt all alone, nobody wanted me. They sent me because they thought I was going to a good school. I seen these older people beside me, I used cry myself to sleep. I was bold, I wasn't going to school. I was locked up ... I thought I would never get out. We had to sew at night ... even when we were sick. I heard a radio sometimes in the distance. We were not allowed to talk to each other. Your letters were checked. I was so short I needed a stool to put washing in. The noise was desperate. I thought I would go mad from the silence. The heat was unbelievable. I broke a cup once and had to wear it hanging around my neck for three days. I felt always tired, always wet, always humiliated. My father came for me after three months but I was too ashamed to go home. I never saw my Mam again; she died while I was in there.

The Magdalen women might have been told that they were washing away a wrong or a sin, but we know now and to our shame they were only ever scrubbing away our nation's shadow. Today, just as the State accepts its direct involvement in the Magdalen laundries, society, too, has its responsibility. I believe I speak for millions of Irish people all over the world when I say we put away these women because for too many years we put away our conscience. We swapped our personal scruples for a solid public apparatus that kept us in tune and in step with a sense of what was "proper behaviour" or the "appropriate view" according to a sort of moral code that was fostered at the time, particularly in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. We lived with the damaging idea that what was desirable and acceptable in the eyes of the church and the State was the same and interchangeable.

Is it this mindset then, this moral subservience, that gave us the social mores, the required and exclusive "values" of the time that welcomed the compliant, obedient and lucky "us" and

banished the more problematic, spirited or unlucky “them”? To our nation’s shame it must be said that if these women had managed to scale the high walls of the laundries, they would have had their work cut out for them to negotiate the height and the depth of the barricades around society’s “proper” heart. For we saw difference as something to be feared and hidden rather than embraced and celebrated. Were these our values? We can ask ourselves for a State, least of all for a republic, what is the “value” of the tacit and unchallenged decree that saw society humiliate and degrade these girls and women? What is the “value” of the ignorance and arrogance that saw us publicly call them “penitents” for their “crime” of being poor or abused or just plain unlucky enough to be already the inmate of a reformatory, or an industrial school or a psychiatric institution? We can ask ourselves as the families we were then what was worthy, what was good about that great euphemism of “putting away” our daughters, our sisters, our aunties?

Those “values”, those failures, those wrongs characterised Magdalen Ireland. Today we live in a very different Ireland with a very a different consciousness and awareness. We live in an Ireland where we have more compassion, empathy, insight and heart. We do, because at last we are learning those terrible lessons. We do, because at last we are giving up our secrets. We do, because in naming and addressing the wrong, as is happening here today, we are trying to make sure we quarantine such abject behaviour in our past and eradicate it from Ireland’s present and Ireland’s future.

In a society guided by the principles of compassion and social justice there never would have been any need for institutions such as the Magdalen laundries. The report shows that the perception that the Magdalen laundries were reserved for those who were offensively and judgmentally called “fallen women” is not based upon fact at all but upon prejudice. The women are and always were wholly blameless. Therefore, I, as Taoiseach,

on behalf of the State, the Government and our citizens, deeply regret and apologise unreservedly to all those women for the hurt that was done to them and for any stigma they suffered as a result of the time they spent in a Magdalen laundry. I hope that the publication of the McAleese report and this apology makes some contribution to the healing process.

In reflecting on this report, I have come to the view that these women deserve more than this formal apology, important though it is. I also want to put in place a process by which we can determine how best to help and support the women in their remaining years. One of the many things I have learned during my recent meetings with the Magdalen women is that their circumstances and current needs vary greatly from person to person. That is why the Government has today asked the President of the Law Reform Commission, Mr. Justice John Quirke, to undertake a three month review and to make recommendations as to the criteria that should be applied in assessing the help that the Government can provide in the areas of payments and other supports, including medical cards, psychological and counselling services and other welfare needs. The terms of reference for Mr. Justice Quirke will be published later today and I will also arrange for the representatives of the women to be fully briefed on this process. When Mr. Justice Quirke has reported, the Government will establish a fund to assist the women, based on his recommendations. I am confident that this process will enable us to provide speedy, fair and meaningful help to the women in a compassionate and non-adversarial way. I am determined that the fund will be primarily used to help the women, as is their stated and strong desire, and not for legal or administrative costs.

The McAleese report also refers to women who recounted similar experiences in other residential laundries, such as the laundry offering services to the public that operated in the

training centre at Stanhope Street, Dublin. The Government has decided that these women should be included in both the apology I have extended today and in the fund.

I am also conscious that many of the women I met last week want to see a permanent memorial established to remind us all of this dark part of our history. I agree this should be done and intend to engage directly with the representative groups and as many of the women as possible to agree on the creation of an appropriate memorial to be financed by the Government separately from the funds that are being set aside for the direct assistance for the women.

