

# Child Exploitation and the Media Forum

Abbey Community Centre, Westminster  
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- [Child Exploitation and the Media: Over-exposure or cover-up?](#) by Mike Jempson & David Niven. Respectively the Directors of the media ethics body PressWise and the educational charity Action on Child Exploitation, they set the Forum in context and rehearse the debate about publicity and child protection. Most submissions to the Forum came in response to a shorter version of this paper which was circulated to social workers, lawyers, police officers and journalists to stimulate dialogue.
- [Declaration and Agenda for Action](#), accepted at the World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, 28 August 1996.
- [Forum Documentation](#) - details of the 36 papers submitted in evidence.
  - *Managing Grief in the Media Spotlight* - Chris Hook
  - *Press on the Alert* - Mairi McElhill-Putt
  - *Leave My Child Alone!* - George X
  - *Breaking the Silence* - Marion Hitchings
  - *More Power to the Fourth Estate* - Gerry Howard
  - *Secrecy in Children's Cases* - Jane Hoyal
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  - *Playing Safe* - Jenny Kitzinger & Paula Skidmore
  - *Media Representations of Sexual Abuse Risks* - Jenny Kitzinger
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  - *What Are They Really After?* - Judith Bockemuehl & Chris McMahon
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  - *Time to Modify Reporting Restrictions* - Mike McKay
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  - *Sex, Computers and Videotapes* - Eve Porter
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## Recommendations of the Forum Panel

### Preamble

The Panel congratulates Action on Child Exploitation and PressWise for organising the Child Exploitation & the Media Forum which raised important issues and furthered the debate on two difficult but interlocked issues - how to protect the victims of child abuse and exploitation while also seeking to improve public understanding of the problem.

The Panel were pleased to have played a part in the United Kingdom's response to the World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Stockholm in August 1996.

The Panel were impressed by the wide range and challenging nature of the 36 submissions they received, and recognise the difficulty of gathering a more comprehensive selection given limited time and resources. It was unfortunate that more material was not available from the perspective of young people, and that no contributions were received from the police or from senior editors and executives from the print and broadcast media including the advertising industry. The insight provided by such contributions would have enhanced the debate about these difficult issues.

In the light of the information made available through the Forum, and our investigations on the day, the Panel offer the following recommendations:

1. Noting the interest expressed by the Home Office, the Department of National Heritage, the Department of Health and the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in the Forum, we urge the new Government of the United Kingdom and the relevant Government Departments to consider seriously the issues raised by the Forum when determining policy and legislation to improve child safety.
2. More opportunities need to be given to young people to express their views, and be listened to, about the issues raised by the Forum, in all disciplines concerned - the media, the caring services and law enforcement.
3. Even the most responsible reporting of child abuse can have a dramatic and lasting effect on victims and their families, including coverage that may appear years after the event, as evidenced by the contribution from Dean Nelson, Home News Editor of *The Observer*. We urge newspapers, magazines and the broadcast media to bear this in mind, especially in terms of the way information is presented to the public. In particular we urge them to arrange and pay for suitable counselling to be available for victims of child abuse who disclose their experiences to them.
4. Care must be taken to ensure that media coverage of child exploitation is accurate, informative and educational and protects the children concerned whether they live in the United Kingdom or elsewhere.
5. The Panel condemns the hypocrisy displayed by some parts of the media about the use of child images, as outlined in the paper by Mike Jempson, Executive Director of PressWise, and David Niven, Chair of Action on Child Exploitation (ACHE). Newspapers and magazines should not juxtapose news or feature stories about sexual abuse alongside sexualised images of young girls and naked women, or use such stories on pages that carry advertisements for sexual services, especially those featuring adults dressed like school-girls.
6. The Panel appreciated the paper from Gwen Thomas, Deputy Chief Executive of the Association of Photographers, on guidelines for using child models. We accept that there may be circumstances in which it is acceptable or appropriate for children to appear in advertisements, however we would question whether children should be involved in modelling careers at a young age.

We urge all photographers, photographic agencies, parents of child models, modelling agencies and advertising agencies to move swiftly to formalise industry guidelines, to ensure

they are widely known and understood, and that adequate monitoring mechanisms are in place. Evidence of adherence to the guidelines should be a prerequisite of publication of images of children.

7. There is a clear need for much more communication, co-operation, understanding and trust between those involved in protecting children and those who report on child exploitation.

This might best be achieved through:

i) the production of educational and informational material by child care organisations and law enforcement agencies on how the child protection systems function and why the law may sometimes prevent journalists obtaining all the information they require; and by media organisations on what information print and broadcast journalists need to do their jobs properly and fulfil their obligation to keep the public informed;

ii) formal liaison between working journalists and those involved in child protection, to ensure that each side is properly briefed about professional and legal developments, and to avoid trial by media;

iii) the adoption of clear, common guidelines for local authority social services departments and other child protection agencies, the media and the courts, on how to release and use information so that victims of abuse are shielded from unwanted publicity while the circumstances of abuse are given appropriate exposure. (The Panel acknowledge that some adult survivors of childhood abuse want to publicise their suffering to draw attention to the problem and to their abusers; in such circumstances it is important that the abused should be given appropriate assistance and support);

iv) co-ordination between the regulatory authorities governing both print and broadcast media so that their codes of conduct are revised appropriately and made coherent and consistent. The codes should then be promulgated among journalists and those involved in child protection, including the police, social services and lawyers.

