

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 491: The Murder of Bridget Cleary

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Hi, it's me.

I'm the close friend.

It's her.

And right now, I am currently listening to The Troop by Nick Cutter, and I highly recommend it.

It is so good.

It's so brutal.

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It's pretty great.

It's on 8 plus acres of farmland with access to fresh water, nutritious feed, and space to roam and groove, I feel like, because I think the hens over at Happy Egg, I think they're grooving because they're just happy.

And you know what?

This goes above the requirements for traditional free range farming.

They believe and they know that this is better for their birds, and I agree, high fives to them.

This results in eggs with the plumpest orange yolks that are full of flavor.

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I'm telling you, I've been eating them nonstop.
I can't get enough.
When you crack that egg open and see the color of that beautiful, huge yolk, you will not believe your eyes.
It's the most beautiful.
It's like a sunset.
I've never seen anything like it.
Honestly, the proof is right there inside the shell.
Look for the yellow cartons in a store near you.
Visit happyegg.com/slash/morbid to find a store near you that carries happy egg.
Keep it weird, but keep it happy.
Hey, weirdos, I'm Alina, I'm Ash, and this is Morbid.
You sounded morose.
I don't know why.
I'm not morose.
But it was also like, I don't know, it's kind of happy at the same time.
I'm pretty neutral right now.
Maybe it was like half happy, half morose, and that makes a neutral.
Yeah, like I went into this, I think, like in a pretty happy mood, and then I looked back over this case and I said, oh, it's going to be a rough one.
Oh, yeah.
That'll happen on this show called Morbid that you talked about.
This one's a little different today, though.
Okay.
So I'm going, this is shocking and very out of character of me, but we're going back to the 1800s.
That's not different.
I love to be there.
I just do.
Be at the 1800s or B-square, that's what they say.
Yeah, honestly, that's what I always say.
Alina's motto.
Yeah, I'm going to get that tattooed on me, but today, we're going to talk about the really, really, really brutal and awful murder of Bridget Cleary.
This has to do with like folklore and fairy folklore in particular.
That's kind of cool.
Which sounds like it's going to be like fun and whimsical and that like something will go awry and that's where it will get bad, but really the whole thing just goes awry.
There's no whimsy involved in this at all.
That's a bummer.
Yeah.
There would be when I went into it, but no, there's no whims.
But you know what?
We're going to get through it together because this is a rough one and it's an important

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one to tell because Bridget Cleary was like a badass lady and she was like outside of the norm.

She was like very successful and independent, like she didn't need her man.

She didn't need any of that.

And that's why they killed her.

That was a problem.

Yeah, exactly.

Too independent.

But I think the story gets twisted a lot to like be something it's not and it's like, no, I think like, I think she was just too badass for everybody.

But this is a story, like I said, of a truly heinous and senseless act of brutality and eventually murder.

But again, full of fairies and fae folk and magic at the same time, but none of it is whimsical.

Damn it.

Roller coaster ride.

So the question here is, was Bridget Cleary really murdered out of fear of witches, fairies or other, you know, fantasy monsters?

Or did her husband simply convince himself of this in order to commit murder for a more mundane reason?

Would you say?

Yes.

Yes.

I don't know anything about this.

I was going to say, you don't have the information, but I like your answer.

So let's talk about Bridget first.

Bridget Boland was born in, and I'm going to do, I looked up these pronunciations because Irish towns are, hoo boy, beautiful, beautiful sounding, but they don't sound the way they look.

She was born in Bally Vaidley, County Tipperary.

Okay.

I'm so sorry, everybody.

She tried.

This is like my ancestral background, but I don't know what to do.

She was born on February 19th, 1869.

A Pisces.

There you go.

She was the youngest born to Patrick Boland and Bridget Keating.

I want you to remember their names, especially Patrick Boland.

Does that sound familiar or no?

No, just remember the name.

Got it.

Baby Bridget.

She grew up in an extremely rural Irish village.

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You said rural good.

I did.

Rural juror.

I was able to say it.

Yes.

Bally Vaidley was only a little under 300 acres, which in the late 19th century had just nine houses and had a population of 31 people.

Wow.

That's a little rural.

Little rural.

I would say.

Sadly, this was actually around a quarter of what it had been before the famine of 1845 to 49.

Now, given the time period in the very rural environment, I keep saying it right.

Look at you.

So I'm going to keep saying it.

It's really hard to say it in my opinion.

Little is known about Bridget's family or her early life.

We can only get so much from it.

Everyone was focused on the potato of it all.

Yeah, exactly.

But according to Angela Bork, who wrote the book, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary*, a true story.

That's a little spoiler alert for you, but I recommend that book.

It's fascinating.

She claims that the family lived in a tiny wood mudwalled thatched cabin across the street from Patrick Bowland's sister, Mary Kennedy.

Remember that name too.

That is Bridget's aunt.

As the youngest in the family, Bork notes that Bridget was more likely to be indulged with education than her brothers were.

Because they kind of had to be relied upon to be help with the farming, with all the tasks of the day.

All the manless stuff.

Yeah.

So it's likely that she was the only one in her family with strong reading and writing skills, which was also kind of different for women at the time.

100%.

When she grew older, her education would come to include, again, what were considered women's skills of the time, like embroidery, needlework, the really important things.

But at the time, they were important because that's how she could make a living.

Because as an adult, she made her income as a milliner, which she made hats for women, essentially.

Oh, cool.

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There's also sources that say she was called her seamstress, but I think it was probably around the same kind of thing.

She was making, fixing, and creating clothing and hats and all that good stuff.

Yeah.

She was a multifaceted girly.

Exactly.

And not only that, she's a young adult now.

She would use some of her income to send her father to help with his expenses.

So she was out here making her own money through her own educational skills and sending that money to her father.

Wow.

Independent lady.

But in the timeline and the reasons are unclear, but by the time she reached her late teens or early twenties, Bridget's mother had passed away and some of her siblings, a lot of them actually had either died or emigrated in search of work.

So she was kind of, I don't know how her mother died, but she was kind of left with her father and they were really the only remaining members of the family in that area.

Oh, wow.

That's really sad.

Yeah.

It was really sad.

It just kind of like family just dispersed in different ways.

Now, despite being very successful as a seamstress slash milliner, people in the area often spoke of Bridget being quote, a bit queer, which means she didn't fit in.

Okay.

Because, you know, they basically kind of thought she seemed a little superior.

Okay.

She was like, new more than them.

She was just confident.

I mean, it still happens today.

Yeah.

Like if you have any kind of confidence, you're just a bitch.

People hate you.

Like that's the way it is.

Especially when it comes to being a woman.

Exactly.

She also had like an immodest style of attire a lot of the time.

Immodest?

Like a lot.

She wasn't wearing the like up to the chin stuff.

She was letting the.

She said, you know, check out my deck.

She might have just been letting the tits flow free.

I don't know.

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Free the titty, baby.

But either way, she was very much set apart from the typical Irish country woman attire at the time.

Fuck it.

So I'm sure some people were like bad bitch alert and then some people were like, she's a bit queer.

It was probably the woman that were like, put your tits away.

I don't want my husband to see.

Exactly.

And it's like, blame him.

Don't blame her.

Exactly.

She's got her terms, Bridget's success as a seamstress slash milliner and a merchant at that point already set her apart from her at the time, very poor and rural neighbors.

Right.

But her difference was kind of underscored by the fact that she also was very open about her success.

Like she was proud of herself.

Oh, people hated that.

I bet.

Yeah.

The people and again, even now, people want you to minimize it.

So it's like, if she was out here today being like, yeah, I'm a badass like business lady.

I made this, I made this damn dress.

Look at it.

Everybody's wearing it.

Like people would be like, calm down.

Don't be so.

Oh, don't finish.

Oh no.

I was just going to say like, don't be so, you know, don't be so outward with your success.

Don't be so boss bitch.

Yeah.

It makes me think of the Doja Cat song.

I'm a bitch.

I'm a boss.

Oh, there you go.

I'm a bitch and a boss.

That's Bridget.

Bridget.

To be quite honest.

Triple B.

Yeah.

I like it.

