The Gerry Ryan Show on 2FM
and The Death of Diana, Princess of Wales
A Case-Study, September 1997

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SYNOPSIS

In the modern world, there are a proliferation of media choices available to the discerning, (and not so discerning), audience. It is a rare moment indeed when, in the crowded television, radio and print media schedules, something approaching a united front occurs, and only one subject is debated, only one topic is talked about, everywhere. The number of times this has happened could be counted on the fingers of one hand. The death of Diana, Princess of Wales was one such media moment.

For those of us who were not around for the death and funeral of John F. Kennedy, this was the first media-event we experienced, in terms of the tragic death and funeral of such a world famous person. And the coverage was phenomenal. Entire British television and radio networks stopped in their tracks, abandoned schedules and talked incessantly about the many angles and implications of the loss of the Princess in a fatal car crash in Paris. Myriad opinions, speculations and tributes bombarded the audience for a week, from the day of the death, (31st August 1997), to the day of the funeral, (6th September 1997).

My interest here is how this spectacle affected the Irish public / audience / media consumer. As The Gerry Ryan Show on 2FM often reflects the 'feelings' and 'emotions' of stories, whilst leaving the 'hard news' side of things to the information programming on RTÉ Radio 1, I decided to use this one show, over one week as a case-study of how the Irish general public reacted to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

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"But the happenings that come into the category of supreme national moments have a grammar of their own, literally so. The BBC announcer usually said, "You're listening to BBC Radio 4", but that morning he said, "This is the BBC," and, with that small reversion from modern, market-minded informality to old-fashioned authority, so the death of the Princess of Wales became linked to Mr. Chamberlain, air raids on the Ruhr (six of our aircraft are missing), the conquest of Everest, the Falkland's War. . .

. . . Eventually, the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, came on and spoke for the first time of "the People's Princess" . . . After the People's Princess came the People's Mall, the People's Funeral, the People's Earl (Spencer), the People's Europe, the People's Television Channel (BBC1), all of them promoted and discussed without irony. In London a man applied to the International Star Registry to have a star in the Andromeda constellation named "Diana - the People's Princess" (another application wanted a star in the Lyra constellation named "Dodi and Diana - Eternally Loved"). The leader of the Conservative Party, William Hague, suggested that Heathrow Airport be renamed Diana Airport. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, was said to be seriously considering a proposal that the August Bank Holiday be renamed Diana Day. Letters to newspapers made other suggestions for the renaming of hospitals and coins, for statues, for fountains, for special stamps . . .

. . . The wholesale price of flowers rose by 25 per cent in the London markets, despite special shipment from the polythene growing-tunnels of Holland, Israel, Africa and South America. By September 9, 10,000 tons of them had been piled outside Buckingham Palace and Kensington Palace. Estimates of the number of individual blooms reached 50 million. Estimates of the total weight of tributes reached 15,000 tons of cards, bottles of champagne, trinkets, teddy bears and items of crockery bearing Diana's picture were included. Public-health officers estimated that the temperature inside these masses of vegetation, cellophane and paper could be 180F. . .

. . . "New Labour", a piece of highly-successful political rebranding invented by marketeers, spoke for "New Britain". New Britain was the princess, the prime-minister, flowers, compassion and the therapeutic benefits of touching and crying - "Modernity" if the princess gets a memorial . . . In Britain, 31 million people watched the funeral on television, about half the population . . . it was the largest audience that British television has ever had."

Ian Jack, The Weekend Guardian, Supplement (pp15/6)
27th December, 1997

INTRODUCTION

On 29th July 1981, Lady Diana Spencer married Prince Charles, the heir to the English Throne, in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, a mediated Cinderella story in the imagination of a massive television audience. Subsequently, and up until her death in August 1997, British, European and world-wide media reported, on an almost daily basis, the soap opera of 'The House of Windsor'. Just like characters in television soaps, (such as Coronation Street or EastEnders), the topics of the plot were intricate and complicated, with enough mystique and gossip to keep the reading, viewing and listening public hooked. Instead of tuning in at a certain time on television to keep up with the story, the plot was reported via the modern media; newspapers and magazines, as well as on radio and television shows, in different ways, on an on-going basis.

The main plot of the real-life soap of 'The Royal Family' centred around Diana herself. Family issues of pregnancy, childbirth and christening, were reported alongside various personal problems such as loneliness, eating disorders and adultery. The plot thickened, the scandals grew and the media audience lapped it up. Separation and divorce intensified the script and the audience began to ponder the future of the monarchy. The media followed Diana's every move to satisfy the [by now] extremely inquisitive market world-wide. When she fell in love with an Egyptian millionaire 'play-boy', the audience loved it. Diana told them they were in for a "big surprise", and as with all good soap plots, speculation was rife: centring in this instance on a wedding, a baby or a new home on foreign soil. Just as interest in the drama was at its greatest, the lead character died. The single biggest British "media event" this century unfolded. Diana's funeral.

On Sunday 31st August 1997, Diana, Princess of Wales was killed in a car crash in Paris, along with her friend, Dodi Al-Fayed and her chauffeur, Henri Paul; allegedly following a high-speed chase from independent tabloid journalist photographers, ("paparazzi") on motorbikes. As news of the death of the Princess was confirmed by French authorities, there was a phenomenal media reaction in Britain. Most of the national Sunday papers missed the headlines, as the accident took place at 3am, and news of the death was unclear until later in the morning.

However, British radio and television networks all reacted by devoting most of the airtime on Sunday 31st August 1997 to the reporting of the accident and the varied reactions to it. Over the next week, thousands of images of Diana adorned the small screen and newspapers, with hours and pages of analysis, contemplating the implications of her death. Diana's life in the media continued to be characterised as a mythological fairytale, a Cinderella / Snow White story, now with an unhappy ending, in the build-up to a televised funeral, which was to be an event on an unprecedented scale. Dayan and Katz, (1994) have defined the nature and characteristics of such televised extravaganzas:

> "We call them collectively "media events", a term we wish to redeem from its pejorative connotations. Alternatively, we might have "television ceremonies", or "festive television", or even "cultural performances" (Singer, 1984). . . Audiences recognise them as an invitation - even a command - to stop their daily routines . . ." (Dayan and Katz 1994:1)

For one week, starting on Sunday 31st August 1997 up until Diana's funeral on Saturday 6th September, Britain became officially a nation in mourning. No one could have predicted the extent, neither of the coverage of her death, the myriad reactions to it, nor the potential implications of it.

This study is an investigation into the Irish general public's reaction to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, as broadcast on The Gerry Ryan Show on 2FM, Monday 1st - Friday 5th September 1997. According to Habermas; ". . .today newspapers and magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere"(Habermas 1974:49). Therefore, before proceeding with an analysis of The Gerry Ryan Show and how this radio programme dealt with Diana's death, the following is a summary of how one Irish newspaper, *The Irish Times*, covered the story, as a framework for subsequent discussion.

The Irish Times, in the wake of the death of Diana, provides an excellent insight into Irish print media's immediate reaction to Diana's death, effectively covering the main topics of debate and discussion, throughout the week, in Ireland, north and south. In summary, the main reports came under the following topics : statements from British, Irish, Northern Irish and worldwide political, establishment and religious leaders; factual reporting on the crash itself; opinion pieces on Diana's glamour and myth; chronicles of her life events; speculation on the future of Prince Charles and the British monarchy as a whole; observations on her roles both as a mother and a charitable campaigner; criticisms of the press and paparazzi alongside dissatisfaction with British privacy laws; and the reactions of 'ordinary' people, north and south.

Apart from a description of British Prime-Minister, Mr. Tony Blair, "his voice cracking with emotion as he paid tribute to a "wonderful and warm human being" (Millar 1997:1), *The Irish Times* profiled statements from establishment leaders, in both the political and religious spectrum, in Britain, Ireland and worldwide, expressing statements of sympathy and shock:

"In the US, President Clinton said he greatly admired Princess Diana . . . President Nelson Mandela of South Africa expressed profound shock and sympathy . . . President Yeltsin of Russia also praised her humanitarianism . . . In Japan . . .there was stunned disbelief . . . Diana's death dominated the headlines in Latin America . . . In Sao Paulo, the Brazilian President Mr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso said he was "profoundly saddened" . . . President Carlos Menem of Argentina sent condolences to Queen Elizabeth . . . The Canadian Prime Minister, Mr. Jean Chretien expressed sadness over Diana's death to her family . . ."(Cullen 1997:9)

In the Irish Republic, President Mary Robinson, "led Irish expressions of grief", and spoke of her deep distress at Diana's death. She said the Princess was "a devoted mother" with "a deep sense of compassion". President Robinson also cited her work for charities, such as the National AIDS Trust as an example of her compassion for those less fortunate. The Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern, spoke of being "deeply shocked". The Tánaiste, Ms Mary Harney, expressed her "deep shock and great sadness", while the Labour Party leader, Mr. Dick Spring, stated it was "a great shock to us all". Furthermore, the Archbishop of Armagh, Dr Seán Brady, reiterated he was, "shocked and saddened", whilst the national chairman of the Irish Red Cross Society, Mr. Richie Ryan, said his organisation, "regretted the loss of a woman who was deeply committed to the alleviation of human suffering everywhere." (Ingle 1997:8)

Political leaders in Northern Ireland also reflected similar sentiments, in *The Irish Times*, with Ulster Unionist leader, Mr. David Trimble; UUP deputy leader, Mr. John Taylor; the SDLP leader, Mr. John Hume; the DUP leader, Rev. Ian Paisley; the Alliance leader, Lord Alderdice; along with the Catholic Primate, Archbishop Seán Brady; and the Church of Ireland Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Dr. James Mehaffey - all of whom spoke variously of Diana's charitable, generous and inspirational character along with the tragedy and devastation of her death. She was described as "an angel of light" by Archbishop Brady, (Breen & Cusack 1997:8).

Other aspects of reports in *The Irish Times* will illustrate particular points in the chapters that follow. But, given the depth of reaction of so many Irish establishment leaders, in just one national newspaper, the following discussion will investigate the reaction of the Irish general public via the talk-radio format of The Gerry Ryan Show on national public service radio, (RTÉ's 2FM), Monday 1st September - Friday 5th September 1997. The aim of this study is: to summarise recent relevant research on radio and the public sphere; to show how the death of Diana, Princess of Wales constituted the biggest media-event in British broadcasting history; and the effect of this on the Irish psyche, using talk radio on 2FM as a case-study.

Chapter One will start with an outline of the current situation regarding radio in Europe. Public service broadcasting in Ireland, i.e. RTÉ, will follow, with the current schedule and workings of 2FM, (the RTÉ network which carries The Gerry Ryan Show for three hours on weekday mornings 0900 - 1200). This chapter will then distinguish important issues from recent academic debate on the public sphere; including how it relates to public service broadcasting; and more specifically The Gerry Ryan Show. From here, the study will define some characteristics of the radio medium, broadcasters, radio audiences, the telephone and talk-radio as a background to analysis of the programming in question.

Chapter Two will discuss media events to show how the sensational reaction to the death and funeral of the Princess constituted the single biggest media event ever in the broadcasting history of Britain. In relation to this, Chapter Two will focus on myth, glamour and 'the goddess' in modern times, as an insight into the Diana phenomenon. This chapter will further show that because of its

proximity to Britain and due to the fact that British print and broadcast media are a popular and unremarkable part of Irish culture, this event had repercussions in Ireland, as can be ascertained from examples in *The Irish Times*.

The Gerry Ryan Show on Monday 1st September 1997 was inundated with calls related to the death of the Princess of Wales the previous day. Chapter Three will look at these reactions. Concentrating on the actual telephone calls from the general public that went on-air, the particular areas of interest are: caller-gender; emotions and sentiments of callers; content of conversations; amount of time individual callers were on air; and whether there was any consistency in the caller's views. Charts will show the extent of coverage, which was most specifically on the day after the death and the day before the funeral.

Having shown the reaction of the Irish public via The Gerry Ryan Show, Chapter Four will give the results of a questionnaire filled in by Brenda Donoghue, the 'replacement' presenter of The Gerry Ryan Show (as Gerry Ryan was on annual leave), Monday 1st September - Friday 5th September 1997. The Gerry Ryan Show programme team completed a similar questionnaire, the results of which are shown, with particular interest in how the programme as pre-planned was affected by the public reaction to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales; how it adapted and some personal thoughts on the story.

Chapter Five will offer some conclusions which may be drawn from this study.

CHAPTER ONE

RADIO IN EUROPE

"At a time of considerable growth and development in the media in general there has been a tendency to undervalue radio. Radio is the oldest of the electronic media: it now has a history as a medium of public service broadcasting stretching over almost seventy years. During the last twenty years or so the scope of radio has enlarged as a result of significant technological developments. The trend towards deregulation has tended to put the emphasis on the commercialisation of radio services. Progressively, however, the specialist character of radio audiences has come to be recognised, and the services which they need have been seen to require public service and community as well as commercial radio." (Wedell et al 1991:5)

In 1991, a study into European Radio (ibid.) was published by *The European Institute For The Media* at the request of *The European Broadcasting Union* and with the support of *The European Cultural Foundation*. This report investigated the development of radio in Europe from the sixties onwards, analysing current challenges from technology, increased commercialisation and audience trends. Furthermore, it provided a setting for broadcasting companies in nineties Europe to analyse their position, both nationally and, through comparison, internationally.

The aim of the study was two-fold, firstly, to ascertain the future of radio as a mass medium compared to other media as well as the future of different 'types' of radio in the new millennium.

The report demonstrates how the European radio-scape was changed due to the portability of equipment, (walkman, portable radio-cassettes and radios); and the social acceptance of radios in new environments, such as at work, in pubs or hospitals for example; as well as in transportation, where in the past radio may not have been permitted. All these factors :

" . . . have enlarged the function of radio as a leisure commodity, particularly, though not exclusively, for the younger listener . . . Audiences are now found in cars, listening on their own, sometimes in the home, using equipment of the same quality as that in the radio studio, but far more listening as individuals than as groups." (ibid:108)

In addition, although the 'use' of radio was not changed, the behavior of the audience in these new environments had altered, due in no small part to:

"the inevitability in a competitive environment of falling audiences for former monopoly networks and a marked audience desire for a popular and entertaining music based format in contrast to the more structured and complex schedules of the traditionalist generalist stations of the more targeted speech and music-based networks that have succeeded them." (ibid:109)

With the arrival in many European countries of legal commercial radio in the past decades, competition to secure listeners resulted in public service broadcasters being forced to diversify into thematic channels, dedicated to specific formats such as talk, pop-music, classical music or sport for example in order to compete in the expanding 'market'. The move towards the targeting of specific audiences or a niche market has been labeled "narrowcasting":

"Such programme streaming represents the current response of broadcasters to the need of listeners to be able to find their chosen programme style easily and quickly in a spectrum increasingly crowded with competing signals." (ibid:114)

The European report further stresses that commercial radio is not the sole reason for the diversification of public service networks since comparisons between radio schedules have proved that pre-war commercial stations and public service networks were quite similar:

"This suggests that at least part of the change in styles is a reaction to changes in public taste, which in turn reflects the fact that all Europeans of working age have grown up with the assumption that radio is an available and unremarkable part of their lives. " (ibid:114)

Whilst reporting that "most" Europeans hear a radio station for between two and three hours a day:

"The Suddeutscher Rundfunk has reported (Bahen-Wuttemberg 1987) that of a sample of 2,200 people, radio was used as an accompaniment predominantly in the home, alongside the activities of washing and dressing, meals, work at home and, perhaps surprisingly, less for leisure time at home. Outside the home, the largest single category of use of radio was while driving or while at work. The Baden-Wuttermberg sample indicates clearly that radio is largely a domestic medium: only among those in full-time employment did the out-of-home time even approach the time spent with radio as an accompaniment to domestic, home-based activities." (ibid:117)

In addition, recent marketing surveys, both qualitative and quantitative, show that listeners are younger and attention spans shorter; and furthermore, listening technology and environments have developed and expanded. As a result, broadcasting companies in the late eighties and early nineties, evaluated and refined schedules, "narrowcasting" to the specific young target audience:

"Private broadcasters in particular have developed this line of approach to their output and have logically extended their thinking to design a whole station that compliments a specific lifestyle . . . the 2FM network of the Irish Republic, intended to compliment the more general programming of the RTÉ first network, rapidly became known as "yuppie radio" and has concentrated a large part of its airtime on discussions and entertainment attractive to the young, educated urban population." (ibid:109)

RTÉ and 2FM

Radio Telefís Éireann (RTÉ), is Ireland's national, semi-state, public service radio and television broadcaster (appendice 1 & 2). The organisation is dual-funded, that is revenue is secured from *both* a license fee levy on all households, with a television, as well as finance from advertising, sponsorship and promotion. RTÉ's television channels are RTÉ One, Network 2 and Telefis na Gaeltachta. RTÉ is mainly based in Dublin, where the main offices and studios are located, whilst there are regional studios located throughout Ireland (appendice 3).

RTÉ's main radio channels are RTÉ Radio 1, 2FM, Raidio na Gaeltachta, FM3 and RTÉ Cork. In line with the blocking or "narrowcasting" of radio services, RTÉ's Raidio na Gaeltachta is a dedicated Irish language service, FM3 caters for classical music, RTÉ Radio Cork reflects regional activity for the densely populated South West; whilst RTÉ Radio 1 provides an extensive range of programming - covering news, current affairs, music, drama, variety, general features, agriculture, education, religion, public service information and sports coverage - in both English and Irish language. 2FM is a popular music and information channel, presented in a lighter vein, as a dedicated service for young people, up to the age of thirty-five years.

From its inception in 1926, RTÉ, formally 2RN, adopted the public service broadcasting principals of the BBC in England. World-wide, throughout the twentieth century, radio broadcasting, both in terms of technology and influence had become one of the most predominant cultural artifacts of the 'nation'. The power of the medium was recognised particularly by Lord Reith, first Director-General of the British Broadcasting Company. He was singularly

responsible for outlining how radio should operate and be controlled in an advanced capitalist democratic society. He saw the medium first and foremost as a "public service".

"Denis McQuail has summed up this "social responsibility" model in greater detail:

* Media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to the society

* These obligations are mainly to be met by selling high professional standards of informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance

* In accepting and applying these obligations, media should be self-regulating within the framework of law and established institutions

* The media should avoid whatever might lead to crime, violence or civil disorder or give offense to ethnic or religious minorities

* The media as a whole should be pluralistic and reflect the diversity of their society, giving access to various points of view and to rights of reply

* Society, and the public, following the first named principle, have a right to expect high standards of performance and intervention can be justified to secure the, or a, common good. " (Wedell et al., 1991:31-32)

The current Chairman of the RTÉ Authority (appendice 4), the body which governs the operation of the RTÉ services is Dr. Farrel Corcoran, from Dublin City University. According to *The Irish Times*,

"The chairman of the RTÉ Authority and professor of communications at DCU, Dr Farrel Corcoran, offered a definition of public service broadcasting in a recent *Irish Times* interview. It is, he said, about making good radio and television universally available at a reasonable cost, subscribing to plurality and catering for minorities. There you have it. It is not then, television or radio that caters for a small market, or offered at a high cost; it is something as necessary as a health service, an education service, a service necessary for our democracy and culture. RTÉ holds that public service broadcasting can include Gerry Ryan and Dave Fanning . . . that public service is about a mix, about diversity and about catering for all types." (Foley 1995:6)

2FM

2FM was inaugurated as RTÉ Radio 2 in 1979, as a direct response by RTÉ to the growing popularity of approximately seventy unlicensed, illegal, so-called 'pirate' music radio stations, which operated in an uncontrolled and unregulated manner, nationwide (Mulryan 1988). With a remit to serve the younger audience 2FM has had a chequered history, since its inception. Factors such as audience figures, technological developments, programming and personnel changes; as well as budgets and fluctuations in government legislation, amongst other considerations, have been instrumental in the station's evolution.