Let me conclude by again speaking directly to the women whose experiences in Magdalen laundries have negatively affected their subsequent lives. As a society, for many years we failed you. We forgot you or, if we thought of you at all, we did so in untrue and offensive stereotypes. This is a national shame for which I again say, I am deeply sorry and offer my full and heartfelt apologies.

At the conclusion of my discussions with one group of the Magdalen women one of those present sang [“Whispering Hope”](#). A line from that song stays in my mind: [“When the dark midnight is over, Watch for the breaking of day](#). Let me hope that this day and this debate heralds a new dawn for all those who feared that the dark midnight might never end.

Dónal Óg Cusack: Foyle Pride Festival, August 2012

Irish sportsman [Dónal Óg Cusack](#) describes being gay in conservative rural Ireland, and being a nationally well-known

player of the traditional sport of [hurling](#) in his native [Cork](#). The speech was given at a gay pride event in [Derry](#) in Northern Ireland.

The video of this speech by Dónal Óg Cusack is from [the GayDerry channel on Youtube](#) and the transcript is from the [GayCork.com](#), and edited.

Dónal Óg Cusack:

As I said, it's an honour to be here this evening. I come from a small village in east Cork called [Cloyne](#). How do I describe home? Well, if I decide to walk to the shop and back that's pretty much the gay pride parade done for the year. So if you guys think you have come a long way, for me being here tonight is like playing Radio City Music Hall.

Growing up in Cloyne we didn't have a gay scene. We didn't have any scene really but we especially didn't have a gay scene. So I've always been a little bit innocent in that way. I was thinking of that on the drive up here today, something that happened just a couple of years ago when I said to a straight friend of mine that I thought a man we both knew might be gay.

What makes you think that? he said.

Ah, something just used a word he used there yesterday that only gay people would know.

Really said my friend, what was that?

I looked around as if I was about to give away a state secret of the gay republic of Cork. I practically whispered it.

GAYDAR!

About twenty minutes later when he'd stopped laughing at me he explained that there were fellas running the Taliban in

downtown Kabul who would be making jokes about who had the best gaydar.

What about in the [DUP](#)? I said.

Time, Dónal Óg. All in time.

It's a long drive up here and I had plenty of time to think along the way (that won't necessarily be reflected in this speech which is stuff I lifted from Wikipedia).

It struck me as an odd thing to be driving all this way to open this festival knowing that when I get here most of the audience will neither know nor care about who or what I am and knowing that back home there's a section of the world who would see me being here as the only thing that I am.

This county has given us Heaney and the Undertones and must also bear responsibility for [Joe Brolly](#) but it hasn't given us much by way of hurling, the world's greatest sport. So to those of few who are curious I see myself as ticking a series of boxes, most of which would have got me kneecapped in various places at various times of my life.

Dónal Óg Cusack. An Irish name and the sum total of the Irish language that my parents have ever used. If I ever break down in certain parts I pretend to be my brother, Victor.

I come from a family with names of Dónal Óg, Conor, Treasa, and Victor. In Cork I'd be kneecapped first for being a trouble-maker who has organised a series of player strikes or for my short puc out strategy which in Cork is far more controversial than who I sleep with.

And I'm an out gay man. For me that's a small part of the deal. Half a chapter maybe in a lifetime's story. But if out of curiosity you come to see me play and can't pick me out because we all wear helmets I'll be the one just in front of the loudmouth on the terrace with the megaphone. He'll be

singing "he's gay/he's bent/his ass is up for rent/ Dónal Óg/Dónal Óg."

People around him will be looking embarrassed and I'll be staring up the field.

Not giving any attention to the person.

I thought of that today as I drove from Cork as the place names started ringing different bells with me. The villages around home where I grew up, then the places with hurling clubs that I'd have played against regularly. The further I travelled the more people's definition of me changed. Yet on every mile of the journey I remained just me. I'm sure you all know that experience. People defining you in different ways and you realising that you are you and always you.

Onwards through places I associate with different people. Different people I'd know and then as I crossed the border all the place names suddenly seemed to remind me of the troubles and the journey got to be about my own lazy definitions.

I got to wondering if gaydar north of the border comes with more advanced settings than we have down south. If I grew up here and walked into a crowded room like this, would I be saying to myself Gay [Shinner](#) at three o'clock, [Orange Order](#) tranny marching in the hallway, [Free Presbyterian](#) pansexuals serving the snacks.

And when you travel down that road the whole business of labelling people and defining them and putting them into social ghettos gets to be almost as comical as it is dangerous.

This is a city that knows all too well. I'm conscious that standing here in this place and in this company and there's not much a person like me can tell you about rights. Whether you call it [Derry, Londonderry, Foyle side or Stroke City](#) this town will always be synonymous with civil rights. You don't

have to know a lot about history to know that in the summer of 1969, when gays and lesbians were engaged in the [Stonewall](#) riots in New York City, the [Battle of the Bogside](#) was happening here in Derry.