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But she was brought up on a farm.
She was brought up in a rural area.
So she had like a good relationship with that part of her life as well.
She didn't totally neglect it.
She didn't leave it behind.
She didn't pretend it wasn't part of her daily life because it was.
She was known to have kept chickens and she ended up supplementing her own income by selling eggs at the market.
She was a business woman.
Yeah, she really was.
She's just looking to make income any way she can.
And like you had to.
Yeah.
So she was working as an apprentice at the market in the nearby town of Clonmel.
I think it is Clonmel.
This is when Bridget met her future husband, Michael Cleary.
I don't like him.
He was a local cooper and nearly 10 years older than her.
She was already established as a tradesman and they began, you know, courting each other, I suppose.
And they ended up marrying like a short time later because, you know, 1800s of it all.
Yeah, courting was like five minutes and they were like, Hey, we should get married.
Yeah, you know, why not?
Let's have a kid.
No, in hindsight, people looked back at this relationship and were like, they were a little of a strange pairing.
Well, you didn't make a lot of sense.
Yeah, it didn't make a lot of sense, not just because of the age gap, which wasn't that big of a deal back then.
Right.
It was and, you know, depending on the age grouping, it's always like different.
Yeah, yeah.
But I think they just didn't match.
Like it didn't seem like he was very, he was very like understated.
He was very quiet.
Modest.
Very modest.
And she was kind of the total opposite, which you could say it could be like a nice balance and maybe it would work.
But maybe not back then.
It did not.
You guys, hydration is not only for people like training for championships and doing marathons because you can bet your booty I'm not running a marathon anytime soon.
But I do love the feeling of being hydrated.

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I'm like, ooh, I'm like functioning on my fullest potential.

And I know that I am when I'm drinking liquid IV proper functional hydration is essential and liquid IV is the number one powdered hydration brand in America.

Their hydration multiplier is the one product you're missing in your daily routine.

Use it first thing in the morning.

That's what I do before a workout.

If you feel run down in the afternoon or sometimes I'm part of this gang too, after a night out with friends or even on long flights with just one stick, you can hydrate real life two times faster than water alone, plus get essential vitamins and three times the electrolytes as leading sports drinks.

Liquid IV also comes in 12 delicious refreshing flavors to keep your hydration routine exciting. Right now my personal favorite is tropical punch.

It's freaking delicious.

But my second favorite is watermelon.

And I was talking about vitamins before guys.

It contains five essential vitamins.

B3, B5, B6, B12 and vitamin C. So like, hello, you got to be drinking that three times the electrolytes of leading sports drinks and made with quality ingredients, no GMOs, free from gluten, dairy and soy.

It's perfect.

Real people, real flavor, real hydrating.

Grab your liquid IV in bulk nationwide at Costco, or you can get 20% off when you go to liquid IV.com and use code Morbid at checkout.

That's 20% off anything when you shop better hydration today.

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Savings accounts provided by Goldman Sachs Bank, USA member FDIC term supply.

This also didn't really help Bridget's whole like, she's a bit queer thing, you know, like people would look at me like, and they were like, oh, and this is weird too, but she's doing this.

Like a stark contrast too, so it showed off her differences even more.

And then the way they went about things in their relationship, which shouldn't be anybody else's business to be quite honest, but again, there's only like 30 people in this town, so it's everyone's business apparently.

Also what the hell else are you going to do?

I'm not going to lie.

That's the thing.

What are you going to do in their business?

Oh, I am up in their business right now.

So like I can't say anything, but I'm like, at the time I'm like, guys, come on, I'll be weird about what happened.

But you know, they're married now and Bridget and Michael spent the first few years of their lives not living together.

That's a little weird, but like whatever.

Like whatever.

I don't know.

I don't know.

Who am I to say what works in your damn relationship?

You know, like I'm like, whatever.

And you know, Michael would, she lived at her parents' house with her father and he would visit her on the weekends, like stay at the house on the weekends.

So I don't know if it was like a work thing or it was going to be traveling, who knows.

But Angela Bork, who had just named that book that everybody should read, said in those days, it was definitely, cause I was like, I don't know, was that not weird back then?

I don't know what was weird back then, but it was unusual for them to live apart from each other.

Like that wasn't a usual thing.

Yeah.

Especially if they were relatively financially stable, which they were.

So they were like, I don't, she's like, I don't really know what that was about.

But she says that Bridget may have had to nurse her mother at the time before she had passed away.

Cause we don't know the timeline of her death exactly, it gets put into different years.

So this could have been during this beginning of their marriage, could have been when she was dealing with her sick mother.

And that makes sense that she wouldn't want to move out in the midst of that.

Yeah.

It would make a lot of sense at the beginning.

She just wants to stay in the house.

He's going to visit.

She's going to take care of her mom until she eventually died, which we don't know when.

Right.

But again, while it's entirely possible that there's a very simple and normal explanation for this, rumors, of course, went quickly through the small town.

What else are you going to do?

Yeah, exactly.

And there were many people who would later speculate that Michael had been having an affair with Bridget's cousin, Joanna Burke.

Damn.

All of these names are going to come back later.

So they definitely had an affair is what you're telling me.

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So there was that.

And in court later, he would vehemently deny having any type of relationship with Joanna.

Yeah, I bet he would.

You know, we don't know.

But there were also rumors that Bridget was not exactly faithful, faithful to her husband in the weeks and months after her death.

Many locals said that they believed that she was involved with a local emergency man named William Simpson.

Well, he sounds more exciting.

So you know, it did sound exciting, but I looked it up.

Blomp.

Apparently an emergency man is a guy called in by farmers to help save dying crops.

Exciting.

I still think it's so exciting.

But like in a different way than I thought.

Imagine if your crops were dying and then it would be pretty exciting.

I'd be excited.

Yeah.

But Michael Cleary would later tell reporters that he thought Bridget was having an affair with a local farmer named Patrick Power.

So there's a lot of just scandalous, like desperate housewives kind of thing going on here.

Like this is with Stereo Lane, is that what it's called?

Yeah, this is that's this.

Still got to finish that.

You know, she probably like showed one of them her ankle or something and they were like, oh, they're fucking that's exact.

And they were like, oh, fair.

Yeah.

There it is.

Now, in the small village of Bally Vaidley and nearby Connemara, I think it's Connemara.

I'm sorry if I'm saying that wrong.

You're like my people.

So I love you.

Bridget's socioeconomic status, her youth and her perceived arrogance could have been perceived poorly by the rural population, particularly women, unfortunately.

Women don't ever like each other.

Yeah.

So Bork suggests the independence and economic prosperity enjoyed by Bridget and, you know, this emergency man, William Simpson, also did well in his business.

They thought this could have been a jealousy thing that they paired the two of them together.

Okay.

Like they were both doing all right.

They were both pretty open about doing all right.

They were arrogant, you know, people didn't like it.

So they decided to fuck with them because he was also married.
So they decided to be like, well, you two are fucking, like that's obvious.
And it's like, no, I think they were just like both doing okay.
Yeah.
And maybe they talked every once in a while and were like, you still doing okay.
That's awesome.
And people were like, yeah, it's definitely that.
That's annoying.
It's a bunch of busy bodies.
So I think people do believe that that's why they became the subject of like a lot of slanderous rumors just because they were doing well and were open about it.
Imagine if everyone that was doing well had an affair.
Yeah.
The old fucking affairs around.
True.
I mean there are, but.
Yeah, like I mean there are.
But like, let me just work through that.
Let me work through that in real time.
Now, on the other hand, it's also possible the rumors of Michael and Bridgette's impidelity were kind of true.
So.
It sounds like he sucked.
So I mean, you know, yeah, it wasn't great.
I don't think their marriage was, was super awesome.
On solid ground.
Yeah.
I don't think it was on any ground to be quite honest.
It was in the sky.
It was in a swamp.
But following, following her death, a lot was made of the fact that they were married for eight years at that time and they never had any children.
Now, now we would just go, okay, they made that decision or whatever.
Like that's just the way it is.
Yeah.
Maybe they couldn't.
But Angela Bork points out in her book that, that the church's influence on Irish life at the time made it that it's unlikely that they were childless by choice.
Yeah.
Because at that time that wasn't a common thing to do, to become childless by choice.
So there might have been a biological or a medical reason for this, but people looked at it as something's wrong here.
Yeah.
You know, and it's not, and it's something within, you know, within this marriage and

not something outside of their control.

That's stupid.

Now it's, so there's like a lot of layers to this that just make it more complicated than just like, wow, you know, fairies, like it's like, no, there was a lot going on here.

But in his testimony in court, Michael Cleary described his relationship to his wife saying, we were not great at all.

Oh.

Well, yeah.

I think we can, we could realize that.

Yeah.

And apparently in like, in, you know, Irish parlance at the time, this means that not only did they not get along, but they were not in love with one another, with each other.

So this was pretty much him saying like we did not love each other.

It was a marriage of like convenience.

It's pretty evident from Michael's testimony that there was a lot of bitterness between them.

It doesn't seem like Michael liked the fact that she was like a strong woman and independent and didn't really rely on him for anything.

Which is strange because it seems like she was already very well established when they got married.

She was.

That's the thing.