Fundamentally 2FM can be subject to conflict and dilemma, in terms of commercial survival versus the operating principals of public service broadcasting. The biggest challenge to the station occurred with the legalisation of privately owned commercial radio in The Sound Broadcasting Bill passed by Dail Éireann on 10th February 1988.

In an RTÉ document "RTÉ's Mission (A Sense Of Purpose, 1988)", the state broadcaster outlined a number of important issues in the face of legal competition:

"The issue for RTÉ is to what extent it should allow a commercially orientated environment to influence its own behaviour and policy, how it can identify and assert the value of its distinctiveness in the new environment and financial premises . . . RTE will respond to these challenges with excellence in competitive public service broadcasting at the core of its strategy. It will :

1. Expand and enhance the quality of home produced programmes
2. Be competitive in its scheduling
3. Enhance the identity of its programming channels
4. Promote the distinctiveness of Public Service Broadcasting
5. Reduce the cost base
6. Optimise and expand existing income source
7. Seek new sources of income"

In response to the legislation and in anticipation of the forth-coming legal radio commercial radio stations, RTÉ Radio management prepared a new schedule and station identity for the young people's network. The official launch date for the 2FM relaunch was Easter Monday 1989, with the station indulging in extensive publicity and hype in presenting the new package to the targeted young audience. As the new local radio operations were not yet on-stream, there was no competition. 2FM seized the opportunity to promote itself as 'ten years ahead of the rest'.

This new package featured not only the new station name (changed from Radio 2 to 2FM) but also a new logo, (appendice 5). Currently therefore 2FM is a twenty-four hour pop-radio network, broadcasting 365 days a year, with news on the hour, (appendices 6 & 7).

2FM was to remain responsible for the 35 years and under age-group, with a popular music policy and three hours of talk-radio in The Gerry Ryan Show as the flagship programme. The schedule was split in two distinctive slots, day-time and night-time. The day-time programmes recognised the 'elder' under 35-years age bracket, whilst night-time 2FM geared itself towards the younger teenage group. The music policy of the station retained a 30% Irish music remit, whilst the programmes became personality driven, each show called after the presenter, such as "The Dave Fanning Show". Strict regimes and discipline, in all aspects of programme output, from station jingles, to rules for on-air promotions and playlists of music were installed.

The Gerry Ryan Show's most recent annual audience figures show that the programme has a national reach of 15%, that is an audience of 405,000 adults, over the age of fifteen years (Joint National Listnership Research Surveys. MRBI, Landsdowne, June 1996 - June 1997), (Appendice 8).

THE PUBLIC SPHERE

"By ' the public sphere' we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guarantied to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body." (Habermas, 1974:49)

The theory of the public sphere originates with Jurgen Habermas, a German social scientist, who published *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* in Germany, 1962. It was subsequently published in English in Britain and America in 1989 and massive academic debate followed,

"powerful testimony to the abiding relevance of the book's central concerns. Habermas, in light of this renewed engagement with his work, has reviewed his attitude today to the theses developed more than 30 years ago. He still sticks, by and large, with the argument of the second part of the book, namely, that public life in late capitalism has been subverted from its critical functions in early modern Europe and reverted to pre-modern forms of publicness - refeudalization, in short" (Scannell 1996:75)

Habermas theorised that with capitalist developments in Europe in the eighteenth century, a strata of society separated from control by church and state, due to economic independence, that is "competitive market capitalism . . . provided the contradictions in eighteenth century Britain for the development of both the theory and practice of liberal democracy" (Garnham 1990:104). As European society developed from the feudal pyramid system of lords and subjects, this new political entity emerged. The new class, the bourgeoisie, had both the time and resources to create and invest in public institutions such as newspapers, libraries and education, so that an independent political force evolved, i.e. public opinion in the public sphere. In modern times, the media constitute the voice of the public sphere, the area where public opinion and debate should take place. Habermas' characteristics of this public sphere are: it should be free from interference from Church and State; it should be accessible

to everyone; it should allow for equality in citizenship; everyone has equal power in it and it should be free from economic dictates.

Habermas also outlined how before the democratic welfare state came into being:

" . . .publicness was a status-attribute of the lords spiritual and temporal. 'They represented their lord not for but "before" the people' (Habermas 1989:8) whenever they appeared in public. The people were simply the audiences for such displays. And so, he argues it is today. 'The public sphere becomes (again) the court *before* whose public, prestige can be displayed - rather than *in* which public critical debate is carried on . . . In the expanded (i.e. mediatized) public sphere the (political) transactions themselves are stylized into a show. Publicity loses its function in favour of a staged display' (Habermas 1989:201,206)" (Scannell 1996:75)

According to Habermas, because of conflicts between private and public interests, of overlapping and interference between the two, not everyone had equal access to the public sphere, "it was destroyed by the very forces that brought it into being" (Garnham 1990:107). There was an uneven distribution of wealth in the new capitalist economy; the price of entering the public sphere therefore increased; which resulted in unequal access and control, with the State and government becoming a major player. Therefore, those in the 'public eye' gained prestige, once more, over the public. Today, according to Habermas, those in the public sphere act *before* the viewing public via the media, rather than the media offering an equal forum for rational critical public debate for everyone. Habermas describes this as a 'refeudalisation' of public life, in that:

"With the interweaving of the public and the private realm, not only do the political authorities assume certain functions in the sphere of commodity exchange and social labor, but conversely social powers now assume political functions. This leads to a kind of "refeudalisation" of the public sphere. Large organisations strive for political compromises with the state and each other,

excluding the public sphere whenever possible. But at the same time large organisations must assure themselves of at least plebiscitary support from the mass of the population through an apparent display of openness." (Habermas 1974:54)

Scannell (1996), Garnham (1990), McLaughlin (1993) and Livingstone and Lunt (1994) have offered alternative theories on the public sphere, which can be applied to Irish public service radio in the nineties, while O'Sullivan (1997) gives a specific analysis of the relevance of Habermas's theory for The Gerry Ryan Show in Ireland.

According to Scannell, Habermas takes too pessimistic a view of the nature of public life. Having outlined the arguments of Habermas' work, Scannell asserts; "We are clearly meant to disapprove of this" (Scannell 1996:75). Scannell maintains that public ceremony should not always be regarded with suspicion, that Habermas views all "theatre, ritual, ceremony" as "somehow irrational" or "an unnecessary distraction" from "rational conduct", (ibid:75). However, Scannell points out that due to Habermas' experience of the "Nazi aestheticization of politics" and his "lifelong struggle against fascism", it is understandable that he would be against any "theatre, rhetoric, narrative, festival or pomp from entering the political" (ibid:75).

". . . such a puritan iconoclastic stance towards public life points to an impoverished understanding of the communicative richness and scope of social life . . . We are supposed to see 'the society of the spectacle' as yet another way in which the ideological veil is drawn over public life. In Habermas' view the only active agents in a 'feudalized' public life are the actors themselves who define and control the occasion. 'The people' function merely as a backdrop, as passive spectators who witness the event and learn their place. As it was in the past, so it is today. " (Scannell 1996:76)

Whereas Habermas observes the active agents in the public sphere as actors on a stage, so to speak, Scannell regards the scenario in different terms. He

theorizes that the media have redefined the very act of being in public, and the conditions entailed therein. In his own words:

"We now live in a world in which the faces of public persons are universally available. Today, everyone 'knows' (in a minimal sense of being able to recognise) royalty, leading politicians, sports men and women, 'stars', 'personalities' and those who are famous for being famous. And this is a world-wide phenomenon. In ways hitherto inconceivable there now exists a domain of publicness in which certain kinds of person routinely appear and thereby are (willingly or not) available to, subject to, the scrutiny of everyone." (Scannell 1996:76)

Corresponding to this, the very fact of being in the public eye has been problematized by the media, the public become more than a passive court and the lords lose essential aspects of control over how their prestige is received. In addition, as a radio or television broadcast takes place in two places, (the location of the broadcast itself transmitted to the private place of listening or seeing), a degree of complexity comes into the equation. The private can become public and vice versa. Crucially, for this case-study, Scannell determines that "We can begin to explore these issues by retracing the presentation, by radio and television of public events involving royalty." (ibid:76)

Habermas has also been criticised by feminists, who perceive his hypothesis as applying only to men in the North European public sphere two hundred years ago, as women were assigned to the domestic, the home or the private sphere. Mc Laughlin (1993) discerns the very existence of the notion of a liberal public sphere as fabricated on the assumption of the exclusion of women.

"Underlying the universalism of the public sphere as a fiction of unifying identity, feminist scholars argue that, despite the rhetoric of publicity and accessibility, the very meaning of 'civil society' was constructed through the significant exclusion of women, the proletariat and popular culture . . . Habermas subsumes all possibilities into one model that is not theoretically or

historically neutral but is associated with a specific set of class and gender interests and is, in fact, inaccessible to most citizens" (McLaughlin 1993:603/4)

Mc Laughlin denounces Habermas for idealizing an epoch of Northern European history in an exclusionary way which did not take into consideration the situation or function of neither women nor any minorities in society, "the result of his analysis is puzzling: a strikingly exclusionary account of a historical moment and a normative ideal." (ibid:601) The imagining of the public sphere as a place for reasoned rational critical debate of an educated bourgeoisie is a misguided concept, for McLaughlin, who outlines how in reality the issues would have centred on antagonisms between conflicting and competitive material matters concerning the middle classes. Mc Laughlin maintains that 'counter publics', such as feminists, need to find their own place and voice in the modern public sphere, in order to be able to partake in debates and discussions relating to political, social and economic issues. Correspondingly, talk radio, such as The Gerry Ryan Show, is an ideal format for women who are in the home on weekday mornings.

"It is a commonplace to assert that public communication lies at the heart of the democratic process; that citizens require, if their equal access to the vote is to have any substantive meaning, equal access also to sources of information and equal opportunities to participate in the debates from which political decisions rightly flow." (Garnham 1990:104)

Garnham (1990) illustrates how Habermas' public sphere model is inextricably tied to the ideals of public service broadcasting, that "the public service model of broadcasting is an embodiment of the principals of the public sphere" (ibid:109). He discerns two great strengths in the public service model of broadcasting, despite debate and criticism centred around it. These are:

"First it presupposes and then develops in its practice a set of social relations which are distinctly political rather than economic. Second, it attempts to insulate itself from the control by the State" (ibid:109)

. . . which he says is in line with Habermas' theory on what constitutes the ideal model of the public sphere. According to Garnham, Habermas' principles, in their perfect form, would constitute "the indispensable basis of a free society"(ibid:108).

"These principles are: general accessibility, especially to information, the elimination of privilege, and the search for general norms and their rational legitamation." (ibid:108)

For Garnham, the destruction of the principles of public service broadcasting, in favour of those of commercial, market controlled media organisations, is problematic. Privatised information systems will result in "the information rich" and "the information poor" (ibid:105), which will have negative repercussions on the public sphere, and by extention democracy itself. Therefore, withstanding criticisms of both Habermas' approach towards the public sphere and the historical experience of public service broadcasting in Britain, Garnham comprehends Habermas' model in positive terms:

"Thus the concept of the public sphere and the principles it embodies represent an ideal type against which we can judge existing social arrangements, and which we can attempt to embody in concrete institutions in the light of reigning historical circumstances." (ibid:109)

Crucially, it is the characteristics of distinction from interference due to economics and the state which should be retained in both public service broadcasting and the public sphere. The ideal for this, according to Garnham is universalism :

"It is this that is the rational core of the argument mobilized in favour of the existing public service broadcasting duopoly in Britain. Namely, that the

existence of a national focus for political debate and information is important to the national political process." (ibid:113).

Access programming in the media, particularly talk on television, was the basis of a 1994 study by Livingston and Lunt. Much of their theory can aptly be applied to talk radio. Livingston and Lunt were concerned with the role of audience discussion programmes in the modern world, analysing their role and purpose: whether they are simply cheap options to fill schedules or whether they offer a new forum of public debate.

"For some it is obvious that the mass media are the only institution which can provide a space for public debate in modern society. Others argue that even if a . . . public sphere is possible; and even if the media can contribute to it positively rather than simply undermining it, then these programmes are not where this will happen" (ibid:2).

Referring to work done by Blumler (1970), Livingston and Lunt state four potential roles for access programmes: that they are a forum for spokesmen for the government; that they provide the public with vital information; that they can offer independent comment and criticism; and they can editorialise regarding parties and their policies. Livingston and Lunt add to this that audience talk or discussion programmes can act as communication on behalf of the public to the government and experts, they can hold politicians and experts to account, "And they can provide a social space for communication among the lay public itself" (ibid:5).

Livingston and Lunt, reiterate that public debate is a requirement if citizens are to be responsible and aware of current affairs.

"If the citenzry is to play a role in a democracy then it needs access to an institutionally guarantied forum in which to express their opinions and to question established power. We will argue that the media now constitute the major forum for political communication. Thus the debate about public

involvement of citizens in political communication leads to questions about the media as a public sphere where the relations between established power and the citizenry take place." (ibid:10)

Challenged with conflicting theories of the modern day public sphere, Livingston and Lunt summarize the alternating opinions. Habermas' is a utopian view of a public sphere as the ideal form of public debate in an ideal world, "which if it can find an institutional context, potentially allows equality of access and equal rights to all citizens"(ibid:35). On the other hand there are those who state that this is too narrow a view. That instead:

". . . the media can facilitate the expression of diverse political and social interests in order to form a working compromise between negotiated positions. Access and participation programmes should, according to this view, be evaluated in terms of how well they express a diversity of public voices and challenges established power to recognise the complexities of everyday life." (ibid:36)

O'Sullivan, (1997) carried out an in-depth academic study into the Gerry Ryan Show in terms of Habermas' theory on the public sphere and the phenomenon of private sphere issues going public via talk radio in Ireland. She writes in relation to The Gerry Ryan Show:

"What makes this show particularly interesting is that it offers access to listeners and in this way allows the audience to participate in meaning making. We have here a clear example of public debate occurring within a media context." (ibid:167)

O'Sullivan studies whether the Gerry Ryan Show can be described as contributing to the public sphere as outlined by Habermas, or whether it is "entertainment masquerading as debate" (ibid:168). She concludes that her research does not offer any evidence that The Gerry Ryan Show can be seen as an example of rational-critical debate in the Irish public-sphere, but on the other hand, it cannot be dismissed as mere entertainment either. O'Sullivan analysed one week of programming of the show, in May 1995 and highlights

crucial points for this study. Regarding the callers to the Gerry Ryan Show, O'Sullivan says that these are not homogeneous, "and include the bizarre and the entertaining as well as the serious. A complex framework is required to include these very different call types".(ibid:169) In line with the other theories listed above as to the importance of access to the modern media in a democracy, O'Sullivan states:

"The show does offer access to its listeners and as such positions the audience as citizens, not simply consumers. All listeners are included in Gerry Ryan's invitation to phone the show, from anywhere in Ireland for the price of a local call" (ibid.: 177).

However, as she points out, the programme's Broadcasting Assistants answer these calls, which are then passed over to a producer for consideration, therefore access is not equal, immediate and open to everyone who rings in. From her research, O'Sullivan evaluates that The Gerry Ryan Show's "main purpose" is entertainment to guarantee the largest audience figures possible and, for this reason, the show's potential function as a place of rational-critical debate is diminished. Finally, O'Sullivan deduces that

"it can be argued that this study of callers to The Gerry Ryan Show would suggest that calling the show is an important social activity, and that this form of participation might have consequences for Irish society as well as for individual callers" (ibid:185).

The above summary of some recent debate on the public sphere is of relevance to this particular study of The Gerry Ryan Show, in the week following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. There was a huge public reaction in Ireland to the news and The Gerry Ryan Show was one of many formats that the issues of the story were debated and commented on. Since getting on-air on a programme such as The Gerry Ryan Show is only a telephone call away, the following section will outline some recent work done both on talk radio in general and in Ireland specifically.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RADIO

"Among the objective answers to the question, "What Does Radio Do?" are these: It plays music. It tells the news. It predicts the weather and warns about traffic. It raises issues of public importance. It puts another voice in the room. As a result of those objective functions, the subjective perception is that it entertains (music), informs (news), empowers (weather and traffic), socialises (public issues), and befriends (companionship)." (MacFarland 1990 :22)

To provide the background, for a discussion of The Gerry Ryan Show on 2FM specifically, this section will sketch some of the basic characteristics of the actual medium of radio itself. Radio is now quite commonplace in modern society in general. Most of its features are so obvious as to be almost unremarkable. However, simply in stating what these are can cast a valuable new light on the oldest electronic communicator in advanced culture today. The work of Scannell (1991 & 1996) effectively suggests some of the cardinal properties of the medium. For instance, radio, like television and the telephone, is a *live* medium, existing in *real* time, that is: "the moment of talking and the moment of hearing are the same" (Scannell, 1991:1). The abstract concept of time further comes into the equation, when one considers that time is filled by programmes and time is spent listening to programmes.

Radio is accepted as an ordinary feature of daily routine. Scannell labels this as *the dailiness* of radio - in that it is like any other daily service, just like the milk on the doorstep or the letters in the post. (Scannell 1996:149)

"It is not a seemingly random jumble of things arbitrarily thrown together and transmitted any old how. It is not that there are islands of meaning in a sea of meaninglessness. To the contrary, programme output, as a whole and in all its parts, has a deeply settled, ordered, orderly, known and familiar character." (Scannell 1996:8)

Radio is meaningful in a certain 'designed' way in our lives. All on-air programming is planned and produced so that the audience will understand it in the listening environment. "The talk that takes place on radio and television has listenable qualities intentionally built into it" (ibid:2) so that in attending to a radio presenter talking or to a member of the public - in studio or on the telephone - the impression is not one of eavesdropping.

Successful radio stations have institutionalized schedules and programmes, so that audiences have become both accustomed to listening to specific programmes at certain times of the day and to knowing what to expect. Whether it is music, chat, information or simply company, radio addresses the listener on a one-to-one basis, in his/her environment, so, crucially :

"Sociability is the most fundamental characteristic of broadcasting communicative ethos. The relationship between broadcasters and audiences is a *purely social* one, that lacks any specific content, aim or purpose. This, of course, is not to deny that a very great deal of broadcast output has content, aims and purpose." (Scannell 1996:23)

Radio programmes broadcast from studios, which, according to Scannell, means that: "The studio is the institutional discursive space of radio and television. It is a public space in which and from which institutional authority is maintained and displayed." (Scannell 1991:2). In reference to the theory of the public sphere above, this notion contributes to the significance of radio as a public place, nurturing public opinion.

"Broadcasting reproduces the world as ordinary, but that seeming obviousness is an effect, the outcome of a multiplicity of small techniques and discursive practices that combine to produce that deeply taken-for-granted sense of familiarity with what is seen and heard." (ibid:8)

The medium of radio helps put a timetable on normal life. From a breakfast show, to a lunchtime show, to a drivetime show, a radio schedule can almost provide a clock for the listener, which Scannell (1996) calls the *ordinariness* of radio. This will be important to consider in the face of a media event, such as the death of Diana Princess of Wales, when, as radio and television schedules changed radically, the *extraordinariness* of the day was reflected, which helps makes it a memorable, 'historical' occasion.

"Today's listener has many choices besides radio, so when he or she turns to radio, it is as a demand-access consumer - someone who is accustomed to getting what he or she wants to hear when he or she wants to hear it." (MacFarland 1990:21).