At first the comparisons between those two things seem remote and far fetched. As [Eamonn McCann](#) has written, when the policemen came mobhanded down Lecky Road into the Bogside they sang

Hey, hey we're the monkees
and we're going to monkee around
till we see your blood flowing
all along the ground.

A few thousand miles away in Greenwich Village gays were facing down their own mob of police. In New York though it was the protestors who were singing.

"We are all [Stonewall](#) girls/ we wear our hair in curls/ we wear no underwear/ we show our pubic hair/ we wear our dungarees/ above our nelly knees."

The Bogside in 1969 wasn't the time or the place for Eamon McCann or Bernadette Devlin to come up with a similar ditty, (though [Nell McCafferty](#) must surely have nelly knees), but the theme in both cities was the same. You colonise places and societies by getting one part of that society to think they have the right to police another section of society.

And hey presto, once the people doing the abusing have somebody to demonise or something to be scared of they don't notice the poverty of their own lives.

That's why I never hear what goes on in the terrace behind me. I'm in the privileged position that the people who would try to police my life have no power, the guy with the megaphone or

the big mouth has paid in to see me and to embarrass himself. No matter what happens I can't be the loser in that situation.

I live in a world which isn't free of prejudice, far from it. But which lets me especially close to home define myself in the way I want to be defined. By the time I came out I had long ceased making a secret about my private life but what was funny was that people who were close to me never saw the wood for the trees. They just had certain assumptions.

I've told the story often of a team trip to Vietnam and me drifting away from a teammate in Ho Chi Minh city one night. I woke up in a strange bed in a strange city the next morning. That's what I'd hoped to do, and it took me quite a while to get back to the team hotel. Finally around noon I wandered in and was greeted with high good humour by the lads who just assumed I'd drunk myself silly and got lost.

When I did come out to them we had lots of deep conversations. And their loyalty to me then and since then has been one of the most moving and meaningful things in my life. It's been a great positive. So have all the encounters with young people thinking about coming out. All the meetings with people who took a bit of encouragement in taking big steps in their own lives.

I know I am lucky though. I know every journey in this room is different to mine.

I know that the journey from 1969 to here has been different in this part of the world to practically anywhere else in the world. Buried beneath a hundred other prejudices and hatreds there must be a secret history of gay men and women living out their lives in the deepest shadows.

We know only little pieces. [Ian Paisley](#) and his Save Ulster from Sodomy campaign launched at a time when things were so bad here that you'd have thought a little sodomy would have been a diversion. We know of the heroism of [Jeff Dudgeon](#),

already mentioned here tonight, whose having been questioned about his personal life by the RUC brought his case against the United Kingdom to the European Court of Human rights and won. Fifteen years after male homosexual behaviour was decriminalised in England and Wales, Jeff succeeded in having it decriminalised here. It took another eleven years for the twenty-six counties to follow suit into the modern world. When I was going to secondary school, it was illegal for me to be a gay person in the Republic.

I say 'follow suit,' I mean be dragged [kicking and screaming](#) by the same court citing his precedent.

It's victories like that that we celebrate. Landmark moments like [Grainne Close and Shannon Sickles](#) going to City Hall in Belfast and becoming the first couple in the UK to legally register a same-sex partnership.

And though it seems like a small thing, we must also welcome [Gavin Robinson](#) the DUP Lord Mayor of Belfast attending a gay pride event in the city a few weeks ago. [Sinn Féin](#) in Cork have been the first to support gay marriage, the first party in the south to support gay marriage.

Engaging in debate represents massive progress for a party who still have their Save Ulster from Sodomy Days at home. It's a huge step forward for the party of [Edwin Poots](#) or [Iris Robinson](#).

It's a strange thing isn't it (although we see it through history in lots of places) that here's a society where people are learning to live with each other with less fear and loathing, yet surveys show (as spoken about one earlier today) a hardening of attitudes against gay and lesbian people. That really surprised me when I did a bit of research before this event. To see two religious faiths coming together to oppose gay marriage strengthens the theory that fear of gays and lesbians is "the last great prejudice of our times."

That's why events like this are important. When I came out a few years ago I wasn't making any big statement about myself. I was following up on a promise I made to myself when I was younger. I was at a gay club in Cork and somebody recognised me as a hurler. They came over to me, said to me "Are you Dónal Óg?" I denied it. The next day, I woke up and I said that would never ever happen to me again.

One of my best friends in playing for Cork, the legendary hurling figure [Diarmuid O'Sullivan](#), as big and tough a man, an aggressive figure as you could ever meet. I'd often heard him talk negatively about the HLBT community

I rang him up, he said he was at home in his parents' house. I went into his house, met his mother, and his mother said he was upstairs in his room. Went into Diarmuid's room, he was lying on the bed, he said "Sit down beside me."

I thought it might not be the best place to be sitting beside with what I was going to tell him, and I told him the story, told him about the other side of my life.

To this day, that man has absolutely loyal to me as all my other friends have been. I've never ever heard him say anything about any of the HLBT community, other than anything positive.

