



Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994

1994 CHAPTER 33

PART III

COURSE OF JUSTICE: EVIDENCE, PROCEDURE, ETC.

Intimidation, etc., of witnesses, jurors and others

51 Intimidation, etc., of witnesses, jurors and others.

[^{F1}(1) A person commits an offence if—

- (a) he does an act which intimidates, and is intended to intimidate, another person (“the victim”),
- (b) he does the act knowing or believing that the victim is assisting in the investigation of an offence or is a witness or potential witness or a juror or potential juror in proceedings for an offence, and
- (c) he does it intending thereby to cause the investigation or the course of justice to be obstructed, perverted or interfered with.

(2) A person commits an offence if—

- (a) he does an act which harms, and is intended to harm, another person or, intending to cause another person to fear harm, he threatens to do an act which would harm that other person,
- (b) he does or threatens to do the act knowing or believing that the person harmed or threatened to be harmed (“the victim”), or some other person, has assisted in an investigation into an offence or has given evidence or particular evidence in proceedings for an offence, or has acted as a juror or concurred in a particular verdict in proceedings for an offence, and
- (c) he does or threatens to do it because of that knowledge or belief.

(3) For the purposes of subsections (1) and (2) it is immaterial that the act is or would be done, or that the threat is made—

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- (a) otherwise than in the presence of the victim, or
 - (b) to a person other than the victim.]
- (4) The harm that may be done or threatened may be financial as well as physical (whether to the person or a person's property) and similarly as respects an intimidatory act which consists of threats.
- (5) The intention required by subsection (1)(c) and the motive required by subsection (2)(c) above need not be the only or the predominating intention or motive with which the act is done or, in the case of subsection (2), threatened.
- (6) A person guilty of an offence under this section shall be liable—
- (a) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or a fine or both;
 - (b) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or both.
- (7) If, in proceedings against a person for an offence under subsection (1) above, it is proved that he did an act falling within paragraph (a) with the knowledge or belief required by paragraph (b), he shall be presumed, unless the contrary is proved, to have done the act with the intention required by paragraph (c) of that subsection.
- (8) If, in proceedings against a person for an offence under subsection (2) above, it is proved that [F²within the relevant period—
- (a) he did an act which harmed, and was intended to harm, another person, or
 - (b) intending to cause another person fear of harm, he threatened to do an act which would harm that other person,
- and that he did the act, or (as the case may be) threatened to do the act,] with the knowledge or belief required by paragraph (b), he shall be presumed, unless the contrary is proved, to have done the act [F³or (as the case may be) threatened to do the act] with the motive required by paragraph (c) of that subsection.
- (9) In this section—
- “investigation into an offence” means such an investigation by the police or other person charged with the duty of investigating offences or charging offenders;
 - “offence” includes an alleged or suspected offence;
 - “potential”, in relation to a juror, means a person who has been summoned for jury service at the court at which proceedings for the offence are pending; and
 - “the relevant period”—
- (a) in relation to a witness or juror in any proceedings for an offence, means the period beginning with the institution of the proceedings and ending with the first anniversary of the conclusion of the trial or, if there is an appeal or [F⁴a reference under section 9 or 11 of the Criminal Appeal Act 1995], of the conclusion of the appeal;
 - (b) in relation to a person who has, or is believed by the accused to have, assisted in an investigation into an offence, but was not also a witness in proceedings for an offence, means the period of one year beginning with any act of his, or any act believed by the accused to be an act of his, assisting in the investigation; and

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- (c) in relation to a person who both has, or is believed by the accused to have, assisted in the investigation into an offence and was a witness in proceedings for the offence, means the period beginning with any act of his, or any act believed by the accused to be an act of his, assisting in the investigation and ending with the anniversary mentioned in paragraph (a) above.
- (10) For the purposes of the definition of the relevant period in subsection (9) above—
- (a) proceedings for an offence are instituted at the earliest of the following times—
- (i) when a justice of the peace issues a summons or warrant under section 1 of the ^{M1}Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 in respect of the offence;
- (ii) when a person is charged with the offence after being taken into custody without a warrant;
- (iii) when a bill of indictment is preferred by virtue of section 2(2)(b) [^{F5} or (ba)] of the ^{M2}Administration of Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1933;
- (b) proceedings at a trial of an offence are concluded with the occurrence of any of the following, the discontinuance of the prosecution, the discharge of the jury without a finding [^{F6} otherwise than in circumstances where the proceedings are continued without a jury], the acquittal of the accused or the sentencing of or other dealing with the accused for the offence of which he was convicted; and
- (c) proceedings on an appeal are concluded on the determination of the appeal or the abandonment of the appeal.
- (11) This section is in addition to, and not in derogation of, any offence subsisting at common law.

Textual Amendments

- F1** S. 51 (1)-(3) substituted (14.4.2000) by 1999 c. 23, s. 67, **Sch. 4**, paras. 21, 22 (with **Sch. 7** para. 5(2)); **S.I. 2000/1034**, **art. 2(b)**
- F2** S. 51(8)(a)(b) substituted (14.4.2000) for words by 1999 c. 23, s. 67, **Sch. 4** paras. 21, **22(3)(a)** (with **Sch. 7** para. 5(2)); **S.I. 2000/1034**, **art. 2(b)**
- F3** Words in s. 51(8)(b) inserted (14.4.2000) by 1999 c. 23, s. 67, **Sch. 4** paras. 21, **22(3)(b)** (with **Sch. 7** para. 5(2)); **S.I. 2000/1034**, **art. 2(b)**
- F4** S. 51(9): Words in para. (a) of the definition “the relevant period” substituted (31.3.1997) by 1995 c. 35, s. 29(1), **Sch. 2** para. 19; **S.I. 1997/402**, **art. 3** (with art. 4)
- F5** Words in s. 51(10)(a)(iii) inserted (24.2.2014) by **Crime and Courts Act 2013** (c. 22), s. 61(2), **Sch. 17** para. 36 (with **Sch. 17** para. 39); **S.I. 2014/258**, art. 2(b)
- F6** Words in s. 51(10)(b) inserted (24.7.2006) by **Criminal Justice Act 2003** (c. 44), ss. 331, 336, **Sch. 36** Pt. 4 para. 64; **S.I. 2006/1835**, **art. 2(h)** (subject to art. 3)

Marginal Citations

- M1** 1980 c. 43.
M2 1933 c. 36.

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