MacFarland, in a study published in relation to American commercial radio, elucidates some characteristics that can be applied to 2FM in Ireland. According to him, radio encourages inattention, in a way that television does not, "radio listening is often thought of as a work accompaniment, rather than as an entertainment tool in its own right" (ibid:25). Therefore radio can be seen to be a low demand medium,

"As a result of making low demands, while being pervasive in the physical and psychological space around the listener, and being open-ended with the listener's imagery, radio becomes a prime breeding ground for daydreams and fantasies." (ibid:30)

Moreover, MacFarland says that this is different from presenting little: "But *demanding* little is not the same as *offering* little. There needs to be the chance for audience participation." (ibid:51) In fact, for MacFarland "radio's strongest asset is the way it can be ignored", meaning that the listener does not want to be conscious that he is listening to radio. It is only when the listener hears something that he does not like that he becomes aware of the medium and switches channel, or turns off altogether . . . "the behavior that drives programmers crazy in their quest to avoid tune-out, is only the means the

listener uses to keep a certain daydream or fantasy going" (ibid:30). He goes on to say that:

"To be really in the radio business is to be intentional about providing fantasy, arousal or relaxation - or in some cases, all three. Fantasy, arousal or relaxation are not by-products of radio listening. They *are* the product." (ibid:38)

Mc Leish (1989) surmises that radio can be determined in terms of the individual and the society at large. For the individual, radio "enlarges personal 'experience', stimulating interest in previously unknown topics, events or people. It promotes creativity and can point towards new personal activity" (ibid:7). According to McLeish, radio can: guide social behavior; aid personal contacts; offer individual choice; and give the ability to act as citizens in a democracy, by offering news and information. He sees radio as being a potential tool for bringing about change in society, by informing the population and offering a forum for people to talk to each other, corresponding to the theory of the public sphere above.

Other attributes of radio are that single programmes have no actual identity of their own, in fact they are gone once broadcast. The identity of a station and of the presenters, can be seen as what 'make' a radio station. This means that although content may differ from day to day, the actual format of a show, the presenter's profile and the station stays the same, and to regular listeners will be very familiar. Furthermore, radio stations, schedules and programmes are directed towards a certain audience - targeted and studied by market research, acknowledged by station management, the advertisers and the programme production team. On the subject of targeting audiences, Scannell points out:

"It is not *necessarily* the case that programmes are for audiences. They might be for profit. They might be for the powers that be. They might be for those

that make them. They might be for those who take part in them for *anyone* and *everyone* . . . It requires a particular thoughtfulness and care to make programmes that are listenable to or watchable by anyone" (Scannell 1996:11).

Radio programmers and presenters have as their goal the production of quality radio programmes. MacFarland (p104) outlines radio quality as:

". . . quality is an exchange of one person's best efforts for the efforts of another. In radio terms, the best efforts of a producer of a program collide with the best efforts of a listener to appreciate the program, and in that event, quality is often realized. Too often, neither the creator, the owner, not the user (to quote Pirsig's terms) feels a sense of identity with it, and hence it has no quality."

According to MacFarland, who situates American radio in the advanced consumer-capitalist system of the late twentieth century: "The radio station that succeeds in an era where computer games, home-produced media and even self-help magazines all promise more control is the one which actually does try to involve the listener in helping to determine programmes."(ibid:54) And in keeping with market-place principals and the importance of commercial viability of all radio stations, "The best radio is radio that sells. It sells everything: the music that is played, the people who play it, the news that interrupts it, the commercials that support it, the station itself" (ibid:111).

THE LISTENER

"Programming that attracts listeners is the dynamo that propels radio. But today, the proliferation of media choices has put the listener in the driver's seat. Today, it is not the station manager or the program director who is calling the shots at the successful station, it is the listener." (MacFarland 1990:1)

As the media consumer is so advanced, it is essential for radio stations to take the needs, wants and desires of the audience into consideration when planning programmes. MacFarland likens radio listening to reading a newspaper, rather than watching TV, as it is primarily a solitary experience, whereas watching TV is usually a group activity. Crisell (1986) theorizes:

"Broadcasters have always been at pains to give the audience a sense of the latter's presence on the medium . . . The phone-in was regarded as such a major development in broadcasting because for the first time it gave the viewer or listener a presence on the medium which was *audible* - not as the result of his having a letter read out on air or going into a studio or attending an outside broadcast in his neighbourhood, but spontaneously and away from broadcasting equipment, in his own home or local telephone box or at his place of work." (ibid:182)

It is impossible to separate a discussion on the radio listener from theory on the telephone in modern society, as it is via the communication afforded by the telephone that the listener can offer opinions, partake in programmes and become a broadcaster. Hopper (1992), has researched how: "The telephone conversation takes priority in our daily lives. We are the people of the phone" (pxi):

"We live in telephone societies. Both at home and at work, we respond to the telephone's rhythms as traditional peoples have responded to rhythms of nature, summons of church bells, or other taken-for-granted experiential boundaries." (ibid:4)

To Hopper the telephone is "the voice print of western culture" (pxi). The phone-in is now one of the most common types of radio show, affording the listener his or her say on the airwaves. As Crisell outlines it:

"In the phone-in the caller is on the air as a result of nothing more than picking up a handset and dialling a number and he is in this sense representative of the listener, irrespective of whether the latter sympathises with him or his views. Thus in a curious way the medium is inverted - turned inside out. The audience members become the broadcasters: they are, as it were, enabled to reflect themselves." (1986:186)

Being on the air gives a listener a certain authoritiveness as he becomes a broadcaster or a performer in his own right. Therefore, anything that a caller wants to talk about on air on a chat show is validated. Or, as Scannell surmises, (1996:93)

"Experiences are permitted to anyone, because they can happen to any kind of person (public or private) so long as they can talk about them. For to have an experience is, among other things, to be entitled to talk about it, to have something tellable."

Once more, MacFarland in his 1990 American study gets the last word, in his description of the ideal radio exchange (p108) " the ultimate radio communion: two people sharing their minds and hearts freely while thousands listen in."

BROADCASTERS

"The *grain* of the voice (Barthes, 1977:179-89) gives rise to the inferences about the speaker, and changes in voice are an important means of creating implicatures. Voice is the irreducible mark of the spoken, of its physical, embodied presence and, for radio in particular, is crucial for listeners' assessments of the character of speakers and their alignment (or otherwise) with their performances." (Scannell 1996:6)

The Gerry Ryan Show has the largest audience share on 2FM, (appendice 8). There are many reasons for the success of this ten year old programme, with much of it accredited to the presenter himself. In considering this, the following are some academic observances on radio broadcasters. Crisell (1986) maintains that it is important for broadcasters to remember the actual listener, even though they are invisible. It is the job of the broadcaster to encourage the audience to stay tuned and the only way broadcasters can do this is by ensuring that what goes out on-air is acceptable. Scannell eloquently supposes that:

"What do I hear if not voices in the air, and what do I hear in voices? I hear in voices the thereness of their speakers. Where they are coming from. Where they are. What they're at. A place. A person . . . Whoever or whatever they are. They are themselves in what they say, in the *way* they say it, in the grain of the voice, the body in the voice as it speaks or sings . . . Themselves uttering themselves. Their being themselves in the way they are in the saying of it."(Scannell 1996:164).

For MacFarland, on-air presenters are in the unusual position of doing a public performance without an audience, and without immediate feedback. Broadcasters need to know that what they are doing is correct: through talent, practice, and learning "that elusive "internal sense of rightness"" (1990:52). He goes on to say that all on-air performances have their roots in theatrical performances so that it stands to reason that the proficient on-air personality is the one that is also adroit at public performances, such as public speaking or acting, especially in acting out monologues. MacFarland likens the listener to a

car and the show to the trip about to be taken. "The listener does not commence in any gear - he or she is in neutral. The announcer alone judges the speed to go, the route to take, and how often the car will be slowed to allow sightseeing along the way." (p100). Moreover, MacFarland says that a good radio communicator would be aware of the immediate culture of the listener:

"The really great announcers seem to know everything that is going on in their cities. But not only do they have the facts, they also have the feelings, the mood. And they convert those facts, focused through the lens of the community's moods into *stories* . . . The radio announcer who wants to become a true communicator needs to consider the behavior of ordinary people who are in an entertainment seeking mood in public places . . " (ibid:108)

It is imperative, in MacFarland's opinion, that broadcasters leave the studio and enter into outside broadcasts from the target listening community, rather than always seeming like a monk in a cell. The broadcaster must also come across as credible, so that the listener will believe in him and pay attention to the subject matter of the show.

Obviously, a broadcaster's voice is paramount:

"Voice is one important aspect of an individual that gives off information about the individual's personality. Voices can, as we know, be beautiful or ugly, hard or soft, warm or cold and much else besides. In every utterance the hearable properties of the voice - irrespective of what the voice is saying - will give rise to inferences about the character and personality of the speaker, their mood, their attitude to what they are saying and to the person they are speaking to. In radio, voice is peculiarly important, since it is the only 'visible' physical quality of the speaker. Among the things that are easily and reasonably accurately hearable in voices are the age and sex of speakers, while social class and place of origin can often be reasonably inferred." (Scannell 1996:36)

Finally, in relation to the role of the presenter of the talk show, Livingstone and Lunt (1994) have said that there is an aspect of double meaning about the conventions of talk shows.

"This generic ambiguity is clearly seen in the role of the host: is he or she the chair of a debate, the adored hero of a talk show, a referee, a conciliator, a judge, the compare of a game show, a therapist, the host of a dinner party conversation, a manager or a spokesperson? At times, the host plays any one of these roles, thus altering the roles of other participants and listeners." (Livingstone and Lunt 1994:56)

TALK RADIO AND THE GERRY RYAN SHOW

"We might distinguish between the terms 'radio talk' and 'talk radio' in the following way. 'Radio talk' may be taken as referring to all forms of talk encounterable on radio, from DJ talk through to interview to phone-in talk. 'Talk radio', on the other hand, may be taken as referring more restrictively to the phenomena of radio interview and radio phone-in broadcasts." (Hutchby 1994:135)

The above footnote to Hutchby's essay on talk radio (ed. Scannell 1991:119-137), is an appropriate definition of talk radio as applied to The Gerry Ryan Show. This programme is slotted into 2FM's music-based schedule. Therefore the rest of the programmes, although very much personality based (such as "The Larry Gogan Show" or "3-5 Live with Tony Fenton") do feature radio talk and music, but are not part of the talk radio group where listeners ring up to debate and discuss various issues. MacFarland, however, offers three experiences offered by radio talk:

"Radio talk has also featured all three types of experience: *fantasy* in the identification derived from imagining the fun, great-looking discjockey who plays your tunes, *arousal* in listening to other people's quirks or opinions on a telephone call-in show or in hearing a newscast, and *relaxation* in enjoying the familiar, consoling voice of a trusted local personality." (1990:38)

Aspects of this would apply to all the programmes on 2FM, but, once more, summarises The Gerry Ryan Show ideally, as this show can display, in varying degrees at different times, all three elements. That is; a strong presenter who can create vivid fantasy in a listener's mind; many quirky calls and opinions for listener thought provocation and arousal; as well as the institutionalisation over a ten-year period of Gerry Ryan as a trusted (albeit national not local) personality.

"Arguably, the discussion constitutes the essential 'excitement' of live radio - considerably more so than the single presenter or DJ format - partly because it is not scripted and nobody, not even the presenter, knows what is coming next. and partly because it provides listener access to people behaving spontaneously, reacting to other people and in real time." (Wilby and Conry 1997:174)

The 'excitement' of The Gerry Ryan Show is indeed that the callers can define the format of the show. Crissel (1986) has given three types of caller to phone-in shows, two of which will be shown to apply to a case-study of the callers to The Gerry Ryan Show after the death of The Princess of Wales, that is *expressive* and *exhibitionist*, (Chapter Four).

"As far as the caller is concerned, then, we might broadly define the function of the phone-in being as 'emotive' in Jakobson's sense of the term - concerned to reveal one's own personality and interests - and perhaps conative too, a means of influencing others; and this overall function seems to assume one or other of three forms which shade into one another but I will nevertheless distinguish as the *expressive*, the *exhibitionist* and the *confessional*." Crissel

According to McNally (1997:16) the Irish frequently tell themselves that they have a great oral tradition and that explains why they are such good talkers and so interested in telling stories and debating on the radio. This gives talk radio its consequential popularity in this country. Another reason offered is that Ireland has a relatively small population which means that "the local and the national tend to overlap". Additionally local independent stations are required to present 20% news and current affairs and talk radio is a cheap way of doing this.

It has been through talk radio in Ireland that many taboos have been brought out into the open, especially relating to sexuality, with not just experts on air, but the caller at home.

In an earlier article published on 29th November 19 , McNally wrote that people go;

"Live on the air, with a jury of thousands listening in and ready to phone with their advice" - he says that the Irish people have lost their shyness about personal things. "In the process they have become the unpaid performers in the daily soap that is talk radio, and RTÉ is quick to acknowledge its debt."

Wedell et al. have shown that: "by far the bulk of speech-based programming in Europe today consists of unscripted studio chat or talkback - listener phone-in programmes - which in the last decade have opened up a whole range of new experience in spoken word radio." (1991:122)

Just one month after the announcement of The Sound Broadcasting Bill (1988), the Gerry Ryan Show first broadcast on March 14th 1988, a mid-morning chat show on weekdays 0900-1200. The Gerry Ryan Show programme structure (appendice 9) consists of a presenter, a senior producer in charge, two producers, a researcher, two broadcasting assistants and an office runner. Each day in studio there is the presenter, one producer and two broadcasting assistants who answer the phones. The other two producers, the researcher and the runner provide back-up support during the three hours that a show is on air. A programme 'running order' is brought to studio as a blueprint every day, but the actual show rarely adheres to this, as it is driven by the subjects that callers ring in with. The Gerry Ryan Show programme team never know how the audience is going to react to certain stories, or what new ones are waiting when a green light appears on one of the studio's three in-coming telephone lines.

"The producer decides the shape of the show, steers the topic and discussions in the right direction so as not to let it get too one-sided or repetitive. The response of the listeners also helps decide where the show goes. The calls are

live. There is no device to delay their comments. It's this risk that gives the programme that extra edge." (Russell 1991:4)

The Gerry Ryan Show has now been broadcasting for fifteen hours a week, on the national Irish airwaves, for almost ten years. It is the only talk show on 2FM and is in a prime-time slot. The rest of 2FM's schedule is music based and this three hour talk format represents a unique forum for the type of topic covered, which ranges from the serious, to the surreal, to the musical. Wilby and Conry, 1996, have summarised the characteristics of such a programme:

"Topics for discussion need not be serious or generated by current news items. People's own life stories or schoolday memories, falling in love, visits abroad, or opinions on favourite television programmes, other people's driving, fashion, or whatever, are all grist to the mill of phone-ins which can become the regional, national or international equivalent of the conversation over dinner or in the pub." (175)

The death of Diana, Princess of Wales was covered on national radio programmes in different ways throughout the week 1st - 5th September 1997. On RTÉ Radio 1 programmes such as The Pat Kenny Show, The Gay Byrne Show and Liveline were all dealing with various related topics from different angles, as was The Gerry Ryan Show on 2FM. Broghan in *The Irish Times* profiled succinctly the state of affairs:

"The problem for the chat shows, with the major news event of last week, was how to enlarge on the story, when the facts of the case were all too stark and were covered in the news bulletins in a couple of sentences. Here there was no room for studio discussion or counter-argument, yet the programmes - and apparently the public - required that the death of Diana be talked about, and talked about, and talked about" (Brohan 1997:12)

CHAPTER TWO

DIANA & MEDIA EVENTS

"In millions of homes, men, women and children sat transfixed as the BBC suspended normal programming to tell the awful story. On-the-hour bulletins, preceded by the national anthem and the Union Jack flying at half mast confirmed a nation in mourning" (Millar 1997:1)

There was a phenomenal reaction to the news of the death of Diana on British television and radio networks on Sunday 31st August 1997. In the following week, much of the stations' airtime was given over to the coverage of the story. Topics which were covered included: the arrival of Diana's coffin to England; the reactions of the public outside palaces associated with royalty; the Queen's speech; reviews of her life; sympathy for her two sons; the future of the British monarchy; and speculation on what would happen on the actual day of her funeral. This chapter will evaluate how Diana's death constituted the single biggest event in British broadcasting history. Factors which can explain this occurrence will be outlined using recent academic theory on glamour and myth in today's consumer society. On top of this, it will show how *The Irish Times* contributed to the construction of Diana's glamorous image, her myth and goddess-stature in Irish public opinion, as background for a case-study of the calls to The Gerry Ryan Show, in the week between her death and her funeral.

"In Britain, 31 million people watched the funeral on television, about half the population . . . it was the largest audience that British television has ever had. According to the BBC, the next largest - 30 million- was for an episode of the soap, EastEnders, in which Angie, the barmaid, served her divorce papers on Dirty Den" (Jack 1997:6)

It is no coincidence that the next biggest television audience in the United Kingdom, after the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, was for a soap opera,

given that much of Diana's life was reported and mediated in the form of a 'real-life' soap opera. But, most importantly, as this funeral had the biggest audience in the history of British broadcasting, I would argue that this singularly constitutes it as the biggest ever media event in British communication and cultural history this century.

Dayan and Katz, (1994), published a remarkable study into the modern phenomenon of the "media event" which aptly applies to the television and radio experience of the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales. At the outset they assert that:

"societies see themselves reflected sometimes upside down, in their ceremonies . . . We think of media events as holidays that spotlight some central value or some aspect of collective memory . . . In any case, the portrait must be authenticated by the public, for the elementary reason that otherwise it will not work" (viii).

Dayan and Katz assess that there are three types of media event, which they distinguish as Coronations, Conquests and Contests. Conquests are celebrations of great achievements, such as when Neil Armstrong first walked on the moon, whereas Contests usually are associated with sporting events, such as The Olympic Games. Funerals, such as that of Diana Princess of Wales come under the category of Coronations :

"Coronations are parades (funerals, for example). While both Conquests and Contests include strong ceremonial ingredients, Coronations are all ceremony. The genre is spiced with royal events from the coronation of Elizabeth II to the wedding of Prince Charles . . . The funeral of John Kennedy, probably the most moving of all events of this kind, brings to mind other state funerals such as those of Lord Mountbatten and Indira Gandhi." (ibid:26)

In Coronations, a 'great' person is on view to be admired and praised, but as it is usually due to their funeral, they cannot act or speak for themselves. Characteristically, the event takes place in awesome surroundings, such as

royal palaces and well-known, architecturally impressive churches. But the 'great' person is "pressed into the service of rhetoric" with "audience approval and traditional authority" (ibid:40).

"In the case of Coronations, television rehearses the audience in the ceremony they are about to witness, carefully spelling out the meaning of symbols, framing the event by separating it from daily life, monumentalizing it, upholding its official definition, and offering a story line and commentary to shape its interpretations. Thus television scripted a Cinderella story for Lady Diana and a Lincoln story for Kennedy" (ibid:38)

Media events, according to Dayan and Katz, constitute a new narrative genre which allow the small screen to get complete attention, "universally and simultaneously" to relate a story. "These are events that hang a halo over the television set and transform the viewing experience" (ibid:1). The difference in media events and the normal television schedule is that this genre of television is not routine, "In fact they are interruptions of routine, they intervene in the normal flow of broadcasting and our lives" (ibid:5) Through special announcements; the sombre tone of broadcasters; and the liveness of the broadcast via OB units, we come to understand that something exceptional has happened and the normal dailiness of both our day and the day in the life of the television / radio has been interrupted. Furthermore, "In the most characteristic events, the interruption is *monopolistic*, in that all channels switch away from their regularly scheduled programming in order to turn to the great event" (ibid:5).