For me, that's, if there's anything I can say to the people in this room, that's a perfect example of that.

That was my journey and as I say every journey is different but what has been important for me is demonstrating to people that who I sleep with is only a part of who I am.

I like what the late Gore Vidal said about there being no such thing as a homosexual person or a heterosexual person. The words are just adjectives describing natural sexual acts, not people. Some of us respond to our own sex, some to the

opposite sex, some to both sexes, some to neither sex, some to different things at different times.

It wouldn't be worth worrying about if it wasn't the hysteria and prejudice of other people. I came out to be myself. To be Dónal Óg Cusack. I'm lots of things. For forty to fifty hours a week I'm an electrical engineer for a multinational company. For a couple of other hours in the week, I'm the chairperson of the Gaelic Athletic Players Association. For far fewer hours in a week, sadly, even in a good week, I'm in bed with a man. I never get invited to Electrical Engineer Pride events though.

People want to define me a certain way. I didn't come out to play on all gay hurling team though I'd take a bullet for anybody's right to do so if they want to and I enjoy ideas like the Ulster Titans rugby. I came out for the right to be me and to play for Cork as me and for everybody to accept that.

I say this not just because everybody's journey is different but because I think there is nothing so important to any of us on that journey as the title we put on events like these. PRIDE.

For me that's something more concrete to grasp than any other label we may give ourselves or any names others may give us. As campaigning groups we sometimes get so tied up with our organisations names and acronyms in an well-meaning attempt to include every possible sort of orientation that we miss the point.

What unites us at the end of the day is pride in being who we are, pride in the totality of who we are as people. Pride in the fact that we refuse to just fit the label hung on us by prejudice.

We can't be limited in what we do in life and in law by our choice of who, if anybody, we sleep with or what God, if any,

we worship. This city knows that better than anywhere else. If we narrow the definition of a person to one aspect of their life, we create a ghetto and a platform for prejudice.

It's about pride. I'm proud to be Dónal Óg Cusack. Proud to be from Cloyne. To be a Corkman. To be the son of the parents I have. To be a hurler. To give my best. And proud of the decisions I've taken in my personal life.

I'm not just from Cloyne, not just from Cork, not just a hurler. Not just a gay man. Like everybody in this room I'm the sum total of many, many things and that's how I want to be judged. That to me is what pride is about.

The only way you can be JUST one thing, the only way you can limit the definition of yourself, the only way you can make the world smaller and darker is to be a bigot. JUST a bigot. A small scared man with a big megaphone.

So when we enjoy this festival and share our pride in who we are we just have to remember that. With pride, brothers and sisters, we will always prevail.

Thank you very much.

Rita Connolly: I Arise Today

The video has Rita Connolly singing a [Shaun Davey](#) song at the inauguration of Michael Higgins, the ninth president of Ireland in November 2011. The words are from the early [St Patrick's Breastplate](#) via [Cecil Frances Alexander](#) and the German linguist and Celtic philologist [Kuno Meyer](#).

Many Irish versions exist:

Críost liom, Críost romham, Críost 'mo dhiaidh,
Críost ionam, Críost fúm, Críost os mo chionn,
Críost ar mo dheis, Críost ar mo chlé,
Críost i gcroí gach aoinne smaoiníos orm,
Críost i mbéal gach aoinne labhraíos liom,
Críost i ngach súil a dhearcas orm,
Críost i ngach cluais a chluineas mé.

Críost liom, Críost romham,
Críost i mo dhiaidh, Críost istigh ionam,
Críost fúm, Críost os mo chionn,
Críost ar mo lámh dheas, Críost ar mo chlé,

Críost i mo lúí dom, Críost i mo sheasamh,
Críost i ngach gcrói ag cuimhneamh orm,
Críost i ngach mbéal, Críost i ngach súil,
Críost i ngach cluas, a éisteann liom.

Críost liom, Críost romham,
Críost im dhiadh,
Críost ar mo chion-sa, agus Críost fúm,
Críost ina chónai i mo chroí-se,
Críost fós ó dheas díom, Críost ó thuaidh.

An early version of the lyrics can be found at the [University of California \(Davis\) website](#). A medieval Irish version can be found on [Wikisource](#). The second video is unfortunately unaccredited and unattributed, but has interesting photos and lyrics.

Rita Connolly (singer): :

I arise today, through the strength of heaven;
light of sun, radiance of moon,
splendor of fire, speed of lightning,

swiftness of wind, depth of the sea,
stability of earth, firmness of rock.

I arise today, through God's strength to pilot me;

God's eye to look before me, God's wisdom to guide me,
God's way to lie before me, God's shield to protect me,
from all who shall wish me ill, afar and a-near
alone and in a multitude.

Against every cruel merciless power
that may oppose my body and soul,

Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me, Christ in me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,

Christ when I arise, Christ to shield me.

Christ in the heart of every one who thinks of me,

Christ in the mouth of every one who speaks of me,

I arise today.....

