[IE] Hoax Call to Radio Show

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A man who made a hoax telephone call to a national radio show on 31 August 2000 was pursued under post office legislation, rather than broadcasting legislation. Irish broadcasting legislation contains numerous provisions concerned with programme content but is aimed at the obligations and responsibilities of broadcasters rather than individual callers.

The man telephoned an RTE (the national public service broadcaster) radio chat show, claiming to be the well-known captain of the Galway county hurling team and to be representing his own views and those of the team members. Hurling is a popular Gaelic game, like hockey, which is played by men. He proceeded to make disparaging remarks about women involved in Gaelic games, especially camogie, which is a game like hockey, played by women. He suggested they should stick to tennis and golf. Irate callers who heard the programme telephoned the hurling team captain's place of work and members of his family. The next day, RTE apologised on air for any hurt caused to the team captain and his family. The prankster himself also went on local radio the next day to apologise.

However, he was charged with making a telephone call, which he knew to be false, for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to others, contrary to Section 13(1)(b) of the Post Office (Amendment) Act 1951. Section 13(1) of the 1951 Act provided for a penalty not exceeding IEP 10, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one month, or to both the fine and imprisonment. That penalty was increased by Section 4(1)(e) of the Postal and Telecommunications Services Act, 1983 to a fine not exceeding IEP 800 or, at the discretion of the court, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or to both the fine and imprisonment. On 25 April 2001 at Galway District Court the man was fined IEP 100, along with IEP 100 legal costs, and was ordered to make a contribution of IEP 250 to the Galway camogie team.

"Man fined for impersonation", The Irish Times of 26 April 2001

http://www.ireland.com/newspaper/ireland/2001/0426/courts3.htm

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