"Media events *privilege the home*. This is where the "historic" version of the event is on view, the one that will be entered into the collective memory . . . the home may become a public place on the occasion of media events, a place where friends and family meet to share in both the ceremony and the deliberation that follows." (ibid:22)

The media event comes into the privacy of homes, live, as it happens, having been advertised and promoted, so that audiences know precisely when to watch. Consequently, a strong element of anticipation is involved. Moreover, the powers in control that act out a media event are described as emanating from what has been described as "the sacred centre of society" (ibid:8) and thus the event is treated with awe and respect by the nation:

"There is the playing of the national anthem, the funeral beat of the drum corps, the diplomatic ceremony of being escorted from the plane, the rules of decorum in church and senate hearings. The point is that in media events television rarely intrudes: it interrupts only to identify the music being played or the name of the chief of protocol. It upholds the definition of the event by its organisers, explains the meanings of the symbols of the occasion, only rarely intervenes with analysis and almost never with criticism. Often advertising is suspended" (ibid:8).

A huge audience watches these ceremonies, nationally, internationally and even worldwide. Usually the broadcasting organisation is not in control of the planning of the event, but cooperates with public establishment bodies, such as the government, international bodies, or in the case of Diana, the Royal Family, as well. In effect, the largest audiences in the history of the world can witness the one stimuli at one and the same time, showing the potential power of the electronic media. According to Dayan and Katz, media events should be analysed as an example of the meeting of the syntactic, the semantic and the pragmatic:

"A ceremony interrupts the flow of life (syntactics); it deals reverently with sacred matters (semantics), and it involves the response (pragmatics) of a committed audience" (ibid:14).

Due to the fact that such televised events target society at large and complete public opinion is needed to facilitate their occurrence, "certain media events have a commemorative function" (ibid:20). This is primarily because normal life is put on pause, as people are expected to watch. "By definition, media events

attract the attention of the world, the cameras are mounted, the lights are on, the ceremony begins" (ibid:72). News reports on the evening of Saturday 6th September 1997, the day of the funeral of the Princess of Wales, showed British urban centres, in cities such as Manchester and Birmingham completely deserted. Shops, business and even public transport, closed or came to a standstill, whilst sporting fixtures and many cultural events were canceled or postponed to a later date. Half the population of Great Britain, an estimated 31 million people, watched the TV as Diana, Princess of Wales was laid to rest.

"Blessed, then, are the television viewers for they (may) have inherited reality. We say this not in the sense that television is a substitute for everyday reality, but because these great events may have their primary effect, and certainly their place in the collective memory, not in the form in which they were originally staged but in the form in which they were broadcast. Most events are radically transformed by television, often becoming unrecognisable to the people who attended them in person" (ibid:77).

DIANA AND MYTH

"French commentators noted that Diana lived fast, loved fast and died fast. But the manner of the princess's death had an unreal storybook quality about it . . . £6,000 a night Imperial Suite where her golden canopied bed was a copy of Marie-Antoinette's bed at Versailles and her bathroom was furnished in marble and antique oak."
(Breen 1997:13)

Before briefly looking at how *The Irish Times* subscribed to the mythologising and glamourising of Diana, as the background for the in-depth discussion of The Gerry Ryan Show, the following is a summary of certain crucial elements of Barthes' work on myths in modern society. Barthes' theory helps explain the myths that partly allowed Diana to gain such a huge status in society. She was a goddess figure and people looked at her as the personification of a romantic fairy-story.

"What is a myth today? I shall give at the outset a first, very simple answer, which is perfectly consistent with etymology: *myth is a system of speech*" (Barthes 1997:109).

According to Barthes, the most crucial aspect of myth is that it is a communication system, a messaging, and a certain set of prerequisites are required in order for language to become myth. Semiology, and the work of Saussure is cited by Barthes as providing the blueprint for the construction of modern day myths, as mythology is just one aspect of the umbrella study of the science of signs. Using Saussure's terms, the signifier, the signified and the sign; Barthes extends this to demonstrate how myth comes from this model, but expands it to what could be described as a second phase.

" . . . for Saussure, who worked on a particular but methodologically exemplary semiological system - the language or *langue* - the signified is the concept, the signifier is the acoustic image (which is mental) and the relation

between concept or image is the sign (the word for instance), which is a concrete entity . . . But myth is a peculiar system, in that it is constructed from a semiological chain which existed before it : it is a '*second-order semiological system*'. That which is a sign (namely the associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system, becomes a mere signifier in the second" (ibid:111-112).

In Barthean terms, Saussurean theory explains the correlation between the word 'Diana' - the letters and the language - and the actual person that Diana was. Mythical theory, on the other hand, extends the person 'Diana' and associates her with the images that she came to mean, the stories she stood for: whether fairytale Princess, modern day icon, single mother through divorce, or bulimic sufferer.

"It can be seen that in myth there are two semiological systems, one of which is staggered in relation to the other: a linguistic system, the language (or the modes of representation which are assimilated to it), which I shall call the *'language-object'* because it is the language which myth gets hold of in order to build its own system, and myth itself, which I shall call *metalangue*, because it is a second language in which one speaks about the first." (ibid:111)

Examples of what can contribute to myth-making include: oral speech, types of writing and representation, photographs, cinema, reporting and publicity, "all these can serve as a support to mythical speech." (ibid:110). Correspondingly, these were all used in the creation of the myths surrounding Diana, most importantly, the essence of public acceptance that the circumstances surrounding her mourning and funeral was, in a way, history in the making. In addition, myth has historical limits, it has conditions of use and certain elements in society are required to permit its production and use, "everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse." (ibid:110)

Examples of the ways in which the written press, in *The Irish Times* contributed to the making of the Diana myth, can be ascertained in a study of

the way her death was reported in the days after the news of her death and before her actual funeral. On the front page of this newspaper on the day following the news of the death, Millar wrote:

"The brilliant star was suddenly extinguished. Diana, "Queen of people's hearts", was dead. And we wept . . . The new life that seemed to beckon was suddenly and brutally at an end. The sun shone but our world instantly seemed a darker place. Church bells toiled and a terrible silence gripped the land." (Millar 1997:1)

I would argue that this is the language of fairy-tales, mythical language, with reference to images of Diana as a 'star', her 'bright light' now 'extinguished' and the 'queen of people's hearts' dead. Church bells toiling and silence gripping the land also evoke mythical stories. The following are just some other incidences of the mythologising of Diana, Princess of Wales, in *The Irish Times* in the days following her death:

"the British public's love affair with the beautiful princess who, 16 years earlier, had been swept from the pageantry of the fairytale wedding of St. Paul's, complete with gilded carriage." (Millar 1997:1).

"It was undoubtedly true that it was the newspapers which initially played a large part in creating the fairytale image of the beautiful princess . . . She was royalty made flesh, an uncommon commoner imbued with the ordinariness of the girl-next-door and the extraordinariness of a woman elevated to the highest family in the land. A shy, gauche figure, she was transformed into a mythological beauty who gradually assumed iconic stature. Yet there was the vulnerability too: she was perceived as slightly unstable, an actor in a script she continually rewrote. Her unpredictability only served to intensify the interest in her." (Greensdale 1997:12)

"Their wedding at Westminister Abbey on July 29th 1981 was a fairytale occasion"
(The Irish Times 01.09.97:10)

DIANA AND PUBLICITY / GLAMOUR

"Diana was undoubtedly one of the world's most popular and photographed women, and the loyalty of her admiring public survived the descent from princely wedding to drawn-out drama of domestic strife. There was something of My Fair Lady about the shy bride, moulded by her "Professor Higgins", a husband 13 years her senior, until she learned her royal role and went her own way. The prince had never seen his part as that of a superstar, while his wife undoubtedly did." (The Irish Times 01.09.97:10)

Berger (1974) elucidates further reason for the massive icon that Diana was. He says that, "The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe" (ibid:8) which applies to both publicity and glamour in the consumer-capitalist society in the modern world. Diana has been variously described as the most photographed and the most famous woman in the world, suggesting that her image is one of the most recogniseable. Photographs of her were used as publicity for magazines and newspapers and still are after her death. As Greensdale has pointed out, it would have been "commercial suicide to ignore her" (1997:12). Therefore by Diana being so famous and so much in the public eye, she became "glamourous":

"Magazines increased sales everytime they put the princess on the cover. Book publishers cashed in. Television programmes about the princess won high ratings. Even news bulletins featuring Diana reported high audiences. She was the most famous woman in the world." (Greensdale 1997:12)

The way a photograph is taken says as much about the person who takes the photograph as it does about the person in the shot; and how a picture is appreciated depends on the spectator's point of view or 'way of seeing'. Therefore, a photograph can become laden with meanings and myths, if the viewer has already been exposed to certain information. Diana was cast as a fairytale princess, she was the wife of the future King and the mother of the heirs to the British throne. Divorced from Charles and her hopes to become

Queen of England, her glamour, (not least because of her physical beauty), held an attractiveness for the general public, especially as she still led a prestigious lifestyle. She became the most glamorous woman in Britain. As Berger says, "The state of being envied is what constitutes glamour . And publicity is the process of manufacturing glamour. . . The happiness of being envied is glamour" (ibid:131).

Just one image of Princess Diana can be laden with many meanings and evoke multiple emotions in the viewing public. Later, as will be shown, the callers to The Gerry Ryan Show were freely able to account numerous emotions and opinions on Diana, simply by having followed her life via the media. They felt that they knew her, that they had experienced aspects of her personal life, even though they had never met her, or seen her on public. Princess Diana was an extremely attractive, photogenic woman, who was also very rich, very fashionable and very popular with fellow 'stars'. On the other hand, she was seen to be a loving, affectionate mother and a charitable campaigner for the less privileged, which constituted further myths and images in the public mind.

"All images are man-made. An image is a sight which has been recreated or reproduced. It is an appearance or a set of appearances, which has been detached from the place and time in which it first made its appearance and preserved - for a few moments or a few centuries." (ibid:9/10)

Diana's glamour, or her enviousness, came from her fame and popularity in the on-going saga of her real-life experiences, mediated as a modern day soap to an adorning public. Likening Diana's life to the soap-opera genre explains the nature of both her myth and glamour. According to David Buckingham, (1996), 'the family' is the cornerstone of the successful soap, which applies to Diana, as a member of The Royal Family, the wife of the Prince and future King, as well as mother of the heirs to the throne. Her family life became public

knowledge as reports followed her engagement, her wedding, her pregnancies, her children's births, their christenings, other family weddings, her marital breakdown, extra-marital affairs and divorce. In addition, when her sufferings within the cloisters of the palaces were admitted to the public, stories of food disorders and attempted suicide further fascinated the audience, which leads to another characteristic of the soap - the sufferings of the lead character. Coverage in national press of the actions of soap characters, also applies to Diana, whose life was chronicled on an almost daily basis. Diana was glamourised by photographs in the press because of her striking physical beauty, whether in top-of-the-range designer dresses, sportswear or denims. "So often attention seemed focused on her wardrobe, on the glamour she undoubtedly brought to the Royal Family" (Millar 1997:1)

The audience of soap opera also feel that the characters are familiar to them: they recognise the settings and identify with the circumstances of their lives. Finally, in soap operas, the audience emotionally respond to stimuli in the plot; feelings of happiness at resolutions or sadness at loss or bereavement. Thus the death of a lead character can evoke real grief, tears, or feelings of sadness.

Diana's life became a valuable commodity in the consumer culture of today, in that just one compromising or revealing photograph of her, an original, so to speak, could award the owner thousands of pounds. When Diana first became associated with Dodi Al-Fayed, there was a media war to be the first to secure proof of a love-affair. When the first photographs were taken, there was phenomenal money paid for publication, with *The Sunday Mirror* paying £250,000 for first rights and both *The Sun* and *The Daily Mail* paying £100,000 apiece for second rights. "By the time the photographer and the ubiquitous paparazzo - turned agent Jason Fraser had finished selling the grainy

shots to foreign papers and magazines it is thought they made £3 million. " (Greensdale 1997:12).

In death Diana media fever reached an almost frenzied level. The following chapter will specifically detail how the story affected the Irish general public, as was broadcast on The Gerry Ryan Show. In conclusion, below is a small sample of how Diana had started to become canonised as a modern day goddess in the Irish press :

"the impromptu shrines that have been raised to a young woman many have already canonised as a saint . . . "Diana - The Saint, the REAL Queen that the world liked is gone". And another: "HRH Princess of Wales - Born a Lady, Became a Princess, Died a Saint. You should have been our Queen." And : "You were always OUR Queen and will always be OUR Queen. . . ."

It is written in the faces of children and old people, cool teenagers and linen-suited young business men, walking together the same path to the railed off shrines. It is in the magnificence of the floral offerings - the perfect rosebuds and lilies, the elegant tied bunches and expensive bouquets . . .

They speak of sainthood and beauty, of loss and tears, of paradise and prayer. Above all, they speak of peace and freedom - "at last". And happiness for herself and Dodi - "together in Heaven forever." . . .

After all, the legacy left by that lady . . . well that Mercedes was her cross and the tunnel her Calvary, wasn't it?" Unlikely as it may seem, this imagery is reflected in many of the people's offerings - pictures of the Sacred Heart and a suffering Virgin Mother, a crucifix studded with flowers, burning candles wreathed in religious pictures."

(Sheridan 01.09:97)

CHAPTER THREE

THE GERRY RYAN SHOW with Brenda Donoghue

MONDAY 1ST SEPTEMBER 1997 TO FRIDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER

"Historical studies always try to catch what's variously called the spirit of the age (the *Zeitgeist*), the climate of opinion, the structure of feeling, the sign of the times. None of these expressions quite catches the phenomenon of *mood*. Mood is 'how it is', where 'it' is something like historical temporality (the mood of the times) as manifest in occasions and things, and in collective and individual dispositions and behaviours . . . In broadcasting, as always, there is a double disclosure of the attitudes of those *in* the event and of broadcasting the event. These two sets of attitudes do not necessarily coincide. Whether they do or not, in the 'age of television' that is coming into being at this time, public mood begins to show up in such ways as are revealed in broadcast commentaries on public events. What shows up here is not an isolated 'moment', but an aspect of wider, pervasive change in the public climate - the atmosphere, the 'feel' of publicly available (sayable) opinion." (Scannell 1996:88).

On Monday 1st September 1997, as Gerry Ryan was on annual leave, Brenda Donoghue, the programme's 'roving reporter' anchored The Gerry Ryan Show. Usually, when Gerry Ryan is on leave, the programme's time slot is reduced from three hours, (9am - 12noon), to 10am - 12noon. This had been the plan in advance. However, in view of the seriousness of the news that Diana, Princess of Wales had been killed in a car crash in Paris, the programme producers took the decision to have Brenda Donoghue on for the full three hours. The show then reverted back to the two hour time slot, as previously scheduled, for the rest of the week.

This chapter will consider the week of Monday 1st September - Friday 5th September 1997, to evaluate the content of the on-air callers, with specific interest in caller-gender, the emotions expressed in calls, sentiments regarding the paparazzi, descriptions of personal reactions to the news of the death of the

princess, descriptions of Diana herself and whether callers wanted to use The Gerry Ryan Show as a forum to campaign for action. The study will show the amount of time callers were on air and whether there was any consistency or controversy. Charts at the end of the chapter will illustrate the amount of time spent on the topic in total.

British television broadcasting stations are widely available and viewed in The Republic of Ireland, due to cable and satellite television. Therefore, as entire British networks gave over their schedules to the death of Diana, and the arrival of her coffin back to England on Sunday 31.08.97, a substantial Irish audience would have viewed this. The calls to The Gerry Ryan Show on Monday 1st September 1997 and sporadically throughout the ensuing week, demonstrated, among other things, that the Irish audience have ample access to British media.

On Monday 1st September 1997, there were twelve on-air callers to The Gerry Ryan Show, nine of which were from females and three from males. In the first hour of the show (0900 - 1000) there were six callers, (five female and one male); in the second hour there were four callers (three female and one male); while in the final hour of the show there were two callers, (one male and one female).

All the callers on this day rang to talk about the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. Each of them had individual emotions, personal reactions, opinions and descriptions of the Princess, as well as some with ideas about taking action.

The first caller on air on Monday 1st September, was Michael, (09.10.25 - 09.14.23) who was described as a "regular caller" ringing from Newcastle in England, though he was from Liverpool.

Brenda: How are you feeling this morning? What's your . . . what's your reaction?

Michael: Well just the same as everybody else. It's just disbelief to start with and shock and horror. I mean we heard yesterday morning. Our phone rang at 5 o'clock in the morning. And you know what you think when the phone rings at that hour of the morning - you think "God what's happening here?"

Brenda That it's something terrible, yeah?

Michael And it was one of my wife's sisters had heard the news and she rang her to tell her. And then of course we put the news on and the whole thing unfolded as the day went on. You know. But it's such a terrible thing to happen to her. She's such . . . mmmm . . . I mean, I'm not a royalist by any means . . . but, but she was just a normal mum. The way she looked after her children and all that and there was one picture that came on the telly of her coming down one of these water-splash things . . .

Michael outlines some of the main themes of all the other callers on the show that day. He tells Brenda how he heard about the news, where he was, and how he felt, followed by a media image of Diana which stood out in his mind. Michael goes on to say that he condemns the paparazzi, "the intrusive and aggressive photographers", whose behaviour he describes as disgraceful. Brenda then asks Michael, as an Englishman, what the general mood was in England:

Michael Everybody in the community is shocked and horrified because she was loved by everybody. And you know - everybody you speak to all had a good word to say about her and all the charitable things she did. And she seemed to be so good, especially with children - she could pick up a child in the hospital and they'd be completely at home with her straight away- do you know what I mean?

In this, Michael elucidates further the popularity of the Princess. Not only does "everybody in the community" know her, and identify with her, but accordingly she was "loved" and seen as very "good" and "charitable". Brenda then asks Michael for his fondest memories of the Princess:

Michael Well, I've never actually seen her - but - the pictures of her with her boys and . . . mmmm . . .and the fact that she's just a mum and being parents ourselves and seeing how your own children . . . and you look after them and sometimes you expect these sort of high-up people to be aloof in a way, from their children. But she was just a normal girl looking after her family as well as all the other things that she did . . .

In this response, Michael affirms that he felt he knew the Princess via the media, and saw her in his mind as being "a normal mum", an image of her like any other parent, doing her best for her children. By speaking of 'high up people' Michael links in with the glamour which Diana was associated with. Diana was, at one and the same time, a glamorous princess and a mother who had her share of marital strife and personal problems. Another of the main themes in the immediate aftermath of Diana's death and the media reaction to it, were many questions asked about the "paparazzi" :

Brenda: And Michael, what about the paparazzi . . .Do you blame them?

Michael: Well, to a certain extent, you must do, yeah. I mean the fact that they're chasing a car along like that, at that time, to try and get photographs you know - compromising photographs you could say - it's the length that they go to. But then again, you must remember the other two people - there hasn't been that much said about the poor driver of the car and that . . .

Brenda: And Dodi either. But she was such a big figure . . .

Michael: I know.

The call ends on this note. The interesting factors about this, as the first call on the show that day, are firstly that it was from a male, (the majority of the calls this day came from females), and secondly that it came from England. In a way, the sentiments of this call set a precedent for the rest of the show, as no one criticised, either Diana, the English/British people or the sympathetic Irish reaction. Criticisms that were made, were of the Royal Family, especially the Queen and Prince Charles, as well as anger at "intrusive media" or "paparazzi".