It wasn't like this was, you know.

Like newsflash or like her business took off while they were married or something.

Yeah.

And there was a lot of mistrust between the two of them.

Because the town was always talking.

Exactly.

There was also a lot, this complicated matters too, that Bridget was surrounded by family in the village.

Not, you know, not so much her brothers anymore.

Her mom had passed away, but like her aunts and uncles, cousins, her dad, they were all there.

Johanna.

And Michael, Johanna.

Michael had no nearby relatives at all.

Oh, so he was jealous.

So exactly.

So in a culture, especially at the time that encouraged large close knit families, this lack of one for him would have made him feel a little isolated.

And the fact that they most likely couldn't start a family themselves.

Exactly.

So he was just kind of at the mercy of her family.

So he felt it was definitely a powerless thing.

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And he did not do well with feeling powerless.

And he didn't look at it like, Hey, I've become part of this family.

So I should just be part of this family.

He took it, I think with him, it was a lot of, he didn't handle feeling powerless well, which is wild.

Also, he like, wait a second.

But also this entire family and support system for Bridget took her side all the time when they would argue.

So I think that's a big Irish family.

That's a big Irish family.

They're going to be like, fuck you, Michael.

But that probably, you know, teed them off as well.

Of course.

And, you know, when this is all taken together, it kind of seems like their marriage was like a lot of conflict, a lot of jealousy, a lot of suspicion, a lot of bitterness and a lot of loneliness.

A lot of one sided things.

It sounds like they were both very lonely in their marriage, which is horrible.

Exactly.

Now, and people could see that there was like anger and bitterness, especially in Michael.

It wasn't outward, but they could just sense it when they were around them.

And because of this, he was definitely more susceptible to some influence of the outside nature.

I mean, you go wherever.

Yeah.

Like it was, he was definitely looking for ways out of this and he wasn't looking for like a divorce, a regular way out of this for sure.

Well, because divorce probably wasn't even like a word back then.

Yeah.

And it's like, dude, I think you both would have been fine if you both just went your separate ways here.

Like you would have survived the society issues.

Like we didn't need to go here.

Right.

Now, on the afternoon of March 4th, 1895, Bridget walked home from her Bally-Vadely home about two miles to Kilnemana.

Hold on.

Kilnemana.

Kilnemana.

Kilnemana.

I'm going to go with that.

Kilnemana.

Kilnemana.

To the home.

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I wrote it out phonetically, so I wanted to make sure I was on it right.

Kilnemana.

I hate when I do that and then I'm like, when did I mean kids say it?

No, I'm like, damn.

She walked to the home of her father's cousin, Jack Dunne.

Okay.

So another family member.

She had gone to the house to deliver eggs and get payment from previously delivered eggs because she's a business woman and you didn't pay me last time on collecting these eggs.

But Jack wasn't there and his wife wasn't there either.

Yeah, I bet they weren't.

So she decided to wait for one of them to come back.

She said, I make good on my fucking eggs, bro.

I'm bringing you eggs.

You're going to pay me for the last one.

Yeah, I'm not bringing you new eggs till you pay for the last eggs.

So I guess it was sunny out.

It was nice out, but there was a deep chill in the air that day.

And Bridget was apparently, because remember, Bridget's not one to be very conservatively dressed.

She was underdressed for the weather.

So by the time she got back home, she was very cold shivering, very much had a chill.

Even sitting by the fireplace, it didn't do anything to warm her up.

And according to Angela Bork, the next day, Bridget woke with, quote, a violent headache and had fits of shivering and wasn't able to get out of bed.

Sounds like she has an ammonia.

Thank you.

You're welcome.

In the days after this, the weather got warmer, but I think it was just damp.

Like the earth was damp, which is not great when you're not feeling great.

And so it kind of made her worse.

And especially if she had an ammonia or bronchitis or something like that, it probably made it worse.

Right.

So she was in bed for like the entire week after that.

And during this time, especially in rural communities, people would come to your bedside people, you know, all the time, like it was, you were not going to be alone in bed.

And so she's bedridden and she got a ton of visitors and they came by to kind of help around the house, help with the cooking, you know, just to offer well wishes, just that kind of thing.

She's got a lot of loved ones around.

Community.

And one of those visitors was Jack Dunn, her brother's cousin.

Her brother's cousin.

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So, and this was also the man who she had gone to visit on the day she got ill.

Rich better have my money.

Exactly.

Now, of course, at this time, and this time in this place, like rural places like this, they were a little slower to embrace scientific and technological changes.

Yeah.

More than like, you know, they're urban countrymen.

Sure.

Sure.

So, but by this, but honestly, even by those standards, Jack Dunn was an outlier here.

Like he was even further back in the evolution of like believing in science and technology.

So he was, as he's described in the book, a man who might have commanded respect in an earlier generation or a more remote place, but who had become marginalized and isolated in an increasingly modern society.

So he's a guy who believes in all the folklore and he's, you know, the folk medicine and all that.

And he's staying very hard into that and not moving with the times.

So people were starting to see him as kind of like, oh, that's Jack Dunn, you know.

Jack the quack.

Boom.

See, you would have killed it back then.

Oh my God.

Oh, it's Jack the quack coming.

They would have killed me immediately.

I would have been killed on impact or just like shunned into the woods, which would have been fun.

I was going to say, which would have been awesome.

So a report in the cork examiner said it like this, at 55 years old, Dunn is an old man in his fairy rhythm.

He's learned apparently in incantations, charms and spells and can tell ghost stories and fairy tales.

He is the he is the very Shinachi of ancient Ireland.

Now I found out that that is what is referred to as just like a teller of old tales or legends.

A Shinachi.

Yeah.

That's fun to say.

Yeah.

And at the time when I read this, I was like, he sounds awesome.

When I, when you say that he sounds awesome, but I can already tell that he's up to some fuck shit.

Yeah.

I'm going to go ahead and tell you he sucks.

Yeah.

I saw that in your eyes.

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Most of the people here suck.

Besides like Bridget.

Yeah.

Pretty much.

Johanna, I have her number.

I think I have his number.

Yeah.

Jack, I was like, you had promise in the beginning, but whew.

No, he didn't though.

Cause he never even paid for her eggs.

That's true.

So fuck him.

That's true.

Now apparently Jack Dunn truly was a very rigid representation of cultural heritage and traditions that had all but died out after the famine because before the famine, folktales and superstition were treated very seriously, much more seriously than they were after. As is pointed out in the book, in another time, he again would be kind of an authority figure in the community and he probably was at one point, but by the late 1800s, he just became eccentric.

That's like he was kind of ridiculed for it.

So he was kind of thirsting for that time when he was the authority on things.

Look upon me again, Jack the Black.

And there was also, so the other thing that made him a target for mockery at this time was he held a genuine belief in fairies and their influence over humans.

Jack and his wife apparently lived near what he referred to as a fairy fort.

That's a real thing.

And he was frequently heard to say, quote, he heard the fairies outside his house every night and that sometimes they played hurling matches there.

Now a fairy fort was apparently a prehistoric or pre-Christian dwelling of some sort that had kind of been like taken over by nature.

And so it looked very super high fantasy and looks like a place fairies would live.

Okay.

I'm not saying they don't personally.

No, I think I believe in fey and shit.

Yeah.

So like let's go.

But like he...

I don't know if they like overtake humans though.

I don't know about that.

I don't know about it.

I'm going to sit over here with my no knowledge of fey or fairy from the only thing I know is what we talked about in our episode that we did.

So I also know not to fuck with it even if it's not real.

So here I am.

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I don't know anything.

I'm just out here reporting this.

Yep.

But he truly believed in this and that fairy fort was very real and that's what it was.

Again, it sounds awesome.

I'm into this.

Sounds awesome until it's not.

I feel.

Exactly.

Now, again, much of Ireland at this time was embracing the modern era.

So this was weird to everybody.

They were like, you need to chill out.

But a belief in fairies was also at the time kind of a means of explaining some part of life that didn't make logical sense.

Right.

For example, like if this man, if a random man like your neighbor was known to have walked with a limp for his entire life and then all of a sudden he's gone for a short period of time and he comes back and he doesn't have that limp anymore.

Can he go see a doctor?

No, he did not.

They most likely would have said there had to be some magical explanation for this.

Which again, I don't know.

I wasn't in the 1800s.

Could have been.

But in Jack Dunn's experience, Bridget Cleary had always been very well put together.

She was a merchant.

She was a seamstress, a business woman.

She was independent.

She was confident.

She was together.

So to see her so unwell and so quote unquote weak and bedridden and unkempt in her bed as well, particularly after she had been near his fairy fort in his home, had sat outside next to it.