Keith Barry: Brain Magic

[Keith Patrick Barry](#) is an Irish illusionist, mentalist, and close-up magician. You can visit [his website, KeithBarry.com, here](#).

An interactive transcript can be found [here, on the TED website](#).

From [the amazing TED lectures](#): talks from the TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) Conference, where leading thinkers talk on science, business, development and the arts.

Keith Barry: : Brain magic. What's brain magic all about? Brain magic to me indicates that area of magic dealing with psychological and mind reading effects. So unlike traditional magic, it uses the power of words, linguistic deception, non-verbal communication and various other techniques to create the illusion of a sixth sense.

Now, I'm going to show you all how easy it is to manipulate the human mind once you know how. And I want everybody downstairs also to join in with me and everybody here. I want everybody to put out your hands like this for me, first of all. OK, clap them together, once. OK, reverse your hands. Now follow my actions exactly. Now about half the audience has their left hand up. Why is that? OK, swap them around, put your right hand up. OK, now, cross your hands over, so your right hand goes over, interlace your fingers like this, then make sure your right thumb is outside your left thumb – that's very important. Yours is the other way around, so swap it around. Excellent, OK. Extend your fingers like this for me. All right. Tap them together once. OK, now, if you did not allow me to deceive your minds, you would all be able to do this. (Laughter) So, now you can see how easy it is for me to manipulate the human mind, once you know how. (Laughter)

Now, I remember when I was about 15, I read a copy of Life magazine, which detailed a story about a 75-year-old blind Russian woman who could sense printed letters – there's still people trying to do it here – (Laughter) – who could sense printed letters and even sense colors, just by touch. And she was completely blind. She could also read the serial numbers on bills when they were placed, face down, on a hard surface. Now, I was fascinated, but at the same time, skeptical. How

could somebody read using their fingertips? You know, if you actually think about it, if somebody is totally blind – a guy yesterday did a demonstration in one of the rooms where people had to close their eyes, and they could just hear things. And it's just a really weird thing to try and figure out, how could somebody read using their fingertips? Now earlier on, as part of a TV show that I have coming up on MTV, I attempted to give a similar demonstration of what is now known as second sight. So let's take a look.

(Video) Man: There we go. I'll guide you into the car.

Kathryn: (Laughter)

Man: You're OK, keep on going.

Kathryn: How are you?

Keith Barry: Kathryn, it's Keith here, I'm going to take you to a secret location, OK?

KB: Now, Kathryn, there was no way you could see through that blindfold, at all.

Kathryn: OK, but don't say my name like that.

KB: No, but you're OK, yes?

Kathryn: Yes.

KB: There's no way you could have seen through it, agreed?

Kathryn: No.

KB: OK, I'm just going to take it off, you're OK, you're OK. Do you want to take off the other part of it? Go ahead and take it off, you're OK. We'll just stop for a second.

Kathryn: I'm so afraid of what I'm going to see.

KB: No, no, you're fine, you're fine, take it off. You're OK,

you're safe. Have you ever heard of second sight?

Kathryn: No.

KB: Second sight is whereby a mind-control expert can see through somebody else's eyes. And I'm going to try that right now.

Kathryn: God.

KB: Are you ready? Where is it? There's no way ...

Kathryn: (Beep) Oh, my God!

KB: Shh. Don't say anything, I'm trying to see through your eyes. I can't see.

Kathryn: There's a wall, there's a wall.

KB: Look at the road, look at the road.

Kathryn: OK, OK, OK. Oh, my God!

KB: Now, anything coming at all?

Kathryn: No, no, no, no.

KB: Sure there's not?

Kathryn: No, no, I'm just still looking at the road. I'm looking at the road, all the time, I'm not taking my eyes off the road. (Beep) (Beep) (Beep) Oh, my God!

KB: Where are we? Where are we? We're going uphill, are we going uphill?

Kathryn: Look at the road – (Beep) Still got that goddamn blindfold on.

KB: What?

Kathryn: How are you doing this?

KB: Just don't break my concentration. KB: We're OK, though?

Kathryn: Yes. That's so weird. We're nearly there. Oh, my God!
Oh, my God!

KB: And I've stopped.

Kathryn: That is weird. You're like a freak-ass of nature.
That was the most scary thing I've ever done in my life.

(Applause)

Thank you. By the way, two days ago, we were going to film this down there, at the race course, and we got a guy into a car, and we got a camera man in the back, but halfway through the drive, he told me he had a – I think it was a nine-millimeter or something, stuck to his leg. So I stopped pretty quick, and that was it.

So, do you believe it's possible to see through somebody else's eyes? That's the question. Now, most people here would automatically say no. OK, but I want you to realize some facts. I couldn't see through the blindfold. The car was not gimmicked or tricked in any way, the girl – I'd never met before, all right. So I want you to just think about it for a moment. A lot of people try to come up with a logical solution to what just happened, all right. But because your brains are not trained in the art of deception, the solutions you come up with will 99 percent of the time be way off the mark.