In relation to the anger felt by many, as expressed on The Gerry Ryan Show, the second caller on Monday 1st September 1997 was Siobhan (09.14.23 - 09.15.55):

Brenda: Siobhan, how are you . . . I believe you have an opinion on the paparazzi ?

Siobhan: That's right Brenda. Good morning. Like everyone else in the country, I'm devastated at Princess Diana's death. And I think she was a wonderful ambassador and did great work. But, yes, I agree that the paparazzi were to blame. But I think that we as the public who buy newspapers, who pay for intrusive and exploitative photos of Diana and other celebrities must take some sort of responsibility as well and I think that maybe as a mark of respect and some sort of gesture - I think we should boycott the tabloids for one day. To show the strength of our feelings on this matter.

Brenda: You're very angry, Siobhan, yes?

Siobhan: Very, very sad. I think we've lost a great woman.

In this, Siobhan, like Michael, reflects the words of Diana's brother, Earl Spencer, whose statement was repeatedly shown on television and reported on the radio and in newspapers. He was the first to express emotive anger at the paparazzi and coined the phrase "intrusive and exploitative" in relation to them and the type of photographs they took. In looking for action, to ban the

tabloids for a day, Siobhan uses the Gerry Ryan Show to try and elicit public support for a cause. The conversation is a short one, as the programme has to take one of its many commercial breaks, so Brenda responds by saying:

Brenda: OK. Well, listen, Siobhan. We'll take it . . .we'll leave it there for the moment. What do you think out there folks? Should we boycott the tabloids for a day? Is it their responsibility - is it their fault?

The next caller, Jeanna, (09.17.15 - 09.20.02) rings to recite a poem that she says she woke up with in her head at five o'clock in the morning. As with the other callers, Brenda begins by asking Jeanna :

Brenda: How upset were you? Just to give us an idea?

Jeanna: It didn't kind of hit me all day - yesterday. It kind of like . . .as if it didn't happen yesterday. It was kind off - when it hit me this morning - when I actually woke up this morning and it hit me - it kind of - I was crying yesterday actually myself at 5 o'clock this morning.

After some more conversation on how long it took for the news to "hit" Jeanna, the conversation moves on to what Diana meant to Jeanna:

Jeanna Mmmm, she didn't mean anything to me personally - if you know what I mean. She was always kind of there. She was the most beautiful woman in the world. Everybody kind of loved her. I don't think anybody had a bad word to say about her, really, you know?

Having ascertained how Jeanna reacted to hearing the news, followed by what Diana "meant" to her, Brenda then offers Jeanna the national airwaves to recite the poem that she says she wrote at 5 o'clock in the morning:

Jeanna: It was the last day of summer
When you fell asleep

Even God seemed to shed a little tear
As it rained all over the world

The day you closed your eyes
You were a rose among roses
The queen of all queens
Goodnight and good-bye.

This would seem to fit in with two of Crissel's types of caller, the expressive and the exhibitionist, where Jeanna both wants to say how upset she was (crying) and to recite the poem she wrote.

Lorraine is next on-air, (09.20.03 - 09.21.47) to tell Brenda that she once sent poetry to the Princess and received a letter in reply.

Lorraine: She thanked me for my two poetry books. She said they were lovely and she really enjoyed reading them.

Brenda: Well, that's very nice. And what did it mean to you as somebody getting a letter from Princess Di?

Lorraine: Oh, it was brilliant like. Because no one my age would probably have a letter from someone like her.

Brenda: No. And what did you like about her? Did you like her clothes? Her sense of fun? What was it for you?

Lorraine: The way she had so much time for so many sick people. I thought it was brilliant. Because you know not many people like her would have time to go and visit old people and people that aren't well - and people with AIDS.

Brenda: And where were you when you heard about it?

Lorraine: I was at home. I came into the room and said to Dad, "Is Diana dead? Because I'm just after hearing some news.

Brenda: And what time was it?

Lorraine: It was about half ten. And we were all in shock.

Lorraine, although she sounded much younger, was 18. This call features the same factors that were present in all the calls this day. But the most important

element to be evaluated is Diana's glamour, especially in Lorraine's way of saying "not many people like her".

The longest call that was on the air on Monday 1st September 1997, on The Gerry Ryan Show, came from Bernie, a regular caller to the programme. In this conversation, some of the main topics of discussion in relation to the Diana phenomenon are accounted for. Most importantly, Bernie is crying as she comes on air (09.21.47 - 09.31.27):

Brenda: And Bernie, how are you?

Bernie: Not well at all. I can't get over it. Oh Jesus - I've followed her since she was a child *(sniffs)* - I'm not a Royalist or anything - I mean they're all only plain people with titles that's the way I look at it, you know ?

Brenda: I was looking at the television last night . . .

Bernie: I never left the television from 8 o'clock yesterday morning, 'til twenty past four yesterday evening and it's on again last night. And it's on again this morning. I just can't believe it. The best asset that ever came out of Britain is dead. Oh, she was a super woman. But it's how it's going to affect the boys long term now - it doesn't bear thinking about. They were so close you know?

Bernie outlines that, although she is not a fan of the Royal Family, Diana was somehow different. She calls her Britain's "best asset" and a "super woman", and describes how she stayed in front of the television for all the coverage of the news. This reaffirms that most Irish people regarded Diana, Princess of Wales as different from the rest of The Royal Family, and therefore likable or lovable. Irish history writes of the conflicts between Britain and Ireland in the past, as well as The Troubles in Northern Ireland. The Royal Family would not be considered as reflecting any great favouritism in The Republic, so it was unusual that so many Irish people rang in to say they were very sad at the death of the Princess.

Bernie, in fact, turns out to be a follower of the Royal Family, as they feature so much in the media. She explains to Brenda that Diana did not have a lady-in-waiting and how, like the Queen Mother, Diana was a "commoner" and of direct English descent.

In line with the argument above that many regarded Diana as a sort of modern day goddess Bernie goes on to say:

Bernie: You know we see her as the figure. You know, the woman of the world. The touching woman, the healing woman. You know she only had to walk into a room - and honest to God - you could see - you know it lit up - you know . . . "

Brenda: Yeah. A lot of people talked about her. Anytime she visited a hospital, or a room, this electricity came out of her - this charisma she had . . .

Bernie: Yes. Like that other woman was saying this morning. Even with the hope that, when it was rumoured that she was going to visit some other hospital in London and even with the anticipation of her coming, the change in the patients was just unbelievable in them.

Bernie then starts to cry and to say that she cannot believe that the Princess is dead. Brenda asks her will she sign the book of condolences, which is another way that the public are able to take action and participate in the event. They start to talk about the unfairness of life, of fate and the poignancy of Elton John's song "Candle In The Wind", which this hugely successful pop-music recording artist released about the death of another twentieth century female icon, Marilyn Monroe, and which he re-recorded, with adapted lyrics, in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales. As the conversation moves on, Bernie brings in other issues regarding The Royal Family :

Bernie: I'm so down in the dumps and I'm not usually like this. But I loved her. I loved her. Loved her. As a person. She was everything. Everything - that they wanted - everything that she wanted to be herself and she wasn't to let anything be said by anybody. You know. They'll be sorry this morning. I'd say there's an awful lot of bitterness going on behind the scenes. I'd say so. You know.

Brenda asks Bernie if she would buy a tabloid newspaper with the shots taken by the paparazzi after the crash, and Bernie replies that she would not. The conversation then moves on to Bernie's memories of Diana:

Bernie: I think, I think the AIDS patients definitely. She took an awful lot of stigma out of that and then coming down the water-slide with the boys in some holiday park and her breaking her heart laughing and drowned to the skin, and the two kids you know?

Brenda: Yeah

Bernie: She was absolutely fabulous. Really. Just to see her grow the way she did from that shy child into this beautiful woman.

Brenda: Yeah. She blossomed - and now her two boys are left without her, which is the thing that gets me more than anything.

Bernie: Because they're going to go into a stuffy regimental routine now, Brenda, when she kind of kept them protected to an extent from that. She let them live their lives - the two boys. She let them do what they wanted to do. Not in a - with a certain amount of decorum - but she loved them two kids - she really did. They were literally her life. William, he's the living image of her. I certainly think, Brenda.

This lengthy conversation then covers Prince Charles and whether or not he should have married Diana, and whether he only wanted to have a mother for the heirs to the throne. Bernie mentions a famous revealing interview that Princess Diana gave on British national television, in which she answered questions relating to personal and family matters. She tells Brenda that she could have cried out of sympathy for her. In Bernie's opinion, Prince Charles

should not have escorted Diana's body back to England, that it should have been Diana's sons and her own family. The conversation ends with:

Brenda: One thing I felt was when she separated from Charles or when they divorced and they were both going their separate ways and she got her seventeen million, and, you know, an awful lot of money, and she'd her life ahead of her. But still there was something about it - it was tougher for a woman out there on her own. In her mid-30s and I'm sure other people fell that out there.

Bernie; Well, I think myself, I've watched her - I've literally watched her take step to step - because no matter what's on the telly about her at all - I would sit and watch it. No matter where she is. Bosnia or wherever and I always felt myself that she'd make it. That she would stand up one day and she'd make it. In spite of everything that happened. Now none of us know what goes on behind closed doors, let's face it, but I always thought she'd come out and shine and she did.

The next on-air caller is Joan, (09.38.05 - 09.43.55), who is originally from Sunderland in England, but is calling from Donegal. She says :

Joan: You felt like she was one of your own. Because actually then after I'd heard it on television - didn't one of my sisters from home phone me up. And she said, "God, Joan, did you hear the news". And straight away I knew which news she was talking about and I says, "God, I did", I says, "And isn't it terrible". And I was speaking to another sister later in the afternoon, so it was, you know, like as you say, it was as if it was a member of your own family you were talking about.

Joan outlines how she feels very sorry for Diana's two young sons, and when asked if she would like to go to the funeral, she says that she would, to offer her condolences and to show Diana's two children that people care. She tells Brenda that the two boys need to be able to grieve properly:

Joan: Good or bad your mother is there for you .And you know, I mean they're not going to have, as I've heard a previous caller

say, they're not going to have the same love from anyone else, as what they had from her, because she kept their feet on the ground. She wasn't stiff-backed like the rest of the regime what the Royals were always brought up in. You know and I only hope, you know, that they'll be encouraged for to show the grief, to show their emotions and to cry and to be told, "It's right to cry. There's nothing wrong to cry."

Like Bernie previously, Joan goes on to tell Brenda how the Queen Mother and Diana had a lot in common:

Joan: They had a great deal in common. Both her and the Queen Mother - they were English - of English - they were the only ones of the Royal Family that were of English descent. Because the Queen, Prince Philip, they all come from foreign descents. But the Queen Mother and Diana came from direct English descent and they were both commoners. And the Queen Mother knew what it was like to be thrown in the public eye. Because she was a commoner when she married the late King George. So you know, she kind of, the Queen Mother knew just how Diana must be feeling.

The next caller is Breda, calling from Cork. Whilst Breda is on-air, another two callers are brought in to join the discussion, (10.48.34 - 10.55.47 in total). Rather than going into another litany of how Breda felt and how she reacted to the news, Brenda goes straight into the reason for Breda's call, which was that she married in the same month and the same year as Diana, and therefore felt a certain affinity to her.

Breda: We got married the same month actually. We got married on the 4th July 1981. And she was married later in the month. The 28th or the 29, I believe, of that . . . that month.

Breda says that two of her children are the same age as Princes' William and Harry and the discussion moves on to discuss wedding dresses and fashion:

Breda: Family and friends and all that and they were all asking about my wedding dress and comparing it to Diana's and you know all that was going on at the time and that's when I became

interested in her. And you know, I was a great fan of hers from then onwards, then.

While Breda is still on-air, Brenda introduces another caller, Peggy from Kerry, whose opening remarks are:

Peggy: Yeah, it's a sad day. Very, very sad, for the whole world, really you know. Nobody's ever touched anybody like this woman has.

Brenda: Where are you calling from Peggy?

Peggy: I'm actually calling from Kerry, you know. And I spent ten years as well in London, you know, and we just felt we knew her so well, I mean it's a great loss. We're all just so upset you know.

Brenda: Yeah

Peggy: I mean my sisters just cried. They rang me, yesterday morning at half past six and it's just been - it's like one of the family, you know. I mean, she'll never be replaced - never, never.

Brenda: She's like a friend, isn't she?

Peggy: Oh, yeah. Well, I mean, she did so much good and you've got to remember the woman was so young. You know. I mean it isn't often that young people can touch, you know, young and old like she did. You know, 'cos they just wouldn't have the experience or the compassion I think really.

Peggy goes on to say that Diana did make mistakes, but that she didn't let herself down, the way, in her opinion Sarah Ferguson, who married Prince Andrew did. This was in reference to compromising photographs which got into the tabloid press of Sarah Ferguson. The three then start to talk about the books of condolences and say that it is unfair that people outside Dublin won't get to sign them in the British Embassy. At this stage Jacques, from Belgium, comes in and says that you can e-mail Buckingham Palace, although he does not have the address. The two women are not very impressed, and Brenda says that she will bear it in mind on the show that there are other people looking to sign books of condolences.

Dymphna calls in next, (10.55.47 - 10.59.30) and says that she does not think that banning the tabloids is a good idea, like Siobhan suggested earlier in the programme.

Dymphna: Yeah. Well, it's just actually what one of your callers said about boycotting the newspapers for a day. I didn't actually think it was such a good idea. Basically I don't think - like myself - I don't think a lot of people did go out to buy papers to see her picture on the paper every day. It's not what we wanted to see like, basically, when I'd see the papers, I'd think, "God won't they ever leave her alone, like, for Christ's sake, give her a life of her own, you know? So I think boycotting the papers is kind of saying to the papers that they're putting things in the papers, we wanted to see, when it's not what we wanted to see.

Brenda: I don't know, Dymphna. Because I feel that - you know - I'll say it myself, if I see a newspaper and there's some revelation in it about Diana, I will go to it, or I have gone to it, and I know many people, other people, whether it's about Sarah Ferguson, if it's something like that. I mean there's an obvious - like where - you know - something tasteless or whatever. But in general, you will be drawn to it and you will read it and I mean anytime they've put Diana on the cover of any newspaper or any magazine - their sales have gone up substantially. So I don't know whether we're not interested in it or not - I mean I think the Irish tabloid newspapers are excellent - they're not like that at all - they're not like the Europeans - but I don't think . . . I do think people still will buy it if Diana's on the cover.

Dymphna: Yeah, but do you think you actually need to see her picture on the paper, or do you not think the headlines are enough to, you know, like you see the headlines "Di" - Ok, you'll read the paper, but you don't need to have a camera in her face like twenty-four hours a day. You know.

Brenda: No, of course you don't.

Dymphna: You know, like the interest would have been there without the headlines "Diana does such and such". You'd read the papers - **but to have these people on motorbikes after her like that -** taking the photographs, that were, you know, unnecessary, you know, you don't need to see it, you know, to say they're taking pictures after the car crash and all. You know. It's just so horrible.

In this call, Brenda debates with the caller one of the main topics in relation to Diana, which was the role of the media in the intrusion on her life, and the role of the public in demanding that such media be available. Dymphna actually goes on to make another suggestion for how the public can take action in relation to Diana's funeral:

Dymphna: And then, I was saying to your, to Helen earlier, like, I think the funeral too should be what the family want, and not what the people want, like, she's been in the limelight all this time and I think her own feelings would be just leave me, you know, I want my own funeral and I know if it was me, I'd say, you'd want to be left alone at this time and just let her children grieve. They've got to go through it for the next months, and years, and it's gonna be unbelievable for them. So you know, and I think it would be a fitting tribute for her, for people to donate whatever amount of money, if it's a pound or whatever, to sell the little badges, like and the money to be contributed to her charities and divided among the charities that, you know, she represented.

A lot of the callers to the show this day also outlined how Diana's children would suffer and that they should not be hassled by the tabloid press anymore.

As the programme moves into its third and final hour, the topic of Diana's death stays as the only topic on the show. Brenda opens the final hour at 11.03.55am with :

Brenda: Again, we did intend to cover a lot of different topics on the programme, to talk about children going to school for the first time, to talk about the U2 concert, but really, we've just been swamped with people who want to talk about the death of Princess Diana, what she meant to them and in some way, to explain how they feel about her, and I think Kenneth is one of those as well. Good morning to you Kenneth.

Kenneth, (11.03.55 - 11.08.51), tells Brenda that Diana, to him, represented what the British Monarchy should be, she has "Royal elegance" and "the common touch" at one and the same time. He says that he is not "a mad royal follower myself", but, like all the other callers, Diana was different from the rest of the Royal Family, because of her charitable work. He mentions her care for leprosy victims or people suffering from AIDS. He says that Diana broke down barriers, by touching people who were sick. Brenda then asks Kenneth how he feels personally about her death:

Kenneth: There's going to be this big void left, personally, because I've . . .let me put it to you this way, as a fella like, you know, speaking from a male point of view, she, I'd certainly give her far more than a second look if I passed her on the street. But . . .

Brenda: She was beautiful

Kenneth: Stunning, In every sense of the word. But, apart from her physical beauty, she was a stunning lady in her attitude and her outlook to life, despite the fact, and she kept on giving, kept on giving, even though she herself did not receive all that much as far as, let's say, public comfort, from being tied to the Royal Family, you know, never stopped giving . . .

Kenneth's conversation ends with his view, in line with the newspapers and other callers to the show, that the British Monarchy were now doomed, because of Diana's death. He says that if the circumstances of his life would permit it, he would like to the funeral to "give her lots of respect in death."

The next member of the public to come on the air, (11.35.24 - 11.42.00), is Roxanne, who was on her honeymoon in Paris for ten days and was near the scene where the car crash took place on the previous Saturday night. She explains that she was told by a woman in her hotel that the Princess was dead, and she describes her feelings of shock, as she turned the television to CNN news network. Brenda asks Roxanne how she felt:

Roxanne: Shocked. Absolutely shocked. I mean, even now thinking about it, I just can't believe it. It's like "Oh my God, she's dead!" and it's just awful. So we went down, we got the Metro and we got there as fast as we could and there was a barricade up and there was police around and there was some English people that were there and they put messages on the flowers like "Thank you" and "Sorry that it had to end this way". There was an awful air of sympathy from the English people, but from the French people, I didn't get that. And in the hotel either, it was like, "Oh, Lady Diana is dead". They didn't seem to realise exactly what she means to us. You know in Paris there's people from all over the world.

This gives an insight into some more of the themes of the media in the wake of Diana's death. In line with Scannell's theory (1996) that experiences give callers the right to call up talk radio shows, Roxanne has an authority over the Irish public in that she was there in Paris when the accident took place and she was able to go to the scene very quickly. There are two interesting factors about this, firstly that Roxanne identifies with the British, when she says "they didn't seem to realise exactly what she means to us" and secondly she criticises "the French". Brenda questions Roxanne on the French people, telling her that on television the impression is that the French are very upset, that the Princess died in France and "they regarded the Princess as a very chic individual" and Roxanne agrees with this. However, Roxanne goes on to explain that she met the famous BBC news reporter, Kate Adie:

Roxanne: Now, Kate Adie was there as well, she was doing a live report for the BBC and she didn't seem to like the French people either.

Brenda: Really? How so?

Roxanne: Well, there were some French reporters trying to talk to her and she has this way of looking at you, she simply cuts you in two and she spoke to the British people beside her, and there was a few Irish as well, and she spoke to us and said: "Oh, it's all right, we'll have to excuse her, she is French" and we were like "Woo!"

