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Transcript Reverend Ian Paisley
Live-Line with Joe Duffy - Wednesday 22nd September
Interview

Joe Duffy: Doctor Ian Paisley, good-afternoon to you.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Good afternoon.

Joe Duffy: How are you keeping?

Rev. Ian Paisley: I am very well thank you.

Joe Duffy: You are very upset, naturally enough of these attacks on your churches

Rev. Ian Paisley: Yes.

Joe Duffy: How extensive have these attacks been?

Rev. Ian Paisley: Well, the one on the 4th of July was extensive there was £100,000 worth of damage done. Now, we have been in that Coreygarry district for almost 25 years. So, it is not as if it is a new work - it is a well established work and it is very sad that happened. But, then this further attack - we purchased the Arch Hall in Castleblayney and we were making repairs to that and then the whole frontom was all broke up and all has been dispatched on Saturday night or Sunday morning, Friday night or Saturday morning for the past week-end.

Joe Duffy: Now you know Bertie Ahern the Taoiseach has agreed to meet you?

Rev. Ian Paisley: Yes. His office has been in touch with me.

Joe Duffy: That is it. Mobile line gone down I think. Has it gone? Yes it has gone. We will try and get him back. Let us take a quick break. Doctor Paisley you are back again.

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Rev. Ian Paisley: Yes, we are ...

Joe Duffy: We were getting interference from up in ...

Rev. Ian Paisley: Yes that is right. Yes, well as I said we have purchased this storage Hall up in Castleblayney and we are turning it into a Church building and we have the front of it very seriously damaged. All the windows smashed, new windows smashed in it at the week-end.

Joe Duffy: The local Superintendent is saying that he thinks it is just local vandals on the way home from a disco or something, that there is no sectarian... He does not believe there is a sectarian motive.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Well, I would hardly think that two vandals worse for drink could set fire to a church so effectively. Burning, starting a fire at both ends of it. You know, the people, the congregation down there do not accept that either.

Joe Duffy: OK. When will you be meeting the Taoiseach?

Rev. Ian Paisley: Next week.

Joe Duffy: And do you know where that will happen?

Rev. Ian Paisley: Well, I would prefer not to say until the Taoiseach himself releases that.

Joe Duffy: And would you be willing to come to Government Buildings?

Rev. Ian Paisley: I will come down to Dublin to meet him. Yes, it will be in Government Buildings.

Joe Duffy: You will meet him there?

Rev. Ian Paisley: Yes.

Joe Duffy: OK and what assurances are you looking for from the Taoiseach?

Rev. Ian Paisley: Well, I am asking the Taoiseach to have a look at this matter and not to close his eyes to the fact that there is in this side of Ireland, also as we have in the North of Ireland, there is religious motivation for things like this. Which is very sad.

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Joe Duffy: What do you think, I mean for example, will you be looking for compensation from the state?

Rev. Ian Paisley: Well, I do not think that they are in a position under the law to compensate us. I am not sure about that - my lawyers are looking at that. But, I mean .....

Joe Duffy: But, if you can, under, I mean it is a criminal act.

Rev. Ian Paisley: It is a criminal act, but it is very hard. I think you need to get two or more people involved in it. You have to be able to prove that two or more people did it. And that we are making a sort of a law for assembly. But I am not sure of the law. I know the law up here of course, we are under different, we have had many of our churches, I mean our Banbridge Church was completey gutted by the IRA - they burned it down completly. Recently, we had a very savage attack, again using the attack by setting a fire at both ends of the church, at Castlederg church. At over £100,000 worth of damage done to it. But, that is all covered through the terrorist registration here, which you do not have in the Irish Republic.

Joe Duffy: But, you could actually ask the Irish State to re-instate your church.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Well, I suppose we could.....

Joe Duffy: Say that again, sorry the line ....

Rev. Ian Paisley: Should I put that to the Taoiseach as a suggestion you made? As with an Irish feel, the real person - you might not be too popular with him.

Joe Duffy: But, would you be will to accept money from the Irish tax payer?

Rev. Ian Paisley: The Irish tax payer are responsible for the law. I am not saying that who is responsible for this, but what I am saying in law - I have to pay for deeds done by evil people in Northern Ireland in my taxes. So, I mean we are all under that same thing. But, this is purely a religious thing, it is nothing to do with politics. I mean, involving politics too, I mean what commontator said: Golden opportunity - no I said it is a very sad opportunity, it is not a golden opportunity for me, I am sorry I have to talk to him on this line.

Joe Duffy: Well, will you be photographed with him?

Rev. Ian Paisley: I would have no objection to that.

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Joe Duffy: And you will shake his hand of course?

Rev. Ian Paisley: Well, that remains to be seen. This is not a social call, I mean this is a very serious thing.

Joe Duffy: Of course it is serious.

Rev. Ian Paisley: I hate this idea that before you can talk with a man you must have a sort of love in with him and you as a journalist put body language - I think it is ridiculous.

Joe Duffy: Ah, but Doctor Paisley shake up. Shaking someone's hand!

Rev. Ian Paisley: I am afraid there are some fellow's hands I would not want to shake.

Joe Duffy: But you will be coming to Government Buildings?

Rev. Ian Paisley: Yes, I will come, I am a Christian Minister, I will treat the man with a respect that as to his office. But, I mean I have to put my case out, put it forthrightly. He would be very disappointed if I was nice to him, you know.

Joe Duffy: Well, I doubt it. He is a very nice, have you every met him before, by the way, before he was Taoiseach? No?

Rev. Ian Paisley: No.

Joe Duffy: He is in Russia at the moment.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Is he in Russia? Well, I am glad I am not in Russia. I hope he is not drinking Vodka.

