

**P = Presenter H = Hoaxer**

P: Welcome to Insight, where our topic for the day is hoaxes, specifically photo hoaxes. My producer had to go to great lengths to actually get a hoax photographer to agree to appear on the show, on the condition that we promise to keep his identity secret. So, I'd like to welcome my guest to the show.

H: Thank you.

P: For starters, can you explain why you want to remain anonymous?

H: Two reasons really. People don't like hoax photographers, because people don't like to be fooled in this way. We make them feel stupid. Also, hoaxers often use photographs taken by someone else, and without permission, and the original photographer could sue us ... or a newspaper can sue you if they discover you've sold them a hoax.

P: You're playing it safe then.

H: You could put it that way.

P: I see. Now I asked you before the show if you'd ever earned money for your hoax work, and you said that you often work with the police and detectives. What exactly do you do for them?

H: Well when a politician, for example, appears in a published photograph in any ...embarrassing situation, say accepting money... sometimes the police ask me to decide if the photograph is a hoax, and then they see if they can find out who did it.

P: Right. OK, well, let's look at some photographs that we found on the Internet – some hoaxes; some not. Talk us through these photographs if you would.

H: OK. this picture of a plane crossing a road looks like a hoax simply because it's such an extraordinary sight. Also, it looks a bit like a composite photo...

P: What's that?

H: When you combine two or more photos, that's a composite. It's easy to put a picture of a plane over a picture of a road, and then put this traffic light here on the right on top, like a sandwich.

P: So it's a hoax photo.

H: No, it's actually real. I wasn't sure myself, but when I found out it was Beijing Airport, I asked a friend who lives in Beijing, and he told me he had seen it with his own eyes a number of years before. There used to be a taxiing runway that actually crossed the road! It's all changed now, of course, and these days Beijing has one of the most modern airports in the world.

P: Sure. Hmm ... so ... then this one could be real. A suitcase in the top of a tree is such an extraordinary sight, maybe that's why it looks a bit fake.

H: Well, even if you've never seen a suitcase that's fallen from a plane into a tree – and who has? – your common sense tells you that there would be more damage to both the tree and the suitcase.

P: Then it IS a hoax photo.

H: Yes, a classic composite photo.

P: Remarkable. Now this one could be real, the man jumping over the canyon. I remember seeing this on the Internet. They said that there was a 900 metre drop underneath. But you're going to tell me it's a composite photo.

H: Not necessarily. This is an interesting example from a number of standpoints. You have to ask yourself how it is that someone was there to take a very well composed photograph of the man jumping. It's too-well composed.

P: So the whole thing was planned. Still, it's dangerous...

H: Well, in a photograph you never see the whole picture. It looks dangerous, but in fact just below the bottom of the frame here is the ground connecting these two rocks. At most he would have fallen a few metres.

P: How do you know that?

H: This is a quite well-known place for adventure tourists who visit the Grand Canyon.

P: Have you been there?

H: No, but I've seen photographs.

P: Ah, how do you know those weren't hoaxes...