Brenda finishes the conversation by asking Roxanne if she left her own personal tribute to the Princess and Roxanne replies:

Roxanne: We got some, there's a lot of flowers around there, we didn't have time to stop in a shop, we got some flowers from the bushes and we laid them there and I just said "I hope now" all I could say to myself and to my husband, was "Now I hope she has the peace she really wanted".

Roxanne was the last of the callers on the show on Monday 1st September.

On Tuesday 2nd September, 1997, (10.00.00 - 12.00.00) there were no calls related to Diana, Princess of Wales in the first hour. In fact the first item covered, is in relation to the cost of new shoes for children going back to school. The topic of Diana is first introduced by a report with an expert from AA Roadwatch, using the Diana accident as a forum for speaking out against drink-driving, (10.29.13 - 10.44.44). The programme then covers children's shoes right up until 11.22.59, when a female caller, Anne, comes on air, (11.22.59 - 11.28.32) to tell Brenda that she is a charitable campaigner in Co Mayo and that she wrote to Diana in the past, to invite her to help with a fund-raising dinner. Anne tells Brenda that Diana had ancestral roots in Co Mayo, through the Spencer family line, and that she wrote a letter in February 1996 and received a reply in May that year. She also tells Brenda that the charity received a substantial cheque from the Princess. Brenda then asks Anne :

Brenda: Tell me what are feelings like down where you are. You're in Westport at the moment . . . about the death of Princess Diana?

Anne: The day it happened everybody's in complete shock, like everybody all over England and all over Ireland, but it was a conflict, because, you know, the Mayo final was on Sunday?

Brenda: That's right and of course we have our controversy about that relating to Diana too!

Anne: There was a lot of mixed feelings and the more you look at Sky News, or the BBC or RTÉ, the more sad you would feel for her, because it is a terrible tragedy all right. I think everybody's just in shock still.

Brenda: And what do you feel about the Mayo / Offaly match. Should they have had a minute's silence for Princess Diana? Or is that too hard a question right now.

Anne: I really don't know Brenda, I never really thought about it.

Anne does not let herself be drawn into a debate of whether or not this major Irish sporting fixture should have held a minute's silence, so Brenda does not push the issue with her. Anne then tells Brenda that a friend of hers left a bouquet of flowers outside Diana's home, Kensington Palace in London, with a card, "From Mayo Cat. Scan".

The only other call this day in relation to the Diana story was from a female, Theresa, (11.55.23 - 11.58.31), who, when asked how she felt when she heard the news, said:

Theresa: Very moved. Very sad. We all feel we want to do something, this is what I've felt I could do, the fact that the children are left motherless.

Theresa was referring to a poem that she wrote for one of Diana's sons, Prince William, called "Words For William" :

Theresa: You see through my eyes, you smile through my smile
I stand by your side, in each and every trial
Don't carry bitterness, it's enough to carry pain
My love grows for you, like flowers in the rain

Remember the good times, the fun that we had
Think of the laughter, when you're feeling sad
My arms around you, like a universal mantle

Nothing, sweet Prince, can extinguish our candle

That total bond with you, will forever carry on
Mum is still here, only the Princess has gone

Brenda tells Theresa that the poem is "lovely" and as the conversation ends, the programme draws to a close.

There were no calls at all about Princess Diana on The Gerry Ryan Show with Brenda Donoghue on Wednesday 3rd September, as can be seen from the charts at the end of the chapter, whilst there was only one on Thursday 4th September.

However, as the show broadcast from London the day before Diana's funeral, much of the two hour time-slot was dedicated to the topic of Diana. The only different topic, on Friday 1st September, 1997 was a twelve minute report about an Ireland world cup football match, against Iceland, during which some of the talk did relate to Diana's death and funeral.

On Friday 5th September 1997, The Gerry Ryan Show, with Brenda Donoghue, started of with Brenda outlining that the show was broadcasting from London, the day before what was expected to be a mammoth affair - the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales. There were nine calls relating to the death of Diana in this show, six from female callers and three from males. In the first hour there were six calls and three calls in the second hour. In quite a long opening monologue, Brenda effectively sets forth the agenda of this programme (10.02.32) :

Brenda Good morning and welcome to London city centre on the eve of perhaps one of the most historic events of the twentieth century. And it is historic because it means so much to so many people. That's why the estimated crowd for the funeral procession of Diana, Princess of Wales varies from one to six

million. No one knows just how many people will be there in the city tomorrow. But the authorities have been working around the clock to have the city ready for anything. They haven't had a lot of practice at this but at least the crowds in London over the past few days can give them hint of what's in store tomorrow. That's because London has quite simply become the city of flowers. Everywhere you go you see people carrying bunches of flowers on their way to one of the numbers of locations that are connected in some way with Diana. There's Kensington Palace her home, there's St. James' Palace, Westminister Abbey and Buckingham Palace and when you see these places you see for yourself the many thousands of people who've come to pay their respects. They cue to sign the book, they leave flowers or simply come to look and read the many messages that have been left for The People's Princess. And believe me, she is The People's Princess - she really, really is. The crowds just keep on coming. As one police officer said to me at the gates of St. James' Palace, they'll continue to come long after her funeral. The Royal Family have not heard the last of this and there's an on-going air of resentment towards the Royals. A mood that may change after the Queen's televised speech this evening. The funeral begins tomorrow at 10am and on the eve of the event in the city of London, to bring you a fraction of the mood of a capital city in mourning, we felt we should be here, after the thousands of calls we received to the show over the last few days about how the Irish feel about the tragic death of this woman. If you want to give us a buzz about your feelings for Diana, the Princess of Wales, the number to dial is the same as always, 1850 85 22 22.

The first on-air caller on Friday is Anne, from Tipperary, (10.21.36 - 10.26.28) who tells Brenda that she has decided to travel to London for the funeral, with her twelve-years old niece. Anne explains:

Anne: The two of us were watching over the last couple of days and we just felt that we should go as a mark of respect because she was such a great woman and she was so badly treated by The Royal Family and the press. So I just feel as a mark of respect because we've always followed her life - well *I* have since she got married and, mmmm, as a mark of respect really.

Brenda goes on to ask Anne what it was that made Diana so special to her :

Anne: She was human like the rest of us. She made mistakes like the rest of us and I think that's why the general public loved her so much. But she did make mistakes.

Brenda: What exactly did Diana mean to you, if you could sum it up?

Anne: Oh, I don't know. She was human like the rest of us. And she wasn't much older than myself and I just felt in a way I could identify with her and all the mistakes she made - but yet she had that element of glamour and she's just somebody that I really, really respected. So, I'm just very, very sad - the whole week's just been terrible.

Another caller, Margaret from Co. Kildare rings in (10.26.28 - 10.31.04) to tell Brenda that she too has decided to make the journey to London. She explains that she is afraid of flying, but that she hopes to put this aside and brave her fears, as she feels very strongly that she wants to be at the event.

Margaret: I had to do it for her because I'm a great fan of hers, you know. I bought papers, three papers, if she was on the three papers I'd buy the three papers. If she was on the news . . .I watch every news morning to night. I'm up all night this week from half five watching all the television news's. Oh, she was beautiful. The Royal Family didn't deserve her.

Brenda: Do you feel responsible Margaret? With her picture - did we want to know too much?

Margaret: Well, definitely, there has to be some blame like, but if we hadn't got the papers for the news, she wouldn't be as popular as she is today like. I mean she was in our daily life every day. To me anyway. They had a jewel in the hand and they crushed it.

Margaret conveys that she does not feel overly guilty for actively seeking Diana in the media, recognising that it was a two-way situation, that without the media Diana would not have gained her high status.

In a particularly engaging call, Tricia (10.40.51 - 10.44.15) tells Brenda that she is "London Irish, so I have very mixed feelings about my nationality, if you

like". Tricia says that she is continually striking a balancing act between her Irish and British identities. She explains that while she supports the Irish football team, she also joined in with the festivities of The Royal Wedding, when the event happened in 1981. The experience of the reactions to the death of the Princess has evoked emotions for her that she did not expect:

Tricia: It's one of those rare occasions when I want to be with my fellow Brit. I feel quite united. I feel a sense of unity with everybody in this country. It's really hit us hard and I think it's - this is something really big. I mean, it's not just about the princess, I think it's about what she represented - what she meant on a really grand scale. I think all the compassion and the caring and all that sort of thing, which we don't have enough of here any more. We're all so selfish and our lives are so fast and I think that's really what people are mourning. And I think I'm really heartened by all this reaction. At first I thought, Oh, what's going on here and I've realised it's great. That we all feel this way. And I think that's what we're mourning, the loss of somebody that represented that for us, you know, somebody that we could be proud of and somebody that made us happy.

Brenda and Tricia then discuss how Diana was "a symbol of hope" and that she is "irreplaceable". Tricia describes going to London city centre to encounter the atmosphere and relays how it was "amazing" and "absolutely unique" and "quite eerie really". Further accounting her experiences she says: "So many people and yet so much quiet and peace". For Tricia, apart from the recognition of her own identity, she illustrates how she sees the event as bringing the British nation together, that people are "talking and sharing" and, according to her, refocusing their lives and reassessing their values. Brenda ends the conversation by asking her if she is going to go to see the funeral the following day:

Tricia: I wasn't going to go. But I've realised I want to go and sing with everybody else. I was going to watch it on the television, but I thought gosh, no, there's people traveling from all over the world and I only live about half an hour away and even if I only go and watch it on a giant screen in Hyde Park, I'll be able to join in. I'll

be able to sing the hymns - and I'm not religious a bit - but I want to go and be counted, if you like.

Brenda reads some statistics from the British newspapers, that the estimated audience for the funeral is 2.5 billion people, in 187 countries, with 44 different languages. In another evocative call John, (10.54.56 - 10.56.40), who works for an Irish charitable organisation, expresses his emotions on Diana, and recites a poem he wrote:

John: Princess Diana has sent out a very clear, unambiguous message to the world to make a special effort to help others and the greatest tribute we can pay her is to do as much as we can for others less privileged, those that can't speak for themselves.

John's language here could be described, as almost biblical, in that Diana gave the world a 'message', corresponding to the growing mythologising of her as a modern day goddess. John further recites a poem that he wrote, which contributes to both the above image of Diana as a goddess, and also portrays her renowned charity work and ability to 'touch' children :

"A Cry From Africa - A Child's Plea to the Princess of Wales"

Diana, Princess, your heart is true
You know I've placed my trust in you
My parents died, how hard they tried
To keep us altogether
My tummy aches while your heart breaks
My brother cries, I love him
We need food, the world is cruel
Don't let them just ignore us
Who are these men who hold our fate
Will we find out before too late
I know they're there, those that care,
I hope, I pray they'll find us
Until they do, our love of you, Diana
Is all the food we share

Martin, an Englishman, who was the first person to queue outside the church, to see Diana's funeral explains to Brenda, (11.47.46 - 11.52.38), that he has been there since Wednesday and that he brought supplies so that he could stay there until Saturday. He describes the scenes, the vast numbers of people, the flowers, not to mention the cold nights!

As the London broadcast draws to a close, Brenda reads out another poem, written by a listener, Fiona from Tralee, who was at the U2 concert, in Dublin's Landsdowne Road when pictures of the Princess were shown, while U2 sang their song dedicated to Martin Luther King "M.L.K." :

Brenda: Tribute to Diana

Shouts and roars die on the wind
Hands cease their clapping
All eyes on her picture
The silence is deafening
We stand together
Listening to the lullaby
United together to pay tribute
Sadness, respect and regret
Washes over us as we mourn
For the woman we never met
But knew so well
In those few moments
She touched our hearts
As I watched the bright lights in the rain
The silent crowd
Carrying our farewells with us
To a princess in heaven

Soft, lilting instrumental music follows this, with some sound-bytes of Diana's brother's emotive press statement, Diana herself speaking both about her disappointments and her children, and the French press reporter announcing her death. Elton John rewrote the words to his famous song "Candle In The Wind", to include specific lyrics about Diana, Princess of Wales. Although the CD was

not yet released, RTÉ Radio were able to ascertain the lyrics from BBC radio in London. Therefore, the producers of The Gerry Ryan Show invited an Irish recording artist, Red Hurley, into studio in Dublin, and he performed the re-styled song. Brenda Donoghue then closed the programme with the words: "Tomorrow will be a unique funeral for a unique special princess. That's all from us here in London"

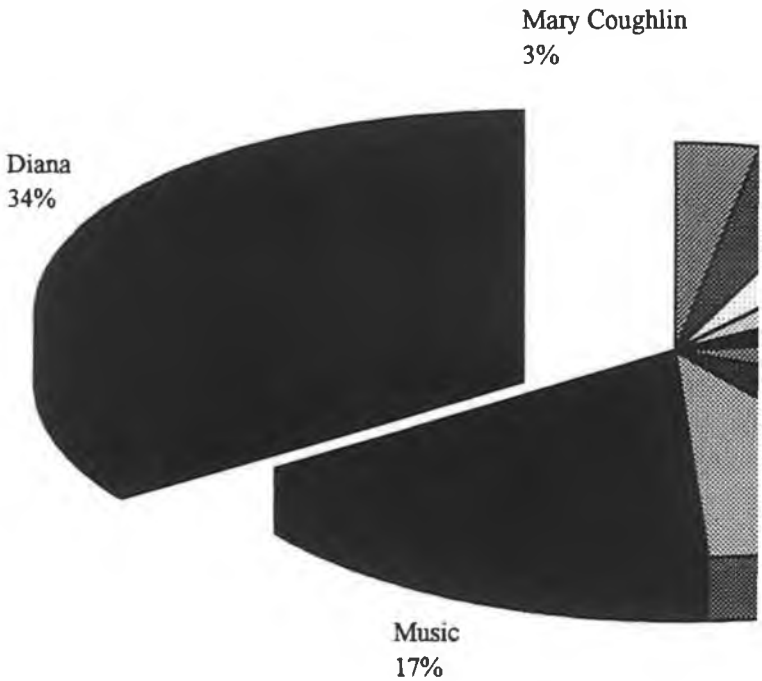
This analysis of the callers to The Gerry Ryan Show with Brenda Donoghue, from Monday 1st September to Friday 5th September 1997, provides a case-study of the many Irish reactions to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. It is of particular interest that none of the callers criticised neither Diana, nor the incessant media debate, in this entire week of programming. The programmes show the extent of emotions; grief, shock, horror and disbelief expressed by the Irish audience on national radio. It also shows how trusting and comfortable the callers were with Brenda Donoghue, addressing her by her first name only, showing a high degree of familiarity with her.

The descriptions of Diana further show how she was imagined by the Irish: as a good, charitable worker, a normal mother, a glamourous lady, a beautiful goddess and a wronged princess. This study effectively depicts the extent of saturation in Ireland of British media, as well as the Irish knowledge of The Royal Family. Finally, of interest in this study, are the descriptions of where people were and how they heard about the death of the Princess, which can be seen as making the event historic and unforgettable, assigning it to the highest status of legend and myth.

The charts overleaf show the amount of time The Gerry Ryan Show gave to coverage of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. The *Chart A* summarises

the entire week of Monday 1st September - Friday 5th September 1997, showing that the topic received 34% of total airtime. This demonstrates a phenomenal response to the death of the princess, especially when compared to the other topics that week, which received a total of 27% between them. *Chart B* illustrates that on the day after Diana's death, the story was discussed for 67% of the entire three hours of the show. This includes both telephone calls and reports from experts and reporters. *Chart C* portrays that, on the day before the princess' funeral, when The Gerry Ryan Show broadcast from London city centre, the topic acquired 58% of the two hour duration of the programme.

Gerry Ryan Show 1997
Division of Minutes for Week 1st Sept. to 5th Sept.



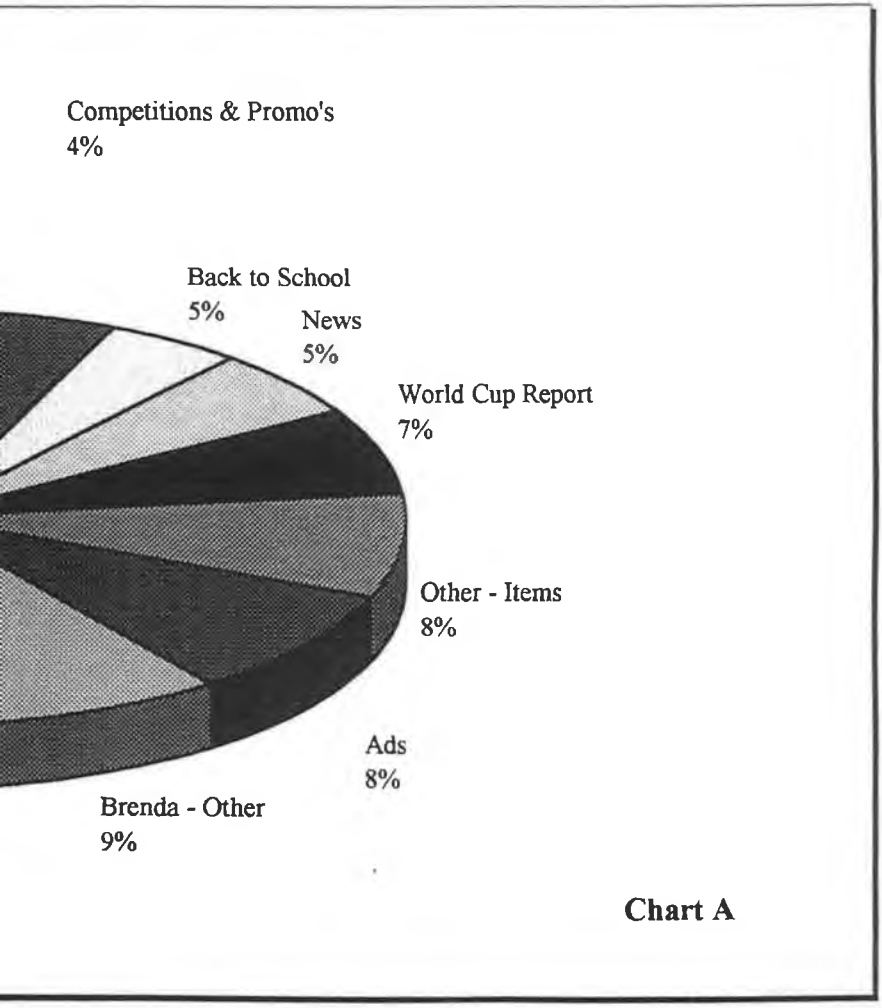
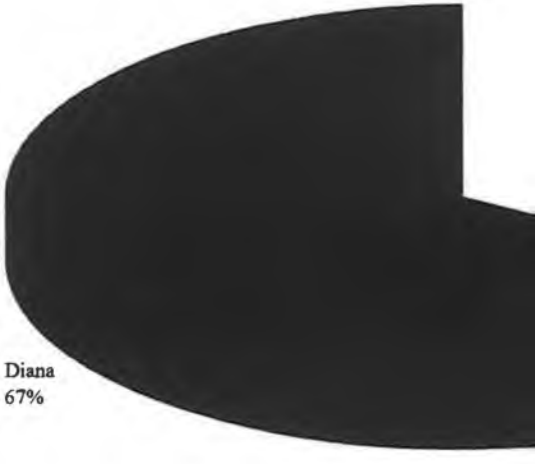

Competitions & Promo's
4%
Back to School
5%
News
5%
World Cup Report
7%
Other - Items
8%
Ads
8%
Brenda - Other
9%