For a while.

It made him very stressed out and he apparently cried out when he saw her, that is not Bridget Boland.

What?

So, like sir, she sat in the damp cold air.

We know what happened here.

She was to a fairy fort.

No.

According to him.

Shut up.

Now, if this were other anyone else there that had said that, they probably would have

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interpreted that as just like a way to say she looks very ill.

Like that's not her.

That looks like, wow, like she didn't seem like herself.

But coming from Jack, they're like, oh, shit, that's not bridge.

It was interpreted to mean that is not Bridget Cleary.

That is not Bridget Boland.

And it's this moment that likely started to seal the deal here.

Because even though he wasn't looked at as an authority anymore, him saying that with such like conviction, I think at least set a couple of people, if not one in particular, Michael Cleary, into a little bit of a tizzy because he already had some thoughts, I feel.

A real tizzy or a fucking put on tizzy.

Exactly.

In fact, the cork examiner later wrote, quote, Dunn's remarks set all the fairy machinery in motion.

So they fully were like, it's him.

He did it.

But it's like, let's not take all the, all the stuff off of the person who actually does it and we'll get there.

So to a lot of people, Bridget was fucking sick.

She had bronchitis.

She had pneumonia.

She was just sick.

That was it.

But Jack Dunn was like, nope.

There is clear evidence here that she is a changeling, which is a human like creature that's left behind by fairies after they stole the actual person.

This motherfucker just didn't want to pick up his egg tab.

That's true.

He just wanted that egg tab to remain open.

Honestly, I think that's all it lines up for for him.

And well, and here's the thing to anybody around who, he was not the last person there to believe this stuff.

It's not like it was totally gone and everybody was like, oh yeah, that's all bullshit.

Why do we ever believe that in the beginning?

This is through generations, people believed this stuff they still do today.

So it's like, there were people there that still at least kind of believed in this.

And if he's sitting here going, here's the evidence to suggest it, you're swaying people who are already in a state of like what the hell is going on.

So according to them, her case checked all the boxes of a person who had been away with the fairies.

Away with the fairies.

Like for example, Bridget and Michael Cleary had experienced a period of uncommon prosperity before she was ill.

And this was after her being at the ferry for it.

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So this indicated that she had maybe traded her health for wealth.

No, I think she was wealthy before even.

I think so too.

Now, also they'd been married for eight years.

They were remaining childless.

So some people thought that that meant she had exchanged her ability to bear children for economic prosperity.

Yeah.

That one does.

Totally.

Absolutely.

And finally, Jack Dunn said several times that the creature in the bed had one leg that was longer than the other.

Remember, the creature in the bed is Bridget Bulland.

And also people can have one leg that is longer than the other.

You absolutely can.

But he said this was proof that Bridget had been changed after her interaction with the fairies.

I would just like to point out that your best friend Debbie is sitting here and one of her legs is longer than the other.

Faye.

You're a fairy.

Get out of there.

You're a changeling.

I mean, would have said that when Jack Dunn looked at your ass and would have said, you're a changeling.

She's witch.

She's witch.

You're a witch.

And while Jack Dunn ranted about, you know, she's a changeling, other members of the community were expressing serious concerns for her actual health.

That's good.

I'm glad there were some people like that.

Because at this point, she wasn't seeming to be getting any better.

So people were genuinely like, what's going on here?

Well, pneumonia back then, I'm sure they didn't have a way to treat that.

Exactly.

Like a good way to treat it.

Now, on March 9th, Bridget's father, Patrick Bowland, walked four miles in the heavy rain to get the doctor, Dr. William Kreen.

Don't be too impressed by him, a physician who provided medical care to the poor in destitute, which was shocking to me because she was either poor or destitute.

But several days passed and Dr. Kreen did not respond, did not come to the home.

Because he was busy with the poor and the destitute.

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Probably.

So Michael Cleary went to go get him, but was only able to leave word with a neighbor that Bridget was still very ill and they needed to see the doctor.

Was there no other doctor?

I guess he was the only one around that they wanted to talk to.

So a few days later, Michael returned again in hopes of finding the doctor, but he still couldn't find him.

Meanwhile, William Simpson, the guy that she was supposed to be having an affair with, the emergency man, he sent one of his maids, because remember, we're not poor in destitute here.

He sent his maids to Drangen to fetch father Con Ryan.

And he did this, which it kind of implicates that she was close to death and needed last rights.

Last rights, yeah.

Like why else, you know, or at least needed a priest there to perform some sort of.

If need be.

Stuff.

So like this, this would implicate that.

But that really wasn't the case.

Now on March 13th, so four days after he was first contacted, Dr. Kreen finally made his way to the Cleary House.

Seven to four days.

Imagine just having to go find a doctor.

Yeah, just go find it.

And he has to come find you.

Right.

Like a.

Angie's list is now Angie and we've heard a lot of theories about why I thought it was an eco move.

For your words, less paper.

No, it was so you could say it faster.

No, it's to be more iconic.

Must be a tech thing.

But those aren't quite right.

It's because now you can compare up front prices, book a service instantly and even get your project handled from start to finish.

Sounds easy.

It is.

And it makes us so much more than just a list.

Get started at Angie dot com.

That's A N G I or download the app today.

Wedding season is in full bloom.

And if you've been wanting a straighter smile, look no further than bite.

Bite offers clear teeth aligners that help you transform your smile from the comfort

of your home or wherever you'll be this time of year.

Get the endless trips to the dentist bites, clear aligners are doctor directed and delivered straight to your doorstep.

Just take an impression mold of your mouth, preview your 3D smile and order your all day or at night aligners, but also knows that wedding season is expensive enough as it is.

Their aligners cost thousands less than braces.

It's time to let your smile shine.

Get started on your smile journey by visiting bite.com and use code WONDERY at checkout to get your at home impression kit for only 14 95.

That's B-Y-T-E dot com code WONDERY to get over 80% off your impression kit.

Now in his testimony later that he gave to the coroner later, Kreen said, I found her suffering sir simply from nervous excitement and slight bronchitis.

So Dr. Kreen prescribed medication for Bridget, but he never followed up after the visit.

So he also didn't know if the prescription ever got filled or if it was given to her.

As far as he knew and what he told the courts, he said Bridget was perfectly healthy.

She had a body of good physique and well nourished.

The only thing I can say is that she was awfully nervous.

Hmm.

And he keeps saying that she was very anxious, very nervous.

Probably because everyone's saying she's a fucking fairy.

Well, when you hear what happens to her later, I'm like, yeah, probably.

It's most likely that Bridget had probably caught like a nasty cold on or around the time she was visiting Jack Dunn's house because like she probably didn't get it there.

She was probably just developing it and I'm sure the cold didn't help the dampness and all that.

Uh-huh.

And that probably developed into bronchitis, which likely went into pneumonia.

Yeah.

That's like pneumonia will knock you on your ass, especially in the 1800s.

Well, there wasn't a lot to do about it, right?

Later in fact, a post-mortem examination said the coroner reported that the only evidence of illness was that her lungs were slightly congested, so it does indicate that.

And also, I guess what they were trying to say too was they were like, okay, so she has congested lungs, but there was all these other like symptoms that were coming out.

So what they're trying to do is kind of like be polite about it, but like Dr. Kreen essentially wrote in his report when he saw her, that basically whatever illness was plaguing her was likely something, you know, in the chest area, but it likely could have also been like slightly psychological in nature because he was pointing to her anxiety, you know, that kind of thing that maybe she was suffering from some of that as well.

Maybe whatever, if it was an ammonia or bronchitis or whatever was going on, that was also making her nervous.

Maybe she was.

Okay.

She was kind of over, over upset about everything, and it was, he probably, Michael Cleary probably

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wasn't being like a great caretaker, so I'm sure she was also stressed out.

Yeah.

So I think he was pointing a little to that, that like there was some psychological stuff happening here, but they don't say it outright.

Okay.

Now, given the autopsy results, it's entirely possible that Kreen's assessment was accurate.

And it actually seemed at the time that she was close to considering Jack Dunn's claims of like the changeling thing with seriousness.

So that leads me to believe that there's definitely some psychological stuff going on right now because she told her cousin, Johanna, that it all started when she, quote, took like a trembling coming by Kilnemana, meaning that she kind of believed she caught a chill down by the fairy fort.

Okay.

She was at least mentioning that she was near a fairy fort when this happened.

Okay.

So if we really think about it, like if we take a step back, it's like, okay, yeah.

I think what I think happened was she was probably developing a cold anyway.

She was down there.

It was damp.

She sat out there, tits out, and she probably caught like a little more of a chill.

It probably developed into bronchitis, pneumonia.