Joe Duffy: The devil's buttermilk - he is not touching it. Are you surprised Doctor Paisley that the Prime Minister should ~~exceed~~ accede to your request so quickly?

Rev. Ian Paisley: No, I am not surprised. I would have been very, very worried if he had not, because I mean he views it as a serious matter as I do. I think that that shows the seriousness of it and of course I am pleased that he has responded so quickly and I did ask them to convey that to him in his office. I appreciated that he came back right away and did not put any difficulties in my way.

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Joe Duffy: But, if he says to you Doctor Paisley, for example, as you know it is very difficult, it is very difficult to protect a church all the time. No matter how much resources, security resources.

Rev. Ian Paisley: I know, I quite agree with that, but I do not think that they should keep saying, we do not have any religious undertones here, you know, you have to face up to reality. And after all you know, when the state came into existence, Irish free state as it was called, being 10% of your entire population were Protestants, you now have only two and a half per cent left and you know, that gives a message to people up here in the North as you very well know. I am not going to get into any argument about that, all I am saying is that we need to face up to reality, sometimes people in both parts of this country do not like the ..... naked truth. I have always tried from my point of view to speak the truth as I see it. The people may not like what I say, but I mean I have never been accused of hypocrosy or dishonesty. Maybe, I speak the truth too strongly, but then of course I think the truth stands on its own. So I think that this will be a profitable meeting and certainly I trust that these attacks will cease.

Joe Duffy: And if the Taoiseach, obviously he is taking it very seriously if he agrees to a meeting so quickly with you.

Rev. Ian Paisley: That is right.

Joe Duffy: If he does offer to financially help to re-build or to reinstate the damage.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Well, that would be accepted by the people. These people are his own country men, I mean they are Southern Irish, they have Southern Irish citizenship, I mean I am not asking for something for the North of Ireland, I am asking for something .....

Joe Duffy: But, how do you know they have not come accross the border Doctor Paisley?

Rev. Ian Paisley: I know these people are all people from many long years have been in Monaghan, many of their friends right across the border, but these people stay put and they have no intention of going across the border - they intend to stay in the place their forefathers lived. And they are quite entitled to that. You would not want them to leave would you?

Joe Duffy: You know .....

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Rev. Ian Paisley: Nice Free Presbyterians, you would not want them to leave.

Joe Duffy: Sure, I would not, I would not. Are you familiar Doctor Paisley with the row, there is a major row in Dublin at the moment with the demolition of a Presbyterian church?

Rev. Ian Paisley: Oh, I beg your pardon?

Joe Duffy: There is a major controversy in Dublin at the moment, the Presbyterian church in Sandymount is being demolished by the actual church itself to build apartments.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Yes.

Joe Duffy: You are not familiar with that row?

Rev. Ian Paisley: No, that is an Irish Presbyterian row. So, I do not get into those sort of rows.

Joe Duffy: That is one row you want to stay clear off.

Rev. Ian Paisley: I have enough rows of my own Joe, without getting into that. But I mean I can understand people's feelings in a matter like that you know and I mean especially people who worshiped in that church. They feel a great attachment to it. And they also feel it to that it is a sign of things are not being as they should be and stability is undermined and so on and so forth. I mean I can well understand people's views on that.

Joe Duffy: And you have been in Government Buildings before Doctor Paisley?

Rev. Ian Paisley: I think I was. Government Buildings is not the Castle, no.

Joe Duffy: No, oh no, you are not going to Dublin Castle, you are going to - Charlie Haughey restored it.

Rev. Ian Paisley: No, I might have been to a European meeting there you know. I am not sure, I was down when I was on the political committee of Europe was down in Dublin many times.

Joe Duffy: That would have been Dublin Castle. You will be going to Government Buildings in Merrion Street. It is called the Chaz MaHal after,

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because Charles Haughey, he renovated it. It is a beautiful, beautiful building. But if at the ending of the meeting, over a cup of tea, at the end of the meeting.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Do you think he will offer us tea?

Joe Duffy: I am sure he will. Very hospitable.

Rev. Ian Paisley: So long as he does not offer us Irish Coffee - we are alright.

Joe Duffy: If at the end of the meeting he tries over a cup of tea to talk about politics in Northern Ireland.

Rev. Ian Paisley: No, no he will not, he knows my point of view, there will be none of that - he knows my point of view. I would have to get up and leave, I mean I am coming down for one purpose only and that is where I am very clear on. He knows my principles and I think I would be surprised if he did not respect that. I take that as it comes.

Joe Duffy: But, you would actually storm out if he said, is there any hope or any discussions we can have about the Good Friday Agreement.

Rev. Ian Paisley: I would say I would give him a warning. I would say to him well you know why I came down here and I think it is very, very unfair of you to raise this matter at this time. If he was persistent, I would say, well we will just say good day.

Joe Duffy: OK, and you would - I suspect you would.

Rev. Ian Paisley: I certainly would. And my people would expect me, and so would you. You would expect and you have said you would expect I would, so you have got the message.

Joe Duffy: OK, enjoy your trip in Dublin. Now bye-bye. Above all I hope the attacks....

Rev. Ian Paisley: I have preached in Dublin and outside the Post-Office years and years ago.

Joe Duffy: Yes, but that was in the middle of the night. Oh no that was.....

Rev. Ian Paisley: No, no this was a time I visited and preached under the Ulster and Irish Church Missions.

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Joe Duffy: Well done.

Rev. Ian Paisley: I had such a crowd there that they decided I should be shifted into the Liffey. But I said to the fella organising, what do I do now, he said you run for your life. So I ran for my life.

Joe Duffy: Well you will be well looked after in Dublin, next week, look after yourself. Doctor Ian Paisley, good afternoon, good bye.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Good Bye.

END

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