Chart A

Gerry Ryan Show 1997
Division of Minutes for Monday 1st September



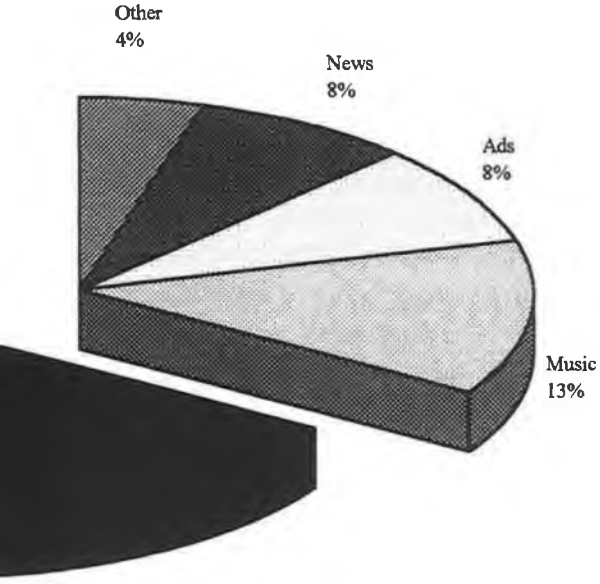


Chart B

Gerry Ryan Show 1997
Division of Minutes for Friday 5th September

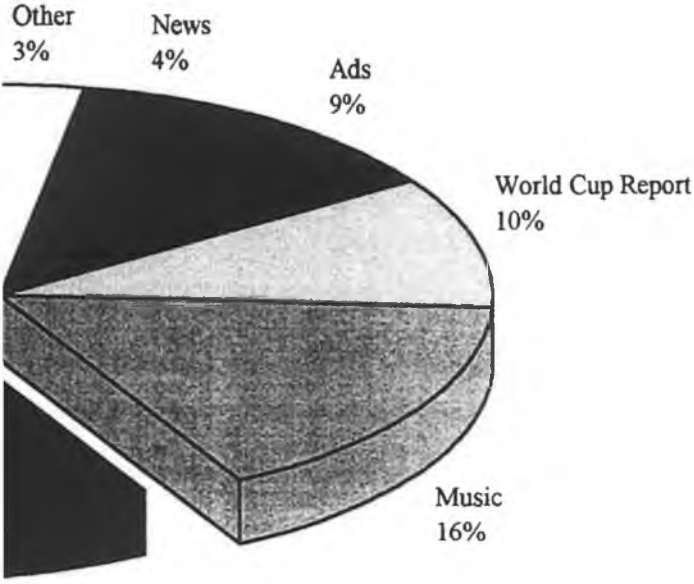


Chart C

CHAPTER FOUR

THE GERRY RYAN SHOW TEAM REACTION MONDAY 1ST - FRIDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER 1997

"The monarchy in the 19th century was merely the symbolic head of aristocratic 'society'. In the 20th century it became the symbolic head of the whole society, of the nation at large. It became so by virtue, in part, of the new kind of publicness with which it was invested by modern media and especially radio and television." (Scannell 1996:83)

As has been shown, the publicness afforded the British monarchy in the Republic of Ireland, via comprehensive access to British media, resulted in a phenomenal reaction to the news of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, as shown by the Irish general public's calls to The Gerry Ryan Show, Monday 1st - Friday 5th September 1997. This final chapter outlines responses of some of the members of The Gerry Ryan Show programme team to a questionnaire specifically related to Monday 1st September to Friday 5th September 1997.

The short questionnaire consisted of five questions:

1. In terms of your radio work, what was your first reaction on hearing of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales?

2. How did Monday's programme change / differ from what you had planned?

3. What kind of role do you feel that the programme was filling in contrast to Radio One programmes?

4. Why did the programme broadcast from London on the day before Diana's funeral?

5. How would you summarise the overall reaction of the Irish general public to the death of Diana, as broadcast on your show?

The Senior Producer in Charge of The Gerry Ryan Show currently is Willie O'Reilly. Apart from performing normal producer tasks relating to on-air subjects, such as editorialising, administration and creativity, Willie O'Reilly carrys responsibility for the consequences of The Gerry Ryan Show's content. As such, he was faced with a number of dilemma on hearing the news of the death of the Princess. These included the fact that Gerry Ryan was on annual leave for the whole week; the potential consequences of this for what could be unusual programmes; the loss of one hour a day, as well as how to tackle the subject, with the replacement presenter.

All the programme team in their responses outlined how they heard the news on Sunday 31st August 1997, which was a non-working day for them. This meant that the team contacted each other at home and decided some of them would have an emergency programme meeting to decide what action to take and to prepare Monday's programme. As Willie O'Reilly responded in relation to my first question regarding his immediate reaction as Senior Producer in Charge :

"First heard about it at weekend. Main presenter on leave, Brenda Donoghue was on instead. Had to weigh up if she was capable of three hour programme. Wanted to be on air at nine with the story, or Radio One would start a march on us. Contacted researcher and other producers to arrange a meeting. It was suggested we send Valerie Sweeney to London, I agreed. Phoned her re: hotels and costs and flights. Also got out clips from Diana Panorama interview and other clips from previous interviews"

Paul Russell is one of the two other producers on The Gerry Ryan Show. He is also the author of a 1991 publication on the show. He writes his first response was:

"Change the programme! . . . as the news came through on the Sunday morning and I knew we had to deal with two issues. First, re-arrange the

programme, get a reporter over to London, bring in a royal reporter to the studio and pull together as much information about the crash as we could. The other issue was our presenter, Gerry was on holidays for that very week. And Brenda was doing the show. It was a big challenge for her. The biggest challenge in fact. She had only presented the show for one day, earlier in the summer, so this was going to be tough.

But the biggest advantage we had on our side - the biggest friend - were our audience. They started phoning in from the very start of the show, to talk about the princess, and they didn't stop until the end of the week. The calls propelled the show for the entire week. It's the perfect example of a show whose basic fuel is people - their views, their stories, their emotions, who phone the show and talk about themselves to over 400,000 every day. And Brenda did very well."

Siobhan Hough is The Gerry Ryan Show's researcher. Part of her job remit is to research and develop the stories and potential topics that may be of interest to the show. In relation to her immediate reactions on hearing that the Princess had been killed, she says:

"I rang all my colleagues on the show, i.e. the producers . . .to decide how to handle the event. Things like should we have somebody in studio talking about the life and times of Diana and should we send a reporter to England."

Brenda Donoghue, who usually acts as The Gerry Ryan Show's roving reporter, admits to her personal shock and fears about anchoring the high profile show, for the first time, faced with such a huge topic :

"I first heard she was dead when the researcher rang me at 10am to tell me Princess Diana was dead. Reaction first - shock - "Oh God I'm doing the programme tomorrow. The first time getting a chance to anchor the programme and this happens!" I came into work along with two producers. The programme was meant to be from 10am to 12 noon, but due to the circumstances it was changed to 9am - 12pm. The first thing I did on Sunday was write an introduction to the programme based on how I heard the news and my initial reaction and worldwide reaction. I then suggested we send our reporter Valerie Sweeney to London. Then we had a programme meeting. I went home and looked at TV all evening."

The two Broadcasting Assistants on The Gerry Ryan Show answer all the telephone calls to the programme in studio when it is on-air. Therefore they experienced first the nature of the callers to the show, and would then have passed this information on to the studio producer each day. According to Helen Howard, one of the BAs in studio on Monday 1st September:

"Apart from the shock and horror and sadness of her death (personal reactions), I immediately knew that in terms of programme content already scheduled, that the Diana story would definitely take precedence over all other stories on the programme - i.e. all other programme content would be pulled to cover the tragedy and give updates as more information became available about the circumstances and public reaction."

As has been shown in the previous sections, The Irish Times and The Gerry Ryan Show mediated a phenomenal reaction in Ireland to the news of the death of Diana. The Gerry Ryan Show programme team illustrate this in their response to the second question on the questionnaire, regarding how the Monday's show differed from expectations and plans. Willie O'Reilly pointed out :

"Monday's programme started at 9am, with calls from listeners. I was overwhelmed by the level of calls. Looked like it would take over the whole show . . . and it did. Sent Yvonne Judge to British Embassy, where book of condolences was opened. Yvonne is a sports reporter who rang to say she was available if needed. The entire planned programme was dropped and managed 'on the wing' - basically driven by the huge public demand for information and discussion on the death, the circumstances and the repercussions."

Producer Paul Russell gives additional information on how the show adapted to the new story:

"Monday's show was totally different. There was perhaps one report that was not to do with Diana, which had been planned previously. But everything else changed, right from the first item.

Brenda read out a prepared script about the princess. Then we took some music, followed by calls from the public who took up most of the first hour

talking about their reaction when they heard the news. There were also callers who had met the princess and talked about her character. Then we had reports from Valerie Sweeney who I had sent over the previous day to be in London, because we figured there'd be a huge public reaction on the streets, which is what happened. Then we had Lorna Hogg in studio. She is Ireland's royal reporter and had met Diana only a few weeks before.

So, yes the whole show was changed. One final thing. As is the custom when Gerry is away on leave, the show is usually reduced to two hours. But for that first show after Diana's death we upped the show to three hours."

Helen Howard, as Broadcasting Assistant, experienced first hand the calls as they came in to the show. In line with the deductions made previously from the analysis of the actual calls as broadcast:

"The Gerry Ryan Show presented by Brenda Donoghue which was to be a 2 hour show, rather than a three hour programme, ran for three hours. The whole three hours, as I remember it, was given over to the coverage of the accident, and on-air callers from members of the general public expressing their grief, shock and horror about the tragedy. The original programme running order was dropped entirely."

The programme researcher, who caters for the calls into 2FM's administration office related to The Gerry Ryan Show, both during and after the broadcasts, stated:

"The programme changed completely. It was not our decision. Our plan had been to include items about Diana, but listeners didn't want to talk about anything else but the loss of Diana."

Brenda Donoghue expresses how packed the show was with items related to the death of Diana. She points out that although the programme did endeavour to move off the subject, [for example a recorded vox pop from the U2 concerts is broadcast out of the 10 o'clock news, (10.10.05 - 10.13.50)], but all the callers wanted to talk about Diana :

"Monday's programme was completely dominated by the death of Diana. We tried to change the topic once or twice during the three hours but all the people wanted to talk about was Diana. It was a very busy show with everybody working at full stretch: lots of callers, Valerie in London, Yvonne Judge at the British Embassy, journalist Lorna Hogg in studio re: Diana's life, clippings from Diana Panorama interview . . . A very busy packed show that "went with the flow". The running order was changed as the events and the callers dictated the pace."

My third question for The Gerry Ryan Show was how this programme was different, compared to the talk radio programmes broadcasting simultaneously on RTÉ Radio One. The team responded by reporting that The Gerry Ryan Show decided to take the emotions and reactions of the general public. Willie O'Reilly explains:

"Much of our programme was a presentation of various public views as represented by a selection of callers. There was a strong emotional tide throughout the week as people openly grieved over a lost one. Some of our programming was possibly similar to theirs but there was more emphasis on putting the general callers on-air."

According to Paul Russell the role The Gerry Ryan Show was playing was:

"Public response, as opposed to official. The show filled the same role as it always does, when something happens that affects or concerns the public, we take their reaction rather than the reaction of those in the public eye. That is essentially where Ryan differs from Radio 1. It gives the public a chance to voice their views and emotions. And in the case of Diana the response of the public and their public show of grief - at the Mansion House and British Embassy for example - was far more potent and effective than any official response. And I think the Ryan Show, presented by Brenda, captured that mood."

This corresponds to Siobhan Hough:

"We gave our listeners a chance to express their grief whereas Radio 1 mostly did feature pieces on her death."

Brenda Donoghue agrees, by stating that The Gerry Ryan Show facilitated personal responses. She sees the fact that this show was on air for three hours as important too:

"It allowed callers direct access to the airwaves where many expressed their grief. People all over the country were shocked and very upset through the show more than Radio One. We were able to highlight that general feeling. Also it was a 3 hour show which was longer than any other show that morning."

Although the content of The Gerry Ryan Show did not contain many calls related to the topic of Diana's death mid-week, the programme team had decided to broadcast The Gerry Ryan Show from London on Friday 5th September 1997, the day before the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales. The reasons for this are outlined by Willie O'Reilly:

"We needed to move the programme closer to the funeral to give a more accurate portrait of feeling with ordinary Britons and to immerse the presenter and the reporter and team in first hand experience of the emotions of the street. We knew that most people would watch the ceremony on Saturday's TV. We wanted to show preparations and give a preview of what they could expect on TV."

In this, Willie O'Reilly acknowledges that the funeral of Diana was going to be a huge media event, and that the Irish public, including the listeners to The Gerry Ryan Show would potentially be watching. Therefore he expresses that the team "needed" to be there, in order to give as realistic as possible a reflection of the reality of the situation to the audience.

Paul Russell describes how the programme wanted to capture the 'mood' of the times:

"We were going on the mood of the Irish Republic. Nothing else mattered that week. Even the death of Mother Theresa got small change compared to Di. So,

on Wednesday, it was decided that we should go to London after the show on Thursday, soak up the atmosphere, record some material and base the show in London on the Friday morning.

This was the first time that I can remember doing an OB that wasn't sponsored! In retrospect, we were right to do the London show, the Di story is now recognised as one of the biggest news stories this decade."

Siobhan Hough, as researcher simply states that the programme went to London in order to provide the audience with what they seemed to want:

"It was a decision taken by the team because of the overwhelming reaction of the public."

Brenda Donoghue corresponds with these sentiments and further portrays her personal feeling that by going to London, The Gerry Ryan Show was contributing to the historicity of the funeral event. As a reporter, she was also aware that the substantial number of Irish people traveling to London for the funeral was a "story" in itself.

"The funeral was on a Saturday. As the programme wasn't on air that day, and because of the enormity of the story, we felt it would make sense to broadcast from London. It had been the dominating feature of the programme for the week, everyone was following it on TV - so it was important that we mark it in some way. Also many Irish people traveled over for the funeral and that too was a story."

There are many conclusions which could be drawn, from various schools of academic thought, for the reasons for the phenomenal reactions expressed by the Irish general public to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales as portrayed by the media. Below are the personal summaries of those responsible for the content of 2FM's prime-time talk radio show, The Gerry Ryan Show, on the overall reaction of the public, as reflected in callers to their show:

"Hugely moved and affected. They seemed to have an identification with her that was intensely personal as though they knew her intimately. All seemed to have been touched in some way by the traumas and joys of her life and most were familiar with her lifestyle in considerable detail. We were surprised there was no backlash against the amount of coverage, even those with little time for her or the monarchy appeared to have at least stifled their opposition. There is no doubt that the failure of the English Monarchy to set the appropriate tone upset a large amount of listeners. They wanted 'her family' to grieve openly as they themselves were willing to. This was represented in the amount and tenor of calls."
Willie O'Reilly, Senior Producer

"Overall, it was very sympathetic, very reflective. People loved her. And their response was genuine. Perhaps the reactions in England could be perceived as a little over the top. But there was no crying on the Ryan Show. These were simply stories from the Irish people about Diana, their memories of her. Their impression of her, not so much outpourings of grief, more of an Irish response to the death of someone they knew. On reflection, a percentage of that could be seen as a response to the story as opposed to the death - that the media had in a way willed this huge public response across the world. And I'm sure that were it not for the massive media coverage, her death may have been a little less devoured across the world. But I also think the response from the Irish audience to that first day's broadcast - on the Monday - told me that this was something bigger than the media. This was, for the most part, a genuine reaction to the death of someone that Irish people felt they had come to know."
Paul Russell, Producer

"Many Irish people seemed to have identified with Diana and have great affection for her - this was obvious in the stream of calls and the huge interest in her life and death."
Brenda Donoghue, Replacement Presenter

"The outpouring of grief for a woman nobody knew personally was astounding."
Siobhan Hough, Researcher

"I believe that the Irish general public were very upset by the death of Diana - I'd even go so far as to say grief-stricken - in fact probably the over-riding emotion was one of shock and disbelief that such a beautiful person could be taken so young and so tragically."
Helen Howard, Broadcasting Assistant

CONCLUSION

" "The People" is not a stable sociological category; it cannot be identified and subjected to empirical study, for it does not exist in objective reality. The people, the popular, the popular forces, are a shifting set of allegiances that cross all social categories; various individuals belong to different popular formations at different times, often moving between them quite fluidly."
(Fiske 1994:24)

The death of "The People's Princess" on 31st August 1997 affected many of "The People" who rang the Irish talk radio format of The Gerry Ryan Show to express their reactions and exhibit their tributes. In line with Fiske's definition above, these people did not belong to one social class, one age category or one segment of the demographic pie in any of its forms. However, what all these callers did have in common, what they all agreed on, was regret at the death of The Princess of Wales. None of the callers to The Gerry Ryan Show in the week of Monday 1st September to Friday 5th September 1997 criticised Diana and all of them, in one way or another, professed to 'know' her, simply from having followed her death in the media.

This case study shows how radio in Ireland is a popular and pervasive part of the Irish public sphere. The Gerry Ryan Show on 2FM is a valuable talk radio format, with a daily audience reach of 405,000 (appendice 8). There are many reasons for the success of the show, not least the profile and talent of the presenter himself. In the week after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, as Gerry Ryan was on annual leave, the programme was anchored by Brenda Donoghue, one of the programme's reporters. In Habermasian terms, this could be viewed as a "Hamlet" without the prince, a different person held court before the public. However, as the regular audience were familiar with Brenda Donoghue, and she displayed her ability to present the show, even when faced

with such a eventful topic, there remained a phenomenal reaction to the news of Diana's death.

Diana's death instigated the biggest media event this century so far. I ascertain this simply from the data which states that her funeral attracted the largest audience in the history of Bristish broadcasting data. The impact of Diana on the public sphere, the affection held for her by both the British and Irish general public can be seen as arising from the myth and glamour afforded her by the media.

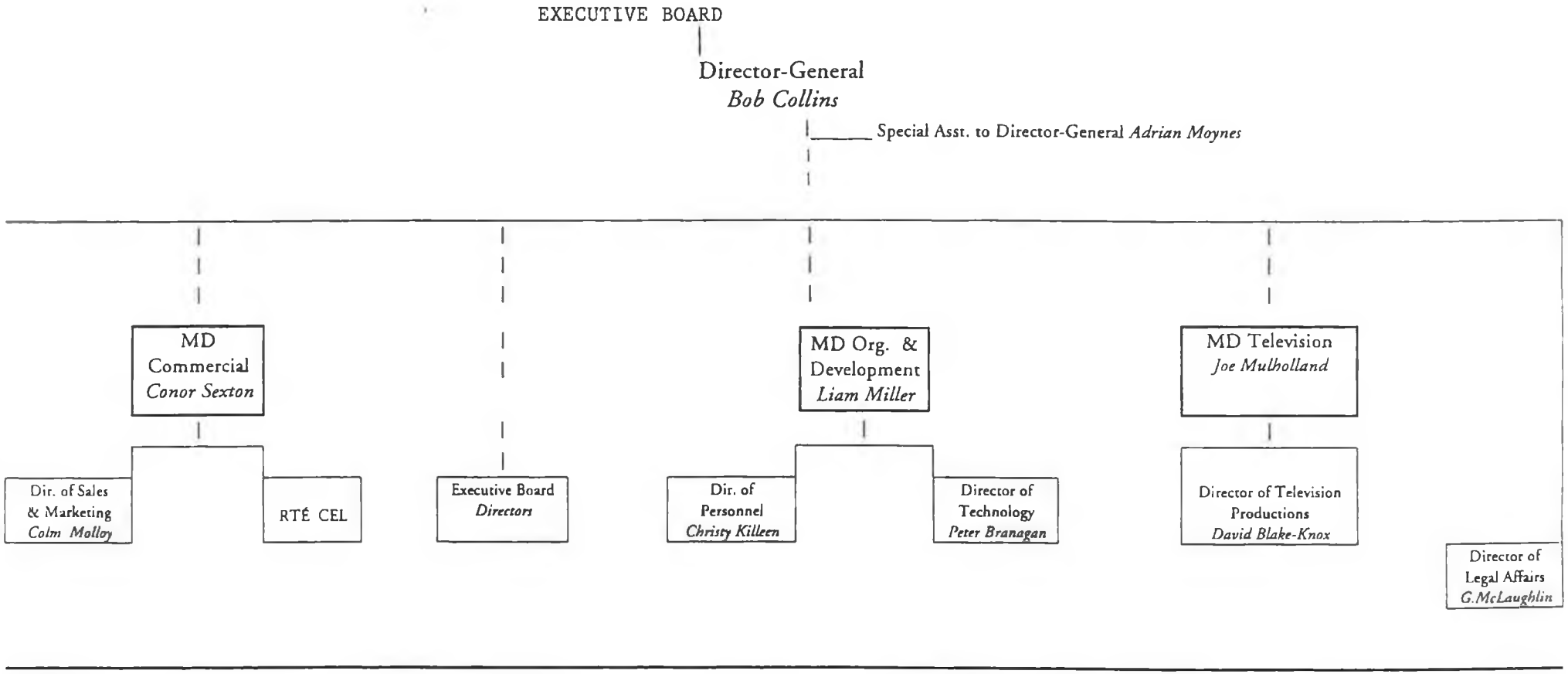
The callers to The Gerry Ryan Show in the week of Monday 1st September to Friday 5th September, 1997 displayed remarkable reactions to the news of the death of a member of the British Royal Family. These responses included personal feelings of grief and loss, as well as talk about action-taking, including signing books of condolences, expressing the desire to ban tabloid journalism and travelling to London for the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales.