It was making her stressed out.

She's hearing Jack Dunn say that she's a changeling.

She's seeing all these people questioning whether she's really Bridget Bolandling in this bed, which is probably stressing her the fuck out.

And people are saying she like sold her ability to have children.

Exactly.

So now she's probably sitting there and being like, well, it wasn't near a fairy fort.

Like what the fuck?

She's probably getting scared now.

Yeah.

Like this is deep rooted folklore that she's heard her whole life.

That she's heard her whole life.

A child.

Yeah.

It's like, no matter what, she's going to be like, fuck.

Is this real?

Is this what is happening right now?

Now it was unfortunately clear that after a week of being sick and the fairy talk on top of it, there was beginning to be that psychological toll.

She told her aunt, Mary Kennedy, I'm very bad.

And she said he, and she's referring to as to Michael Cleary, he's making a fairy of me now in an emergency.

He thought to burn me about three months ago, but if I had my mother, I would not be this

way.

And don't worry, I'm going to explain to you what she probably meant by that.

Okay.

Because when I first read it, I was like, come again.

Yeah, like, wow.

So Bridget wasn't referring to Jack Dunn.

She's referring to Michael Cleary when she says he.

And that's her husband.

Yeah.

Yes.

And according to Angela Bork, to make a fairy of someone actually could also mean to isolate or reject them.

Okay.

So this is kind of implying that under the growing influence of Jack Dunn, Michael Cleary was starting to isolate his wife and blow her illness way out of proportion, which was making it seem far worse than it really was.

And she also notes that the phrase he thought to burn me about three months ago implies that this wasn't the first time the couple had dealt with an argument or crisis like this.

Okay.

So that there was some shit that was happening before this, that she was kind of.

She doesn't actually mean burn her.

No, they think at least that's what the, that's what like is thought to be what she meant by that.

But that's interesting because from the name of the book, it sounds like he does burn her.

Thank you.

Because then that's the thing, like nobody knows if that's, because there is different ways to take that when you look at language and like what it was back then.

But then when you look at what actually happened.

When you look at what happens in the end, you're like, did she mean that?

But I don't know.

And then what does she mean?

I don't want to say because I can't really.

About her mom.

I think she's just saying if my mom was here like.

She wouldn't let this happen.

Like I, I think that's part of it, which is really sad.

Basically the distress and emotional stress that was referenced by Dr. Kreen was the result of Bridget's belief that Michael's behavior had some sort of nefarious intent, that this wasn't him caring and being influenced.

It was him wanting an end game here and that she's referring to possibly the idea that they had been in that argument or crisis before and that he had possibly tried to get rid of her.

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That is a possibility.

Like who knows if it means exactly that.

That's terrifying.

So Michael Cleary left the house shortly after Dr. Kreen and he was still away that afternoon when Father Ryan actually ended up coming to the house and he got back just as Father Ryan was leaving.

Now according to Cleary's testimony, he went by Father Ryan as he was leaving and this is when he was informed that Bridget was very weak and that the priest had already prepared her for death by giving her her last rights.

So this is like shocking, like they're like, shit.

And in the days following later after Cleary was arrested later, a lot was made of Father Ryan's assessment of Bridget's health as so dire that he had to give last rights, especially because Dr. Kreen's opinion was that she had a bad cold that turned into pneumonia.

And she was like, why is she suddenly on death's door?

But Bork explains in her book that as a Catholic priest who took his vows very seriously, Father Ryan's vow of celibacy, quote, forbade him to have any more dealings than necessary with women.

So it's unlikely that he spent even more than 20 minutes with her.

It was probably in very poor lighting.

Others were around.

Everyone's in an emotional heightened state.

So while Cleary reported Father Ryan as having made dire predictions about Bridget's like impending death, he never considered her to be dangerously ill instead.

He likely administered last rights as a precautionary measure in case it did progress and he couldn't get back there in time.

Yeah.

And he wasn't going to want to have to come back because she's a woman.

Exactly.

He's like, I don't want to spend any more time with women than I have to.

So he probably did it like just in case she seemed pretty fucking sick right now.

So like I'm just going to do it so that it's there.

But Michael Cleary took it as like she's dying.

So when Dr. Creen and Father Ryan saw Bridget Cleary that day, because it was on the same day that they saw him, both men recalled her being way more emotionally upset and agitated than physically ill.

Because she probably had her husband talking about hitting her or killing her.

Yeah.

And this was supported later by testimony from friends and family who visited that same day that it was way more emotionally upset than physically upset.

And while both men did what they could for Bridget, Creen gave the prescription and told them to fill it and give it to her.

And Ryan did the last rights and prayers and all that good stuff, which probably upset her even more if she's thinking that she's feeling better and then he's just giving her last rights like Jesus, literally.

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But they kind of didn't give Michael Cleary the answer he was looking for.
So it was just kind of Dr. Creen saying, yeah, it seems like it's bronchitis, pneumonia, like take this prescription.
I'm sure she'll be fine.
And then Father Ryan being like, she seems like, you know, she seems pretty sick.
I just did this just in case that's very, all of that is very unclear.
So it's like, you could just have taken Dr. Creen's word for it, but like, who am I?
But Michael Cleary took it as like, this is very ambiguous.
So he looked over to Jack Dunn and was like, you know what, fey it is, that seems more likely.
Or did it just seem simpler?
Now while most of those who saw Bridget in the days just before her death remarked on again her agitated emotional state, far fewer seemed to notice Michael Cleary, who was deteriorating into like a madman at this time.
Like he was becoming more and more wild with his, his thoughts, with his actions.
Cause he's hanging out with the quack Jack.
Yeah, exactly.
Or Jack the quack.
Exactly.
Whichever you prefer.
Yeah.
He, he wasn't looking and it soon became clear that he was not going to look to traditional medicine to help his wife.
He was not going to fill that prescription.
He was not going to get further medicine, which probably would have just helped her.
She probably would have gotten out of bed in a couple of days.
And that's probably what he was hoping would not happen.
Exactly.
And unfortunately the premature last white rights reading by Father Ryan.
Set things over the edge.
Put that in.
And again, they were on the same day.
So they're back to back things on the same day, which just sent him into a different realm.
A tizzy.
Now acting under Jack Dunn's influence, Michael Cleary went to the market and fettered to get several herbs that he thought would improve her condition.
Now after Dr. Kreen and Father Ryan had left, Dunn had chastised Michael for waiting so long to take action.
He was like, I can't believe you even had these two men in here.
Like why are you having a medical doctor in here?
He doesn't know anything about Faye.
And why did you have Father Ryan in here?

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He doesn't know shit about Faye either.

Like you're taking, you're not taking the right action.

Okay.

Yeah.

He said, it is not your wife in there.

This is the eighth day and you had a right to have gone to Gainey on the fifth day.

And we'll tell you that.

So he's making reference to Dennis Gainey, who was a local farmer and herb doctor who had a very strong belief in fairies and folklore, just as strong as Jack Dunn.

So later that evening they went, got the herbs from him and they gave Bridget the first dose of those herbs.

Oh God.

And I'm going to explain to you in a little bit how they gave her those herbs.

Now the following day, the herbs didn't seem to have any effect on Bridget's health.

They weren't helping her, which, wow.

But Dunn and Cleary were going to go ahead with their full plan.

They were not willing to accept this.

And that afternoon, Jack Dunn, Michael Cleary and two other young men gathered in Bridget's room with a glass of milk.

They put the herbs in there, they mixed them up.

And in his testimony in court, Dunn said, quote, the four of us caught her and I had her by the neck.

It was very hard on her to take it.

So while Dunn is essentially admitting he and the three other men violently forced Bridget to drink the liquid, he's just minimizing it into like, it was tough on her, but she took it.

And it's like you poured it down her throat, you piece of shit.

Yeah.

And he's saying I caught her, which indicates that she was running.

That she was trying to get away from them.

So I'm like, there's way more to this story of what they were planning to do to her.

Oh, and it gets worse.

Because as they were forcing her to drink this milk with herbs in it, William Simpson, who she was accused of having the affair with, the emergency man and his wife, as well as Joanna Burke and her mother, they all came to the Cleary's front door and were coming to visit Bridget.

But Michael Cleary refused to open the door at the time so they could just hear what was going on inside.

And from the bedroom, they could hear a man's voice shouting, take that you wrap.

And then they were banging on the door, being like, let us in.

No one was coming.

So they just could stay out there and try to get in the house, but they were hearing the whole thing.

And they said a moment or two later, they heard another man shouting, take it, you old bitch,

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or I'll kill you.

Oh my God.

Yeah.

So four or five minutes later, Michael Cleary just walks up to the front door and lets everybody in.