This is because magic is all about directing attention. If, for instance, I didn't want you to look at my right hand, well, then, I don't look at it. But if I wanted you to look at my right hand, then I look at it, too, you see. It's very, very simple, once you know how, but very complicated in other ways.

Now, I'm going to give you some demonstrations up here, live, right now. I need two people to help me out real quick. Can

you come up? And let's see, down at the end, here, can you also come up, real quick? Do you mind? Yes, at the end. OK, give them a round of applause as they come up. You might want to use the stairs, there. (Applause) Now, it's very important for everybody here to realize I haven't set anything up with you guys. You don't know what's about to happen. Is that agreed? OK, would you mind just standing over here for a moment? Your name is?

Nicole: Nicole.

KB: Nicole, and? (Telephone ringing)

KB: OK, oh. Tell them, actually here's the thing, answer it, answer it, answer it. (Laughter)

KB: Is it a girl?

Man: They've already gone.

KB: Oh, they're gone, OK. I'll tell you what, swap over positions. Can you stand over here, this will just make it a little bit easier. OK, that was a pity, I would have told them it was the ace of spades. OK, a little bit closer. (Laughter) A little bit closer. (Laughter) OK, a little bit closer, come over – they look really nervous up here. Come in a little bit closer.

OK, now, do you believe in witchcraft at all?

Nicole: No.

KB: Voodoo?

Nicole: No.

KB: Things that go bump in the night?

Nicole: No.

KB: Besides, who's next, no, OK. I want you to just stand

exactly like this for me, pull up your sleeves, if you don't mind. OK, now, I want you to be aware of all the different sensations around you, because we're going to try a voodoo experiment right now. I want you to be aware of the sensations, but don't say anything until I ask you, and don't open your eyes until I ask you. From this point onwards, close your eyes, do not say anything, do not open them, be aware of the sensations.

Yes or no, did you feel anything?

Nicole: Yes.

KB: You did feel that? What did you feel?

Nicole: A touch on my back.

KB: How many times did you feel it?

Nicole: Twice.

KB: Twice. OK, extend your left arm out in front of you. Extend your left arm, OK. OK, keep it there. Be aware of the sensations, don't say anything, don't open your eyes, OK. Did you feel anything, there?

Nicole: Yes.

KB: What did you feel?

Nicole: Three –

KB: Like a tickling sensation?

Nicole: Yes.

KB: Can you show us where? OK, excellent. Open your eyes. I never touched you. I just touched his back, and I just touched his arm. A voodoo experiment. (Laughter) Yeah, I walk around nightclubs all night like this. (Laughter) You just take a seat over here for a second. I'm going to use you again, in a

moment. And can you take a seat right over here for me, if you don't mind. Sit right here.

Man: OK.

KB: OK, take a seat. Excellent, OK. Now, what I want you to do is look directly at me, OK, just take a deep breath in through your nose, letting it out through your mouth, and relax. Allow your eyes to close, on five, four, three, two, one – close your eyes right now. OK, now, I'm not hypnotizing you, I'm merely placing you in a heightened state of synchronicity, so our minds are along the same lines. And as you sink and drift and float into this relaxed state of mind, I'm going to take your left hand, and just place it up here.

And I want you to hold it there, just for a moment, and I only want you to allow your hand to sink and drift and float back to the tabletop at the same rate and speed as you drift and float into this relaxed state of awareness, and allow it to go all the way down to the tabletop. That's it, all the way down, all the way down, all the way down, and further, and further, and further, and further, and further, and further. Excellent. I want you to allow your hand to stick firmly to the tabletop. OK, now, allow it to stay there. OK, now, in a moment, you'll feel a certain pressure, OK, and I want you to be aware of the pressure. Just be aware of the pressure. And I only want you to allow your hand to float slowly back up from the tabletop as you feel the pressure release, but only when you feel the pressure release. Do you understand? Just answer yes or no. Do you understand?

Man: Yes.

KB: Hold it right there. OK, and only when you feel the pressure go back, I want you to allow your hand to slowly drift back to the table top, but only when you feel the pressure. (Laughter) OK, that was wonderfully done, let's try it again.

Excellent. Now that you've got the idea, let's try something even more interesting. Allow it to stick firmly to the table top, keep your eyes closed. Can you stand up? OK, just stand, stage forward. I want you to point directly at his forehead, OK. Imagine a connection between you and him, only when you want the pressure to be released, make an upward gesture, like this, but only when you want the pressure to be released. You can wait as long as you want, but only when you want the pressure released. OK, let's try it again. OK, now, imagine the connection, OK. Point directly at his forehead, only when you want the pressure released, we'll try it again. OK, it worked that time, excellent. And hold it there, hold it there, both of you, hold it there, only when you want the pressure to go back, make a downward gesture. You can wait as long as you want. You did it pretty quickly, but it went down, OK.

