

Tax abuse is not faceless: there's always an accountant...

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Jesse Drucker has become one of the leading journalists exposing tax abuse over the last few years. Now with Bloomberg [he has a fascinating story out today about the man he suggest is behind the Irish tax haven](#): Fergal O'Rourke of PWC, Dublin. As he notes:

Google Inc., Facebook Inc. and LinkedIn Corp. wound up in Ireland because they could reduce their tax bills. Their success is leading European and U.S. politicians to label the country a tax haven that must change its ways.

The grand architect of much of that success: [Feargal O'Rourke](#), the scion of a political dynasty who heads the tax practice at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Ireland. He advises both multinational companies and the government on tax policy and has emerged as his country's leading defender.

The story is worth reading. It's about commercial motive, the interlinked nature of the top of Irish society and the almost brazen way the exploitation Ireland permits is promoted in the face of obvious opposition from the EU and elsewhere.

But it says more than that: it says tax abuse is not faceless: there's always an accountant behind it.

I happen to have come across this accountant. As Jesse Drucker notes:

On Sept. 12, the morning after the Financial Times reported that the European Union was probing Ireland's tax practices, O'Rourke appeared on a popular Irish radio show, jousting with [Richard Murphy](#), a U.K. tax accountant and blogger.

"There's been a lot of guff talked out there about Ireland being a tax haven," said O'Rourke. When the EU inquiries are done, "Ireland will be found to have not done any tax deals, no matter what way you define them."

Murphy retorted: "Ireland sells harmful tax practices that undermine the revenues of other countries."

O'Rourke interrupted: "That's untrue."

Their squabbling continued on Twitter until O'Rourke struck a conciliatory note: "Must have you over -- always want our tax people to hear contrary views."

The invitation has not arrived. He's clearly not that keen. Maybe an accountant who abuses tax abuse is not that welcome on his patch after all.