

= The Frontline ( Irish TV series ) =

The Frontline is a topical debate television series in Ireland , which aired for 60 minutes every Monday night on RTÉ One at 22 : 30 . It debuted on Monday , 21 September 2009 . The Frontline replaced a similar political analysis show Questions and Answers . The programme features around an invited audience and featured guests .

Many public figures politicians have appeared on the series . Some incidents on the programme have attracted a large amount of media coverage . The programme has generally received positive reviews . The programme is broadcast from Studio 4 in RTÉ . The first programme received an audience share of 43 @. @ 4 % , with a viewing audience of 464 @, @ 000 . Later into the series 100 @, @ 000 fewer people watched it , watching The Apprentice instead . It won " Best Current Affairs programme " at the 7th Irish Film and Television Awards in February 2010 .

The show returned in September 2012 . However , RTÉ announced in October 2012 that the show would be revamped in early 2013 . In November 2012 , media reports indicated that this revamp would involve The Frontline being axed and replaced with Prime Time : Debate , and that the new show would be similar to The Frontline but under the Prime Time branding . The Frontline aired for the final time on 28 January 2013 .

= = Format = =

The Frontline was hosted by former The Late Late Show presenter and RTÉ Radio 1 presenter Pat Kenny . The programme runs for 60 minutes on Monday nights on RTÉ One . It was directed by David Donaghy and produced by Dave Nally . Studio 4 in the RTÉ Television Centre was the venue of the programme . That was also used for The Late Late Show .

The show differed from its predecessor Questions and Answers in that the show does not entirely focus on a panel . The show regularly featured one @- @ on @- @ one interviews with key political and social figures , such as the Minister for Finance and the Leader of the Labour Party , as well as specially themed shows . Other formats include a panel from various social and political backgrounds discussing political issues affecting Ireland and the wider world . The programme debates " the most important news stories of the week " . The programme also features debate on " major political , economic and social issues " . The programme also features some satire .

Steve Carson , head of programming in RTÉ Television , said the programme wouldn 't be a replica of the old format . An audience also features as part of the discussion similar to Questions and Answers .

For the beginning of the programme , Kenny " zips around the studio , microphone in hand " .

= = History = =

The first indication that Pat Kenny would present another television programme , was on the night he announced his departure from presenting The Late Late Show . By the time of presenting his last programme , it was announced a new current affairs programme would begin in autumn 2009 . It was later announced that it would be 21 September 2009 .

There was a high demand for tickets , which RTÉ described as phenomenal . 4 @, @ 000 applications were received for a capacity of 120 seats ( originally 60 for Questions and Answers , which was subsequently doubled ) . A public invitation for comments and ideas on topics was issued by the makers of the show .

The first programme had guests such as Eamon Dunphy , Fintan O 'Toole , Pat Farrell , Tom Parlon and Brian Lenihan , Minister for Finance . Audience members included small business people and mortgage holders . Lenihan talked about the proposed National Asset Management Agency and the purchase of ? 28 billion in loans from Anglo Irish Bank .

As a result of cutbacks , RTÉ could only afford to spend ? 2 on sandwiches per audience member . The programme won " Best Current Affairs programme " at the 7th Irish Film and Television Awards on 20 February 2010 . Kenny accepted the award .

A special programme about the aftermath of sudden recession aired in May 2010 .  
The programme returned to RTÉ One on 20 September 2010 .

= = = Ratings = = =

For the first two programmes , viewing figures were above the programme 's predecessor Questions and Answers . The first programme had an initial audience of 464 @,@ 000 viewers . Overall , the second programme reached an audience of 653 @,@ 000 . In November 2009 , the viewership was reduced to 333 @,@ 000 , less than the 493 @,@ 000 received by The Apprentice on TV3 When George Lee appeared on the programme explaining his resignation from politics on 8 February 2010 , the viewing figures were at 627 @,@ 000 .

The Frontline gained nearly 70 @,@ 000 viewers when TV3 temporarily replaced its rival Tonight with Vincent Browne with UK celebrity torture show I 'm a Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here ! in November 2011 .

= = = Incidents = = =

On 2 November 2009 , Jack O 'Connor of SIPTU suggested that in the 2010 budget , " a reasonable level of tax " should be placed on " Trophy Houses " . Kenny responded by asking what is a trophy house . To this O 'Connor responded with " A house like yours , probably . " After some hesitation , Kenny quoted :

I built my house in 1988 . Like , why is that a trophy house ? I don 't want this kind of crap coming at me .

O 'Connor then apologised instantly .

The following week ( 9 November 2009 ) , during an interview with Mary Hanafin , Alan O 'Brien ( who has a conviction from 2006 for incitement to hatred ) , a member of the audience , spent three minutes accusing Kenny of " pontificating and moralising " people on social welfare , despite being in receipt of a ? 600 @,@ 000 salary . Then referring to a previous court case involving Kenny , he concluded by saying , " Now I am going to sue an old woman for a field because I feel I might make a million or more . " After being removed by security , the programme continued .

Days before the 2011 presidential election , a debate was held between the candidates on The Frontline . A tweet was read out by Pat Kenny which caused Seán Gallagher , ahead on opinion polling , to falter on live television . Michael D. Higgins subsequently won the election . A member of Gallagher 's campaign team described it as an " earth shattering " moment for Seán Gallagher . Gallagher later took RTÉ to court over its role in the sabotage of his election campaign .

During the debate held on 21 May 2012 concerning the Irish European Fiscal Compact referendum , Pat Kenny got down on his hands and knees and shouted at a farmer in the audience to shut up . He also promised a debate on the CAP " in January " ? scheduling of which would have occurred two months after it was announced that The Frontline had been axed .

= = = Reception = = =

The programme generally received a " big thumbs up " . Patrick Freyne of the Sunday Tribune described the programme , in his television review column , as " the People versus A Bunch of Bastards " . He also called it " slick , pacy and well @-@ researched " . Hilary Fannin writing in The Irish Times , predicted that the programme , in relation to the economy , " will [ not ] be allowed to debate much else in the months to come " . She also rated it as one of the best current affairs programmes in 2009 . The two reviewers said that , compared to The Late Late Show , Kenny was more " in his comfort zone " . Sarah Carey , also in The Irish Times , was disappointed by the tone of the programme even though Kenny was " thoroughly enjoying himself " . She said it was a televised version of Liveline .

Future President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins , then a Labour Party TD , said in February 2010 that The Frontline " degrade [ d ] politics " and called it a " really bad programme " .