Now, I want you to be aware that in a moment, when I snap my fingers, your eyes will open, again. It's OK to remember to forget, or forget to remember what happened. Most people ask you what the hell just happened up here? But it's OK that even though you're not hypnotized, you will forget everything that happened. (Laughter) On five, four, three, two one – open your eyes, wide awake. Give them a round of applause, as they go back to their seats. (Applause) OK, you can go back.

I once saw a film called "The Gods Are Crazy." Has anybody here seen that film? Yeah, yeah, yeah. (Applause) Do you remember when they threw the Coke bottle out of the airplane, and it landed on the ground and it didn't break? Now, see, that's because Coke bottles are solid. It's nearly impossible to break a Coke bottle. Do you want to try it? Good job. (Laughter) She's not taking any chances.

You see, psychokinesis is the paranormal influence of the mind on physical events and processes. For some magicians or mentalists sometimes the spoon will bend or melt, sometimes it will not. Sometimes the object will slide across the table, sometimes it will not. It depends on how much energy you have

that day, so on, and so forth. We're going to try an experiment in psychokinesis, right now. Come right over here, next to me. Excellent.

Now, have a look at the Coke bottle. Make sure it is solid, there's only one hole, and it's a normal Coke bottle. And you can whack it against the table, if you want. Be careful. Even though it's solid, I'm standing away. OK, I want you to pinch right here with two fingers and your thumb. Excellent. Now, I've got a shard of glass here, OK. I want you to examine the shard of glass. Be careful, because it is sharp. Just hold on to it for a moment. Now, hold it out here.

I want you to imagine, right now, a broken relationship from many years ago. I want you to imagine all the negative energy from that broken relationship, from that guy, being imparted into the broken piece of glass, which will represent him, OK. But I want you to take this very seriously. Stare at the glass, ignore everybody right here. In a moment you'll feel a certain sensation, OK, and when you feel that sensation, I want you to drop the piece of glass into the bottle. Think of that guy, that ba – that guy, (Laughter) I'm trying to be good here. OK, and when you feel the sensation – it might take a while – drop it into the glass. OK, drop it in.

Now, imagine all that negative energy in there. Imagine his name, and imagine him, inside the glass. And I want you to release that negative energy by shaking it from side to side. (Laughter) That was a lot of negative energy, built up in there. (Laughter) (Applause) I also want you to think of his name. Look at me and think of his name. Have you got his name? OK, think of how many letters in the title of his name. Think about how many letters in the title. There's five letters in the title. You didn't react to that, so it's four letters in the title. Think of one of the letters in the title. Think of one of the letters. There's a K in his name, there is a K. See the way I knew that, because my name starts with a K also, but his name doesn't start with a K, it starts with an M. Tell

Mike I said hello, the next time you see him. Was that his name?

Nicole: Mm-hmm. KB: OK, give her a round of applause. (Applause) Thank you. (Applause) I've got one more thing to share with you right now. Actually, Chris, I was going to pick you for this, but instead of picking you, can you hop up here and pick a victim for this next experiment? And it should be a male victim, that's the only thing.

Chris Anderson: Oh, OK.

KB: I was going to use you for this, but I decided I might want to come back another year. (Laughter)

CA: Well, to reward him for saying "eureka," and for selecting Michael Mercil to come and talk to us – Steve Jurvetson.

KB: OK, Steve, come on up here. (Applause)

CA: You knew!

KB: OK, Steve, I want you to take a seat, right behind here. Excellent. Now, Steve – oh, you can check underneath. Go ahead, I've no fancy assistants underneath there. They just, they insist that because I was a magician, put a nice black tablecloth on. There you are, OK. (Laughter) I've got four wooden plinths here, Steve. One, two, three and four. Now, they're all the exact same except this one obviously has a stainless steel spike sticking out of it. I want you to examine it, and make sure it's solid. Happy?

Steve Jurvetson: Mmm, yes.

KB: OK. Now, Steve, I'm going to stand in front of the table, OK, when I stand in front of the table, I want you to put the cups on the plinths, like this, in any order you want, and then mix them all up, so nobody has any idea where the spike is, all right? SJ: No one in the audience?

KB: No one in the audience, and just to help you out, I'll block them from view, so nobody can see what you're doing. I'll also look away, so, go ahead and mix them up, now. OK, and tell me when you're done. (Laughter) You done?

SJ: Mmm, almost.

KB: Almost, oh. OK, you're making sure that's well hidden. Now – oh, we've got one here, we've got one here. (Applause) So, all right, we'll leave them like that. (Laughter) I'm going to have the last laugh, though. (Laughter) Now, Steve, you know where the spike is, but nobody else, does? Correct? But I don't want you to know either, so swivel around on your chair. They'll keep an eye on me to make sure I don't do anything funny, No, stay around, OK. Now, Steve, look back. So, now you don't know where the spike is, and I don't know where it is, either, OK. Now, is there any way to see through this blindfold?

SJ: Put this on?

KB: No, just is there any way to see through it?

SJ: Um-umm.