Hey, everybody.

Welcome.

Nothing to see here.

And this is when they stepped in, they were like, what the fuck?

And they said, as soon as they stepped in, they heard another man shout, away she go, away she go.

And later, William Simpson would tell the court that Cleary had claimed the house was full of fairies and that he had only opened the door to force the fairies out, not to let them in.

What the fuck?

Yes.

I told you.

Oh, this is sad.

It's very sad.

It's fucked up and sad.

I don't think they thought she was a fairy.

I really don't think they thought she was a fairy.

Really brutal.

Now, when Simpson finally, William Simpson made his way into the bedroom, he said he found the men aggressively restraining Bridget who was struggling and Jack Dunne was pouring the hot milk and herb mixture down her throat.

Oh my God.

Like forcibly.

And as Bridget was struggling, Michael Cleary held his hand over her nose and mouth to make sure she swallowed it because Dunne was telling him if it went on the ground, she could not be brought back from the fairies.

What the fuck?

So the Simpsons would later learn that this was actually the third time that they had administered the herb mixture in this way.

This was the third time they had forced it down her throat.

And they're forcing milk down her throat when she has bronchitis or pneumonia.

Oh, and it gets worse because during, I think it was during the second time, the time before this one, she had actually sustained a burn on her forehead because Jack Dunne struck her with a hot fireplace poker in order to force her to drink the mixture.

What the fuck?

Yeah.

Also remember, these are her family members.

Yeah.

This is like her father's cousin.

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Now throughout the force feeding of the herb mixture, the men gathered around the bed were repeatedly shouting at her, are you Bridget Boland, wife of Michael Cleary in the name of God?

Okay.

And when she wouldn't or should I say couldn't answer them because remember, they're forcing hot milk with herbs down her throat and hitting her in the head with hot pokers.

Dunne was heard to say, make down a good fire and we will make her answer.

Oh my God.

Now finally, when the fire was burning, the men, and it was burning low, the men got Bridget off the bed and carried her towards the fire.

Now she has been abused, but she is fully conscious and aware of what's happening.

So she started to yell for them to give her a chance because I'm sure she's like, just

I don't even know what you want from me.

Like just let, like put me down.

And the men just ignored her and placed her body on the grate above the fire at the kitchen fire.

Oh my God.

And William Simpson later told the court, she gave no evidence of being in pain.

She did not scream.

And it's like probably because she was in shock, I would assume.

Now she's crumpled up on the grate over the fire and her father is there, by the way.

And her father looks at her and says, are you Bridget Boland, wife of Michael Cleary in the name of God?

And this is when she spoke and she said, I am Dada, I am the father of Pat Boland in the name of God.

Oh my God.

I'm the daughter of Pat Boland in the name of God.

And after about 10 minutes, they removed her from the grate and put her back in bed.

Oh my God.

The fact that she called him Dada.

Yeah.

It's important also.

It makes me think of your kids.

Yeah.

It's important to note that among the things that made this story so fucking shocking to the public was that during this whole thing, there were like nine to 13 people in the house who witnessed and participated in all of this and at no time did anyone do anything to stop it or help her.

Horrific.

So she lay in bed and she's writhing in pain.

She's mumbling incoherently because now she's essentially been like beaten.

And at this point, she's writhing in pain.

She's a mess.

And the men around her were described in court later as being more relaxed than ever, including

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her own father.

And William Simpson later told the court they were satisfied that they had their own, which implies that they believe their actions were successful and that they had magically returned Bridget to her body.

OK, so then why did they need to go further?

So the following morning, Michael Cleary went to see Father Ryan and explained to him that Bridget had a very difficult evening and he was hoping that the priest could come pay her a visit.

I like how he describes it as a very difficult evening.

OK.

And at some point during the night, apparently Bridget's clothing had been changed and her body cleaned.

So there was no obvious evidence of her abuse.

Father Ryan said mass in her bedroom and then left.

And he later told the police that Bridget appeared definitely more nervous and overexcited than she had been previously.

But he said that he didn't see anything that indicated she was in danger, like nobody was acting strange.

As he was leaving, he asked whether Bridget had been given the medicine that Dr. Kreen had prescribed.

He was like, you know, she doesn't seem great.

So like, did you give her anything?

When Michael replied, people may have some remedy of their own that might do more good than doctors medicine.

And he was like, OK.

Incorrect.

And the rest of the afternoon was spent by various visitors stopping by to check on her.

And later that evening, Bridget apparently was feeling a little stronger and she got out of bed by herself, dressed herself and sat by the fire with a neighbor, Tom Smythe.

When Smythe asked how she was doing, though, Bridget seemed very agitated and told Smythe that she was, quote, middling, that he was making a ferry of her now in an emergency, which accusing her of being a changing.

Now Bridget's anger was like very clear that day towards Michael.

Like she was very angry, very upset.

Many of the visitors remarked on it later.

They said they could very much tell that.

And that evening, apparently Joanna Burke, Patrick Boland, her own father, Mary Kennedy, her aunt, James Boland, which I believe is a cousin, and Patrick, or no, excuse me, it's James Kennedy, excuse me, and not the DJ.

James Kennedy and Patrick Kennedy, who were her cousins, they all sat at the table with Bridget and Michael and she was served some bread and jam with some tea and she ate two pieces of bread.

And then Michael Cleary, which you know, she's sitting there being like, honestly, everyone shut the fuck up because Michael Cleary is just eating her jam and drinking her tea.

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And Michael Cleary says, are you Bridget Cleary, my wife in the name of God?

Oh my God, I'd be like, yes, I'm your goddamn wife, but not for long because I'm going to kill you myself.

Literally.

And Bridget didn't answer because she's like, well, you just let me eat my fucking jam and drink my tea.

Like everyone leave me alone.

She did.

She became pissed.

She was like, shut the fuck up.

And then Michael became enraged that she wouldn't answer and forced her to eat the third piece of bread.

Oh my God.

And then threw her to the floor in front of her entire family.

Now, Joanna Burke, I will say, was screaming for him to stop.

Okay.

But didn't, I mean, nobody intervened here.

Everybody was just like yelling.

Michael then stripped his wife of all but her nightgown and took a flaming stick from the fire, held it near her mouth in a threatening way.

It was telling her to declare that she was Bridget Poland.

Holy shit.

Like he didn't put it in her mouth, but he held it there in a very threatening way.

This man is a fucking sadist.

And immediately what, I thought something immediately, and Angela Bork seems to also agree in her book that the details of this part of the crime are reported like that, that this is how it went, but there's, there's a sexual sadist act, that aspect about this that I think is underplayed and I think wasn't reported upon as much.

The fact that he stripped her down in front of everybody and then, and then holding that to her mouth.

Yeah, I don't like that.

Like he's going to shove it into her mouth.

It's like, there's something about that that seems way more sadistic than anybody's given it credit for.

And I think Angela Bork is kind of pointing to that too, being like, I don't think this was reported correctly.

But in also each of these like attacks on Bridget were seeming more like at this point, not to kill her, but to put some kind of terror into her and dominate her.

That seems to be, this motherfucker felt powerless and he snapped and decided to assert what he felt was a, an unbalance in his relationship is what I think.

He said, are you Bridget Cleary wife of Michael Cleary?

He wanted her to say, yes, I am.

I am your wife.

That's what he wanted to hear.

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He wanted to hear.

He was looking for, he wanted to dominate and he wanted to put terror into her.

That's what I see.

He wanted to beat her down.

It certainly feels that way.

It doesn't feel like he's sitting here acting out of love and compassion or anything like that in some kind of, you know, disillusion that he's, you know, some kind of hysteria.

I think that plays into it because he was in a state, but I think this is more about him feeling for a long time, less than in his marriage.

And he decided to assert it this way, which is unbelievably fucked up.

Yep.

Now, this escalated very quickly, the scene of violence.

According to witnesses, they said it was awful.

And they also said this was really scary to witness in general, but also that Michael Cleary before this was a very unassuming man.

He was quiet.

He wasn't outwardly violent.

He wasn't loud.

He wasn't abrasive.

He wasn't any of this.

It sounds like he might have been more violent behind closed doors though.

That's what I wonder if he, it was all behind the scene.

And she, she had previously said before this had even happened that he was trying to make a fairy affair.

Yeah.

And it's like, hmm, because he became so enraged during this that he knelt on her chest and she was begging him to stop.

And nobody knows, and I'm not going to speculate because I was not there.

Nobody knows if what happened next was the intended end here.

But what happened was he was holding that stick that he had taken out of the fire.

And he's kneeling over her very menacingly.

He's trying to terrify her.

He's trying to hurt her.