On hearing the news themselves of the death of the princess, The Gerry Ryan Show programme team immediately realised this topic was going to have immense repurcussions on the programme's content. At the start of the week there was no way of knowing how the story would evolve. In their own personal responses, in this case-study, I have outlined the main dilemmas they faced, and how they coped with them.

It is hard to imagine such a media event occuring again on such a grand scale, with such comprehensive coverage in both Ireland and Britain. This case-study represents the Irish general public's reaction to the death of Diana, Princess of

Wales, as broadcast on The Gerry Ryan Show on 2FM. Having investigated this it becomes increasingly obvious that there are many other academic studies to be carried out in relation to the media and Diana.

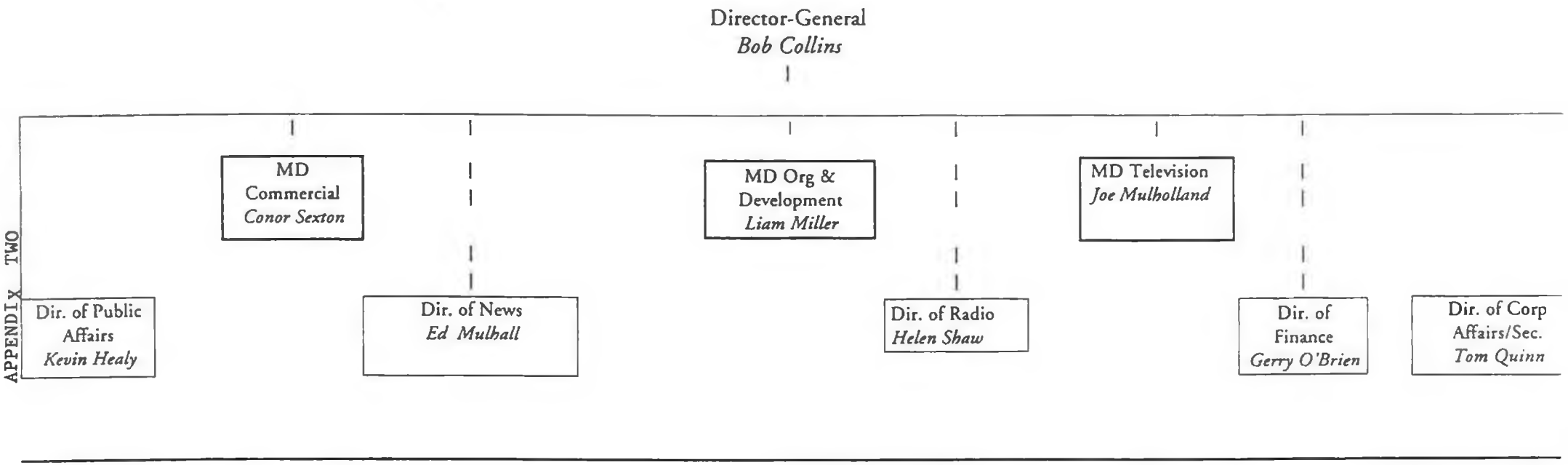
RTÉ ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



RTÉ RADIO 1 2FM fM3 THE MUSIC STATION RADIO CORK ONE RTÉ NETWORK TWO

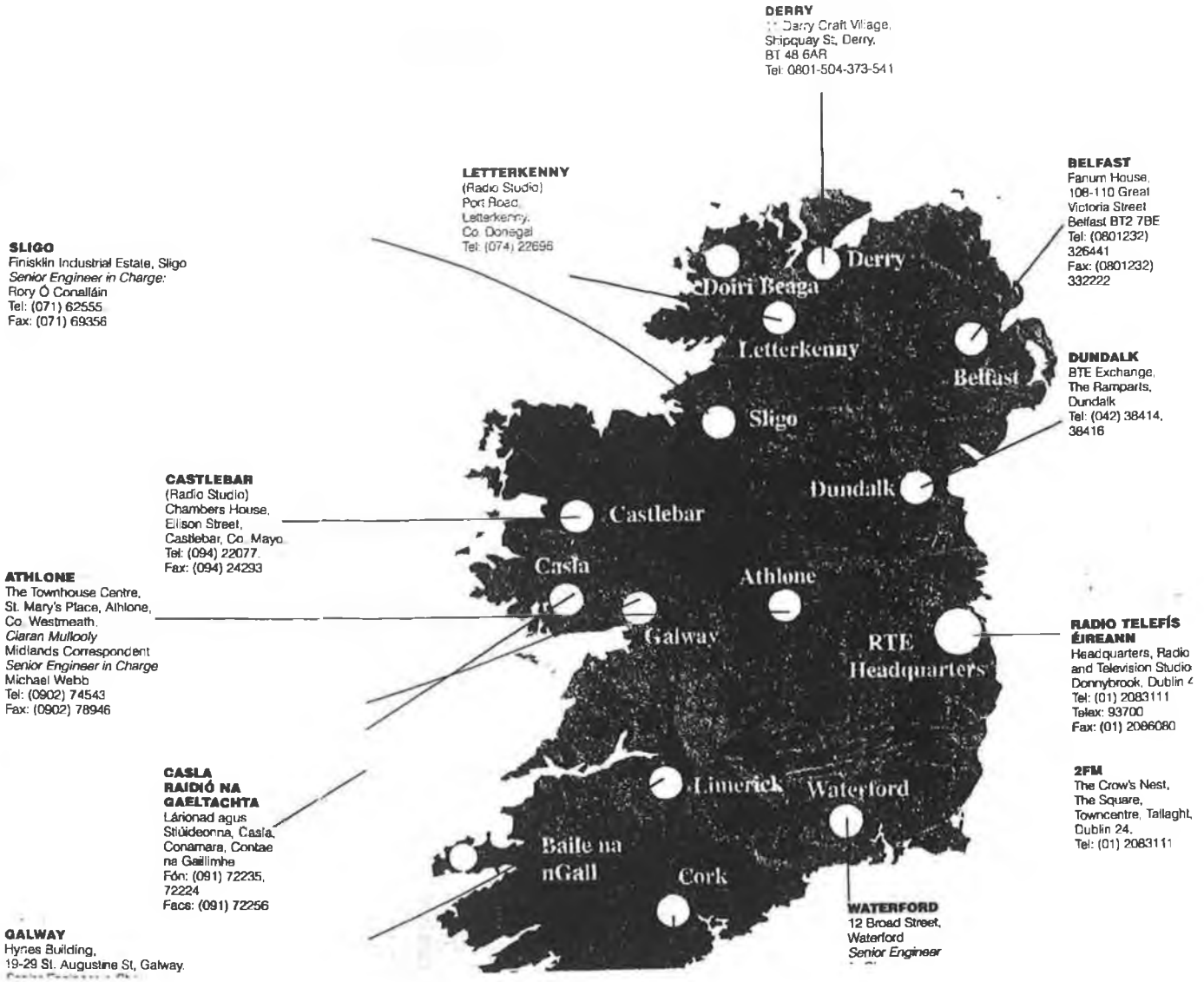
APPENDIX TWO

RTÉ EXECUTIVE BOARD



Nov.97

APPENDIX 3


DERRY
Derry Craft Village,
Shipquay St, Derry,
BT 48 6AR
Tel: 0801-504-373-541
LETTERKENNY
(Radio Studio)
Port Road,
Letterkenny,
Co. Donegal
Tel: (074) 22696
BELFAST
Fanum House,
108-110 Great
Victoria Street
Belfast BT2 7BE
Tel: (0801232)
326441
Fax: (0801232)
332222
SLIGO
Finisklin Industrial Estate, Sligo
Senior Engineer in Charge:
Rory Ó Conalláin
Tel: (071) 62555
Fax: (071) 69356
DUNDALK
BTE Exchange,
The Ramparts,
Dundalk
Tel: (042) 38414,
38416
CASTLEBAR
(Radio Studio)
Chambers House,
Ellison Street,
Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Tel: (094) 22077
Fax: (094) 24293
ATHLONE
The Townhouse Centre,
St. Mary's Place, Athlone,
Co. Westmeath.
Ciaran Mullooly
Midlands Correspondent
Senior Engineer in Charge
Michael Webb
Tel: (0902) 74543
Fax: (0902) 78946
RADIO TELEFÍS
ÉIREANN
Headquarters, Radio
and Television Studio
Donnybrook, Dublin 4
Tel: (01) 2083111
Telex: 93700
Fax: (01) 2086080
2FM
The Crow's Nest,
The Square,
Towncentre, Tallaght,
Dublin 24.
Tel: (01) 2083111
CASLA
RAIDIÓ NA
GAELTACHTA
Lárionad agus
Stiúideonna, Casla,
Conamara, Contae
na Gaillimhe
Fón: (091) 72235,
72224
Facs: (091) 72256
GALWAY
Hynes Building,
19-29 St. Augustine St, Galway.
WATERFORD
12 Broad Street,
Waterford
Senior Engineer
Derry
Doiri Beaga
Letterkenny
Belfast
Sligo
Dundalk
Castlebar
Casla
Athlone
Galway
RTE
Headquarters
Limerick
Waterford
Baile na
nGall
Cork

APPENDIX 4

RTÉ AUTHORITY 1997

CHAIRMAN:	**Farrel Corcoran**
MEMBERS:	**Patricia Redlich**
	Des Geraghty
	Anne Tannahill
	Bob Quinn
	Anne Haslan
	Bill Attley
	Betty Purcell
	Dr. Garret Fitzgerald

APPENDIX FIVE

2FM LOGO

BLACK ON YELLOW
or

YELLOW ON BLACK

APPENDIX SIX

2FM PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

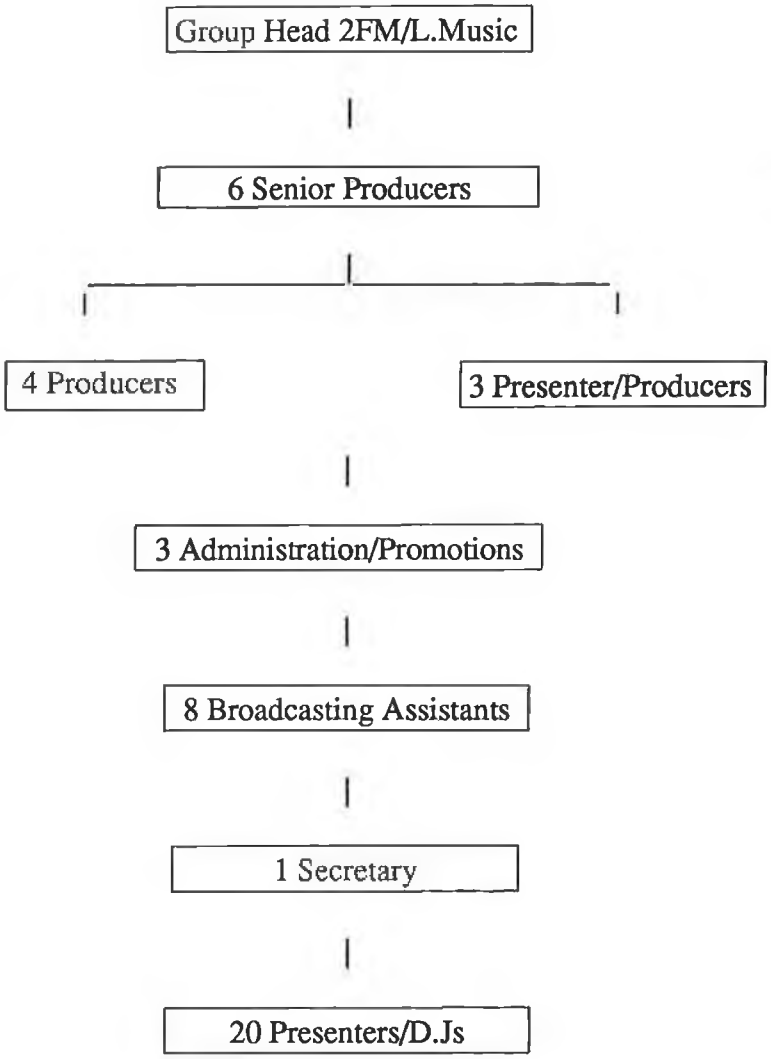
WEEK NO 1998

W/C SATURDAY

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
12.00 J.CLARKE J.Clarke 101	12.00 P.COLLINS P.Morley 135	12.00 P.COLLINS P.Morley 135	12.00 M.MOLONEY M.Stapleton 080	12.00 M.MOLONEY M.Stapleton 080	12.00 M.MOLONEY M.Stapleton 080	12.00 M.MOLONEY M.Stapleton
02.00 G.GOGAN P.Morley 154	02.00 D. McCAUL S.McKenna 118	02.00 G. WILSON S.McKenna 090 M.CAHILL I.Dempsey 091	02.00 S.O'DONOGHUE S.McKenna 092 M.CAHILL I.Dempsey 091	02.00 B.CONWAY S.McKenna 110 M.CAHILL I.Dempsey 091	02.00 M.RYAN S.McKenna 115 M.CAHILL I.Dempsey 091	S.O'DONOGHUE S.McKenna M.CAHILL I.Dempsey
7.00 S.YOUNG P.Morley 130	7.00 S.YOUNG P.Morley 130	7.00 I. Dempsey J. Clarke 001	7.00 I. Dempsey J. Clarke 001	7.00 I. Dempsey J. Clarke 001	7.00 I. Dempsey J. Clarke 001	7.00 I. Dempsey J. Clarke 001
9.00 THE GREAT GIVE-AWAY SHOW S. DUFFY K BURNS 145	9.00 THE GREAT GIVE-AWAY SHOW S. DUFFY K.BURNS 145	9.00 G. Ryan P. Russell J. Tarsey 010 W. O'Reilly	9.00 G. Ryan P. Russell J. Tarsey 010 W. O'Reilly	9.00 G. Ryan P. Russell J. Tarsey 010 W. O'Reilly	9.00 G. Ryan P. Russell J. Tarsey 010 W. O'Reilly	9.00 G. Ryan P. Russell J. Tarsey 010 W. O'Reilly
12.00 Chart Show L.Gogan L.Gogan 160	11.30 2TV D.Fenning Ed Darragh 126 12.30 WRANGLER REQ. SHOW S. O'DONOGHUE P. Morley 092	12.00 L. Gogan L. Gogan 040	12.00 L. Gogan L. Gogan 060	12.00 L. Gogan L. Gogan 060	12.00 L. Gogan L. Gogan 060	12.00 L. Gogan L. Gogan 060
14.00 L. MURRAY P.Morley 156	1500 L. MURRAY P.Morley 156	1500 T. FENTON I.Wilson 150	1500 T. FENTON I. Wilson 150	1500 T.FENTON I. Wilson 150	1500 T.FENTON I. Wilson 150	1500 T.FENTON I. Wilson 150
18.00 'The Best of Irish' B.Conway P.Morley 110	18.00 A. COCOVAN	1700 B. Lang B.Lang 060	1700 B. Lang B.Lang 060	1700 B. Lang B.Lang 060	1700 B. Lang B.Lang 060	1700 B. Lang B.Lang 060
19.00 Outline D. RHODES P. Morley 070	P. Morley 100	1900 D. RHODES J.Lockhart 070	1900 D.RHODES J.Lockhart 070	1900 D. RHODES J.Lockhart 070	1900 D. RHODES J.Lockhart 070	1900 D.RHODES J.Lockhart 070
20.00 M.McNAMARA ex Limerick Studio P.Morley 105	2000 THE METAL SHOW J.KENNY P.Morley 155 2200 W. LEAHY P.Morley 093 24.00	2000 D. Fanning J. Lockhart 050 2200 A. LEONARD S.McKenna 272 24.00	2000 D. Fanning J. Lockhart 050 2200 A. LEONARD S.McKenna 272 24.00	2000 D. Fanning J. Lockhart 050 2200 A. LEONARD S.McKenna 272 24.00	2000 D. Fanning J. Lockhart 050 2200 A. LEONARD S.McKenna 272 24.00	2000 D. Fanning J. Lockhart 050 2200 A.LEONARD S.McKenna 272 24.00

Appendix 7

2FM Organisational Chart



APPENDIX 8

RTÉ

JNLR WEEKDAY DATA - July 1996-June 1997

2FM			ALL ADULTS 15 +	
TIME BLOCK	PROGRAMME TITLE	NATIONAL REACH %	(Population Base :-)	2755000
06:00-07:00	Michael Cahill (1)	1		21000
07:00-09:00	Ian Dempsey	8		230000
09:00-12:00	Gerry Ryan	15		405000
12:00-15:00	Larry Gogan	10		279000
15:00-17:00	Aidan Leonard (2)	7		186000
17:00-19:00	Barry Lang	6		163000
19:00-20:00	The Hotline with Tony Fenton	4		110000
20:00-22:00	Dave Fanning	3		91000
22:00-00:00	Dusty Rhodes (3)	3		94000
00:00-02:00	Moloney after Midnight	1		37000
02:00-06:00	Nightime on 2FM (4)	*		5000

NOTES :
(1) - The new 06:00-07:00 slot was introduced on 4th June 1996.
(2) - Aidan Leonard moved to the 15:00-17:00 slot on 4th June 1996.
(3) - Dusty Rhodes took over the 22:00-00:00 slot on 4th June 1996.
(4) - From 4th June 1996 onwards, Nightime on 2FM data are for the 02:00-06:00 slot.
* = Less than 0.5%

APPENDIX 9

THE GERRY RYAN SHOW ORGANISATIONAL CHART

PRESENTER
GERRY RYAN

REPORTER
BRENDA DONOGHUE

SENIOR PRODUCER
WILLIE O'REILLY

PRODUCERS
PAUL RUSSELL
JOAN TORSNEY

RESEARCHER
SIOBHAN HOUGH

BROADCASTING ASSISTANTS
HELEN HOWARD
SARA WALSH

OFFICE RUNNER

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