KB: No?

SJ: No, I can't see through it.

KB: You can't see through it. Excellent, OK. Now, I'm going to put on the blindfold. Don't stack them up, OK. Give them an extra mix up. Don't move the cups, because I don't want anybody to see where the spike is, but give the plinths an extra mix up, and then line them up, like this, all right? I'll put the blindfold on. Give them an extra mix up. No messing around this time. OK, go ahead, mix them up. My hand is at life, here, so – at risk. (Laughter) Tell me when you're done.

SJ: Done.

KB: OK, where are you? Put out your hand. Your right hand. Is that – no, OK. Tell me when I'm over a cup.

SJ: You're over a cup.

KB: I'm over a cup, right now?

SJ: Mm-hmm.

KB: Now, Steve, do you think it's here? Yes or no?

SJ: Oh! (Laughter)

KB: I told you I'd have the last laugh. (Laughter)

SJ: I don't think it's there.

KB: No? Good decision. (Laughter) (Applause) Now, if I go this way, is there another cup over here? SJ: Can we do the left hand?

KB: Oh, no, no, no. He asked me could he do the left hand. Absolutely not. (Laughter)

KB: Now, if I go this way, is there another cup?

SJ: There's a cup that way, yes.

KB: OK, tell me when to stop.

SJ: OK.

KB: There?

SJ: Yes, there's one.

KB: OK. Do you think it's here, yes or no? This is your decision, not mine. (Laughter)

SJ: I'm going to say no.

KB: Good decision. (Laughter) OK, give me both hands. Now, put them on both cups. Do you think the spike is under your left

hand, or under your right hand?

SJ: Uh, neither.

KB: Neither, oh, OK. But if you were to guess. (Laughter)

SJ: I think it's under my right hand. KB: You think it's under your right hand? Now remember, you made all the decisions all along. Psychologists, figure this out. Have a look.

SJ: Oh! (Applause) Thank you.

Thank you. If anybody wants to see some sleight of hand later on, I'll be outside. Thank you. (Applause) Thank you.

Thank you. (Applause)

John F Kennedy Visits Ireland: British Pathé (1963)

John F. Kennedy visits Ireland, 1963. [British Pathe newsreel](#)

Narrator: The wheels of the Presidential airliner were running on Irish soil. The cheers of Berlin were still ringing in his ears. But how different it all was now.

John F Kennedy was in the land of his forebears. And there to bid him welcome was President De Valera, himself no less a fighter for freedom than the chief executive of the United States.

This youthful man who has revived the government of the great republic across the ocean had a firm determined step as

he went to inspect the guard of honour of 187 men drawn from the 5th Infantry Battalion. Soldiers, these men, who have known active service, for the battalion served the cause of the United Nations in the Congo.

Mr Kennedy is the first American president ever to visit Ireland during his first term of office. That alone would make this a memorable occasion. But there is more to it than that. For as many reflected while President De Valera made his speech of welcome, this is the man whose grandfather Patrick Kennedy somehow scraped together the 4 pounds for a sailing ship passage and emigrated to the United States.

In the hungry years of the mid-19th century, when adversity drove hundreds of thousands to leave their beloved Ireland, they used to call it seeking their fortune. And the man now driving to Dublin has achieved fortune beyond their wildest dreams. He was coming to the capital of Eire as the head of the greatest nation in the world.

Already thousands were converging upon O'Connell St. For several days the Kennedy visit had been the number one topic of conversation. At last the President was in Dublin. Ireland and America, warm friends for 100 years share in this dynamic man a symbol of their common faith and liberty. The motorcade was cheered by fully a quarter million people.

Wexford beckoned Mr Kennedy on a sentimental pilgrimage. At nearby Dunganstown is cherished the family homestead on which Patrick Kennedy turned his back 100 years ago. The hostess today was a second cousin of the President, Mrs Mary Ryan, who farms there now. Many Kennedys are to be found in the district, several of them the President's cousins. Scores of people who could claim no relationship had come from near and far to be present. Even to see this teaparty was something none of them will forget.

Mr Kennedy was spending four days in Ireland but the programme

was crowded. So all too soon the time came for him to bid Dunganstown and its friendly people goodbye. And there to whisk him away was something few of them had seen before. Certainly not on the doorstep. A helicopter!

Wexford shared with Dunganstown in the President's homecoming. They could hardly muster the enormous crowds who had cheered him in Germany, but this was a different kind of warmth. Welcoming one in whose veins there's not a drop of blood that's not Irish. The Mayor presented Mr Kennedy with a casket containing the scroll of freedom, making him the 13th freeman of an historic borough.

The President then left to return to Dublin. And what a crowd there was in the grounds of the Presidential Residence for the garden party Mr De Valera gave in the visitor's honour. The film star June Thorburn got close enough to see Mr Kennedy, which is probably more than hundreds there were able to do. Everywhere Mr Kennedy, went they could apply that famous old saying:

It was a great day for the Irish.