He's trying to assert dominance in flames from the stick that he was holding from her face, like fell onto her nightdress and it caught fire and engulfed her in flames.

Oh my God.

Now this is where, this is where I say to me, this sounds intentional because right here you can go, okay, that seems like it went further than was, was maybe intended.

But Joanna Burke later testified that Michael Cleary grabbed a nearby lantern and threw lamp oil over her body before that, before she caught fire.

No, like while her nightgown was going up in flames, he ignited it more.

That's why like, and after this, you can absolutely say that he intended for her to die because he didn't help her.

He threw the lamp oil on her.

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The fire grew very intensely and Mary Kennedy, her aunt ran to help her, but Michael stopped her and shoved her to the floor.

Oh my God.

Now, then that he shoved them all out of the house and trapped Bridget in the house, locked the door and put the key in his pocket.

Witnesses are yelling for him to help his wife.

Like everyone there is like, help his fucking, like, are you kidding me?

And he was shouting, she's not my wife.

She's an old deceiver sent in place by, of my wife.

And he said, as I begin it with her, I will finish it with her.

You will soon see her go up the chimney.

What?

So he was saying like, she's a changeling.

She's a deceiver.

She was sent here.

That's not her.

You're going to see her go up, like the changeling go up the chimney and you'll see it.

That was what he was saying.

When anyone tried to go in there to help her, Michael was threatening them saying he would burn them as well if they attempted to help her.

And she's just laying on the floor on fire at this point and he's in the house with her.

Yeah.

Okay.

Now, Bridget died this way.

And nobody knew what to do.

It just completely stopped at this point.

And Mary Kennedy, her aunt, wrapped the body in a sheet and left the room, didn't know what to do.

And when she came back, she found that Michael had put Bridget's body in the fireplace to try to destroy her remains.

Oh my God.

Why is nobody going to get a policeman?

Exactly.

Now she said the house was full of smoke and smell.

She later said.

Yeah.

Now later, when they were all in the kitchen again, Michael Cleary said she's burned now and God knows I would never do it, but for Jack Dunn, I would never have forced my wife into the fire, but for Jack, it was he who told me my wife was a fairy.

So now he's trying to say.

That's not me.

I didn't do it.

Jack told me to do it.

It's like, no dude, you let your wife on fire and struck her way before that, you fucking

piece of shit.

Yeah.

Now Michael Cleary collected his, Bridget's remains in a bag and Patrick Kennedy helped him and they both took her to a nearby churchyard to bury her on consecrated ground.

That night, Cleary forced all who were involved to swear that they would never talk about what had happened.

It sounds like that.

And if anyone asked, they were told to say that Bridget had gotten dressed that evening and left the house and they just didn't ever saw her again.

She disappeared.

Oh yeah.

She just like walked away with pneumonia.

Now throughout the entire thing, what's weird about this and what makes you say there was more to this than just like somebody who was caught up in hysteria, Michael Cleary was pretty ambivalent when it came to his beliefs and fairies in witchcraft.

Like in the moments directly after Bridget's death, he kind of seemed to recognize that Jack Dunn was like, had like a lot of rhetoric that he was spewing and that he was saying, well, that's what led me to do this.

Like it's already placing the blame.

He was kind of taking his own belief out of it, which is wild considering the length he is claiming to have gone to rid her of this changeling that had taken over.

So it's like, to me, I'm like, you're conflicting your own reasoning here and you're making it more obvious that there was a lot more intention behind this than just a hysterical fear of changelings and in fact, but then I say ambiguous because it's going back and forth because there's that and you're like, I don't know.

You're telling me that you really don't believe that stuff and it was Jack Dunn who set you up on this.

But then for three nights following her death, Michael was said to have waited on kill the man on a hill for her to return from the fairy fort on horseback because that's what the legend said was that after you kill the changeling, the real human will return on horseback from the fairy fort.

Wow.

So now everybody's like, was that, you know, was that just for show or what was that?

Exactly.

You could look at that either way.

He truly believed it or that he was doing it to maintain that.

So as he was waiting, the police were alerted to Bridget's disappearance by William Simpson.

You think they were fucking?

I kind of do.

I hope they were.

I hope they were.

He seems like you at least read.

But then also a day after that, Joanna Burke went to the police and told them that she was disappeared.

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I was mad at her earlier because like you had a face.

I know.

You were leading the story.

And I don't mean to, but I just didn't know how to stop it.

So it just happened, you know, but justice for Joanna.

It's true.

Now the police spent a lot of days looking for her and I mean, by the same coin, nobody stepped in and helped this or stopped the abuse.

Like, yeah, there was a lot here for Joanna.

I'm going back because I'm like, oh no, because she couldn't have stood up to the men like they would have.

Yeah.

I think again, I wasn't there so I can't sit there and say that Joanna didn't try to do something.

Exactly.

It didn't seem like a lot of people were making great, vast efforts to stop what was going on here, which is very disconcerting, but I'm not going to sit here and crucify anyone in particular, except for the people who actually did.

Exactly.

But based on the information provided by William Simpson, Burke and several others in the house that night, they did make nine arrests.

They set out nine arrest warrants on March 21st and Michael Cleary and all his co-conspirators were arrested for the assault and murder of Bridget Cleary.

Now that included Patrick Kennedy, Dennis Ganey, the farmer and herb doctor who prescribed the herbs, Jack Dunn and Joanne Burke, because again, they were there.

Yeah.

The following day, March 22nd, which was a week after her murder, Bridget Cleary's remains were discovered.

They were buried in a shallow grave on the grounds of the Abbey in Durrangan.

I can't imagine.

Yeah, it must have been really bad.

The news of this whole thing spread very quickly.

It actually made its way to London, the United States, very quickly because it was just wild.

It was reported as a witch burning, very sensationalistic, but in the British press at the time, we're very eager to hold this up as evidence of how rural Ireland is so barbaric, which it's not great.

The Irish papers were equally quick to blame the murder on folkloric beliefs of the Irish peasantry, ignoring the fact that very few of the people involved would have been considered peasants at all.

Yeah.

So it was a lot of misrepresentation, a lot of sensationalism that came out of this.

The day after the arrests, a coroner's inquest was held in Clonine, I believe it is.

At this time, Dr. Kreen and Dr. W.K. Heffernan provided the jury with details of the post-mortem examination.

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So there was obviously extensive burning and charring of Bridget's body, but Dr. Kreen and Dr. Heffernan also found an abrasion on the inner side of the lips at the right side of the mouth and the tongue at the side was slightly lacerated.

Huh.

Yeah.

So they don't know where that came from or what happened.

Maybe when they were forcing the milk down her throat.

Possibly or that poker that he held to her mouth.

Did he do that at some point?

They also reported that other than the obvious burns, the evidence suggested that Bridget had been perfectly healthy when she died and the cause of death was attributed to shock caused by burns.

Oh my God.

Yeah.

Which is even more horrifying.

On April 1st, 1895, all nine defendants were brought before the magistrate and charged with maliciously wounding Bridget.

Michael Cleary, Patrick Boland, Mary Kennedy, James Kennedy and Patrick Kennedy were also charged with murder.

So like her own father was charged with, like that's just so like, ugh.

This is a very interesting case.

No one helped her and the trial began in early July and everyone testified that it was Michael Cleary who was directly responsible for the death.

But the testimony from witnesses were kind of conflicting and contradictory at times too.

Everybody was saying something different and Cleary would shout out in the middle of the court a lot.

He would have a lot of angry responses, outraged responses.

One paper described him as having a wild kind of look in his eyes during the whole thing.

Yeah, I bet.

And during the prosecution's questioning of Joanna Burke who testified about what happened on the night of the murder, he jumped to Michael Cleary, jumped out of his seat and shouted, I can't listen to it any longer.

Like he had nothing to do with it.

When it came time for him to testify, he just kind of confirmed though what the witnesses had said, explaining that based on what he was told by Jack Dunn, he and his neighbors, he made sure to include them, had attempted to drive out the changeling with herbs and fire, believing that in doing so, he would cause the changeling to flee and return his wife to the bed.

That's what he kept.

He maintained that.

And although he definitely attempted to pass the blame onto Jack Dunn, like he was like, without Jack Dunn, I wouldn't have done this.

Right.

Like it was because of his beliefs and fairies and witchcraft, not me being an awful person.

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I didn't believe it, but I did burn my wife alive.

Everyone else though, tried to minimize their role and just pointed right at Michael Cleary and said it was all him.

Yeah.

I mean, he's the one that fucking lit her on fire and then threw lamp oil on her.

Exactly.

And a lot of people said the motive while a lot of witnesses said that Cleary's mind was going astray for sure.

