Australian radio hosts from 2 Day FM, Mel Greig and Mike Christian, make a prank phone call to King Edward VII’s Sister Agnes Hospital.

In the phone call the radio hosts impersonate members of the Royal Family and ask about the wellbeing of the Duchess of Cambridge who was in hospital for severe morning sickness.

As there was no receptionist on duty that day, nurse Jacintha Saldanha answered the initial call and forwarded it to the nurse caring for the duchess. This nurse then answered questions posed by the radio hosts.

Jacintha was found hanged in the hospitals nurse’s quarters.

Jacintha had written three suicide notes. One detailing her wishes for funeral arrangements, a second discussed the prank phone call and a third discussed problems she had been having at work prior to the incident.

Jacintha was an Indian born nurse who had been living and working in the UK for 10 years.

Public reaction to the incident was quite strong both in Australia, the United Kingdom and in India. While the reaction was one of outrage in India and the UK, in Australia opinion varied from outrage to ‘its just a prank”

All advertising was suspended on the radio network until December 10 and the radio hosts and their program was taken off air. The station also stopped replaying excerpts of the prank call as part of their inhouse advertising. And suspended all prank calls on all programs

After threats were made against the radio hosts, the station moved everyone associated with the program to a safe location for a few days.

On December 10 the radio hosts gave a television interview. This interview was also aired in the UK.

2 Day FM cancelled their Christmas Party and donated the funds to charities associated with depression. Advertising on the station resumed on 12 December with the proceeds going to Saldanha’s memorial fund

The two DJ’s involved in the incident were stood down, their show cancelled and prank calling was banned.

One of the DJ’s , Mike Christian, has returned to air in Melbourne.

Mel Greig is currently still not back at work. She has lodged a dispute against 2Day FM with Fair Work Australia regarding OHS.

Two important points to note

1/. Humour plays a large role in the corporate branding of the radio station.

2/. The prank call had been cleared by the radio station’s legal team. The call was not made live, it was pre-recorded. The radio station claims to have made numerous attempts to contact the hospital to inform them of the call/ gain consent before putting the prank to air.

Jacintha suffered from depression.

She had made two previous attempts on her life, the first on the 30th of December 2011 during a trip to India and the second on the 8th January 2012 . After the second incident Jacintha was hospitalised and treated for depression.

The hospital’s initial response was to blame and criticise the radio station for playing the prank.

The hospital also claimed that both they and the Royal Family were victims of the prank.

While the prank occurred on the 4th of December, Jacintha had not spoken formally to management regarding the incident. This meeting was to take place on the 7th of December, the day Jacintha died.

Jacintha had had a longstanding dispute with a fellow employee at the hospital. Management action had been to place Jacintha and the other woman involved, on different shifts. Jacintha was reportedly unhappy with this resolution.

It is not known if the hospital was aware of Jacintha’s past mental illness.

What are the OHS issues in the case study?

What role does teamwork play at 2 DayFM?

How would your describe their organisational culture?

What sort of HRM was practiced at King Edward IV Hospital? Strategic or Welfarist?

What do you think the organisational culture was like?

The hospital often looks after high profile patients. Do you think Jacintha was the best person to be answering the phone