They said he definitely becomes somewhat hysterical.

They said they believe that may have made him more susceptible to this whole fairies and changeling rhetoric that was being spewed.

Now even after all the testimony that have been heard though, it remained unclear what exactly happened.

Like how did this go here?

Like it got here so quick.

What happened?

It sounds like it just happened so quickly.

That's the thing.

It was like a runaway train.

But what was clear to the jury was that although Michael Cleary had been the one directly responsible

for the death, there were others whose participation and influence had definitely contributed to the outcome.

Like Jack.

Even the judge in the case felt that murder was an inappropriate sentence and reminded the jury that they alone had the right to recommend a sentence of manslaughter, which they chose to do in the end.

Are you fucking kidding me?

He threw oil onto her as she was already burning.

Thank you.

I agree.

Fuck doesn't understand that concept.

Michael Cleary was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

That's it.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Joanna Dunn, Patrick Kennedy, James Kennedy, and William Kennedy were all found guilty of malicious wounding.

Dunn was sentenced to three years.

He needed more.

William and James Kennedy were sentenced to 18 months and Michael Kennedy to six months.

Michael Kennedy definitely obviously received the harshest penalty, which he should have.

But while so many others may have avoided the lengthy sentence, that doesn't mean jail sentence.

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That doesn't mean they got out of it.

Don't worry, because they definitely got it when they got out of prison.

Upon his release from prison, Jack Dunn's reputation had plummeted into the earth's crust.

One would think.

The laughing stock and obviously someone who was involved in creating this hysteria that led to the murder of an innocent woman.

Was he like chased out of town?

Pretty much.

And Mary Kennedy, her aunt, avoided prosecution for her role in the murder.

But when neighbors learned about the details of what had happened and that her sons were also involved, they burned the Kennedy house to the ground to make sure they couldn't return to the city.

Which is, didn't Mary try to help her?

I mean, yeah, but it was like too late.

I mean, I think people heard a lot of stories.

And I think there was there's a lot of like unclear parts of this.

Like when the when the whole herb mixture was being force fed to her, when she was being violently abused during her illness, who was there?

Right. There were some.

Some of them were there.

And they didn't stop it.

It's like, you're that's guilty, man.

But because somebody could have gone to the police, somebody could have gone to somebody and like, this is happening in this house.

Somebody needs to go stop it and nobody did.

So on its face, it definitely sounds like a sensational story of murder, motivated by kind of outrageous beliefs at the time.

But it's kind of more complicated than that because it has a lot to do with where and when it like it really has to do with like the time and place.

Yeah. Less about like the reasoning, I guess.

Like it's it's it's strange.

There's so many layers to this one.

You know what I mean? Yeah, definitely.

Like the press at the time also was a wild part of the story, because particularly the British newspapers at the time because they were using it.

Yeah, they made a lot of the folkloric beliefs that were involved.

Like they really went to those and they kind of place those those kind of hard, steadfast, somewhat archaic beliefs at the time.

They placed them on an entire rural population in Ireland and just what it seems like they were on their way out.

Yeah, and they used it to portray these people as very superstitious, very antiquated, very like, wow, they're just going to burn you at the stake

if they think you're a changeling kind of thing.
And at the time, it was also like this kind of language was used like fairy language and witches and kind of folkloric language was used in Ireland a lot.
Yeah, but it also was used metaphorically, not so much like for real, you know, like as like Bork points out in her in her book, that the term gone to the fairies can absolutely be used in the literal sense. And it was used in the literal literal sense.
But in Bridget's case, it was likely referring to having an affair or stepping out of the house kind of thing and to like make a fairy of me like Bridget said, doesn't mean that, you know, making me like he's making people believe I'm a fairy. It's isolating her like we said from others and, you know, making people treat her like she's sick and rotten, like something that you don't need to be around.
And again, the press coverage definitely in the trial really didn't really untangle any of the true motive behind this. But Angela Bork's book suggests that the language and circumstances of those involved might be where we can find the keys to what happened here. It sounds like that.
She says Michael Cleary had no relatives close by and says for over a week, his wife's relatives had been in and out of the house, shaking their heads and making dark insinuations about her condition. A suggestion that she was away with the fairies was a serious reflection on him and their marriage.
So that's all to say that Michael Cleary was already an outsider. He already wasn't surrounded by his own family. He had come from another county, which meant he didn't have a lot of social support here. His wife had a huge social and familial support network. And he took it all the way from there. And she was also independent. She supported herself. She didn't need him. She didn't need to rely on him, which is all great. And like people should look at that as like, what a bad bitch. But not bad. Like good for you guys can just love each other and live your lives. But there's nobody needs the other one to live. You know what I mean? Like you're just doing this because you care about each other. But there's the other part where like there was all these rumors of her having an affair and him having an affair and all their marriage talk and all that stuff. He was being very, you know, feeling very powerless at the time. And so they kind of feel like that was likely the real motive, was the feeling of powerless and wanting to dominate her, wanting to take back that power,

wanting to be the man of the house.

You're my wife.

You're not this, you know, and you'll answer to me when I ask you who you are.

When I ask you to say who you are, you say you are Michael Cleary's wife.

Right.

You don't say you are just Bridget Boland.

You are my wife.

And I bet because she answered when they wanted her originally to say, you're the wife of Michael Cleary.

She said, I'm the daughter of.

Yeah.

And of her father.

I am the daughter of Pat Boland.

And I bet that.

That's the only thing she would really answer about.

And that in and of itself is so telling.

Yeah.

That one almost forced into a fire.

She still wouldn't say that she was his wife.

Yeah.

And then you have the other side of that with Jack Dunne being this other piece of the puzzle where he was also feeling powerless and feeling like he was not the authority anymore because he believed all these archaic folkloric things and he used to be the authority. And these things would have made him powerful and would have made him somebody that everybody came to to find out what was going on.

He doesn't have that anymore.

Another feeling of powerless and it's really scary to think about.

But it's true that that could that could have absolutely been part of this,

that it's too unfortunately to men in a time when men are supposed to have all the power

and all the influence and all the the handhold on the home and they didn't or they felt they didn't.

And so they decided to assert it.

In a very violent and horrific and tragic way.

I mean, Jack there, for lack of a better term, added fuel to the fire.

Absolutely.

Physically and theoretically.

Yeah.

I mean, it's very clear that Bridget's death was not simply about fairies.

No.

And I think that there's.

Real or imagined.

No.

And I think there's a lot of things we don't know that happened behind closed doors before her death.

Yeah.

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I don't think Michael Cleary necessarily quote unquote one insane.

I think, sure, you could say that he definitely did at some point fell into some kind of hysteria. Maybe.

But I think he may have been on his way there before that before the fairies even happened.

Her death was about power.

Definitely who had it, who didn't have it.

And in this time, especially Bridget clearly had achieved stuff that most rural, you know, women at the time in Ireland,

especially wanted and were striving towards.

She was successful.

She was independent.

She was powerful.

She, I mean, she was going to Jack Dunn's house to collect some payment because she gave you the goods.

Like it's like you, she was on it.

She was like a business lady and she was murdered for that.

You know, that's the, unfortunately, that's the, that's the end of that.

No, you're right.

I think that's really where it all boils down to.

Fairies are no fairies here.

And it's a really sad story, but a very interesting one.

He just went to prison and that was the last anyone heard of him.

Yeah, I don't know what happened to him after that.

He died of brutal death.

Yeah.

Saiyan.

Just Saiyan.

And I think, I'm trying to think, because I remember hearing about this story a long, long time ago.

I've never heard this one.

I think Aaron Mankey did it on lore in one of the early lore episodes, I think.

So if you, if you were interested by the story and you want to hear it and a different telling of it, Aaron Mankey does a really good job of telling stories.

And you should go listen to it just because he rules so good.

And he has a new podcast, doesn't he?

He does.

Yeah.

You posted about it on Instagram.

Yeah.

He has a podcast that he just launched recently called That's Just Weird.

And it's like a family friendly thing, but it's also like, and it's short.

It's short little like bite sized episodes.

I think they're like 17 minutes.

And he just talks about like weird phenomena, weird history, weird news.

And like, you can listen to it with your kids.

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Okay, cool.

I want to check that out.

I haven't yet.

It's very cool.

You should listen to it.

I don't know what to listen to it.

I should just shout out Aaron.

A-A-Ron.

A-Ron.

All right.

Well, we love ya.

And we hope that you keep listening.

And we hope you keep it weird.

And that's where that you kill your wife and blame it on fairies, because I don't believe you, Michael Cleary.

I think you're a giant and asshole.

An asshole.

An asshole.

Giant and asshole.

Bye.

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