8. There is a need for more training of social workers on how to deal with the media, and of journalists on the role and responsibilities of social workers. The Panel are aware that those who favour more training are rarely prepared to participate in it or pay for it. However the seriousness of these issues merits a special effort to ensure that there is collaborative training among journalists and those involved in child protection. Industry lead bodies should be prepared to consider expanding vocational training courses accordingly, and consult each other on best practice.

9. Child exploitation needs to be understood by the public but in explaining the issues, especially the physical or sexual abuse of children, care must be taken not to betray confidences from children or parents who are in need of protection. There should be a policy of openness in local authorities and other social service agencies when allegations of abuse of children in care are made, providing the children concerned cannot be identified.

10. More detailed consideration needs to be given to calls for the media to be granted greater access to court procedures involving children. The Panel were not fully convinced by the evidence they heard on the day that this would help to increase public understanding of child abuse, but acknowledge that there are serious issues of accountability and transparency that merit further investigation.

11. Child exploitation is an international problem. Any efforts to address child exploitation and the media in Britain should take into account international initiatives, particularly those flowing from the Declaration and Agenda for Action of the World Congress Against Commercial Exploitation of Children, to which the UK is a signatory.

12. There should be continued monitoring and investigation of the issues raised by the Forum. This might best be accomplished either by an independent body with a wide remit and

powers to call for submissions and evidence from all the agencies involved; or through a research and education project designed to bring together the different disciplines and seek agreement on how to overcome the problems associated with publicity about child exploitation.

*Elizabeth Lawson QC*

### Summary of proceedings

Planning for the Child Exploitation & the Media Forum began in advance of the World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children held in Stockholm in August 1996. The United Kingdom sent the largest number of non-governmental organisations to the Congress at which some 120 nations were represented. Delegates committed to protecting the rights of children identified the way the media handles child abuse as a key issue.

The Declaration and Agenda for Action unanimously adopted at the Congress called for measures to encourage media professionals to develop strategies which strengthen the role of the media in providing high-quality, reliable, ethical information concerning all aspects of commercial sexual exploitation of children.

The Forum became the United Kingdom's initial response to the Stockholm World Congress. Its organisers, the charity Action on Child Exploitation (ACHE) and the media ethics body PressWise, were already convinced of the need for an initiative to highlight the problems associated with coverage of child abuse issues. They invited survivors of child abuse, social workers and law enforcement agencies to submit evidence about the problems caused by media coverage of child exploitation, and invited journalists and other media figures to write about the difficulties they face when investigating child abuse stories.

Elizabeth Lawson QC, Deputy High Court Judge and Chair of the Family Law Bar Association, who chaired the Leeways Enquiry (1985) and the Liam Johnson Enquiry (1989) and was counsel to the Tyra Henry Enquiry (1987), was invited to Chair the Forum Panel, whose task was to sift through the evidence and examine witnesses in public.

She was joined by:

- David Colvin, CBE, Chair of NCH Action for Children (Scotland) and former Chief Social Work Advisor to the Scottish Office;
- Dorothy-Grace Elder, award-winning columnist with *Scotland on Sunday* and *The Express*, and *UKPress Gazette* Reporter of the Year 1996-97;
- Paula Found, young person's representative and a volunteer with ACHE;
- Mike Hames, former head of the Obscene Publications Branch of New Scotland Yard and a member of the Interpol Standing Working Group on Offences Against Children, now an independent consultant on staffing, strategic management and security; and
- Pat Healy, Member of the National Union of Journalists' Ethics Council and former Health & Social Affairs correspondent of *The Times*, and a Director of PressWise.

(Unfortunately overseas assignments prevented Ms Elder and Mr Hames attending on the day.)

By chance, the Forum was held two weeks after the screening of a controversial television film *No Child of Mine*, directed by Peter Kosminsky, which featured a vivid portrayal of the sexual abuse suffered by a young girl and allegedly based on a true story. The film was accompanied by a leaflet from the Children's Society which appeared to suggest that 'sex tourists' could easily obtain child prostitutes in British seaside resorts.

The Forum also coincided with the use of 13-year-old schoolgirls as catwalk models by designer Vivienne Westwood, to display her latest provocative, adult collection. These events brought sharply into focus questions about media coverage of child exploitation; the role of young actors in portrayals of sexual abuse; whether 'faction' is justified because of the restrictions that prevent journalists telling the whole story in such cases; how far charities should go to get their message across; and where the line should be drawn in the exploitation of children for commercial gain.

The main purpose of the Forum was to draw attention to such issues and to take forward the Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action in the UK with recommendations to improve best practice in child care and journalism, increase public understanding of child exploitation issues and strengthen the protection of the victims of child exploitation and abuse.

The Forum Report and Recommendations were forwarded to the relevant Government departments, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child and to trainers and regulators concerned with child protection, with law enforcement and with the media.

## Opening Plenary Session

### **Have a care: people could get hurt**

Participants were welcomed to the Forum by Linda Townley, Chair of PressWise, and the opening plenary session was chaired by David Niven, Chair of Action on Child Exploitation.

Janet Tarbun, Chair of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW), gave the social workers' perspective on their relationship with the media and explained some of the difficulties they face when working in the field of child care. She said there has always been a tension between the media and social workers that has led to mistrust and a mutual unwillingness to learn about the difficulties each face in their different professional roles.

Ms Tarbun said some of the more sensationalised media reports give the impression that social workers are, at best, misguided do-gooders or, at worst, politically correct zealots with little regard for the effects their professional actions have on the lives of their clients. As a result, few other professions are the target of such public outrage and vilification, particularly when there is a child abuse scandal or a child dies at the hands of their parent or carer.

She pointed out that social workers are not in a position to defend themselves to the media because they owe confidentiality to their clients even in situations where the clients have told their side of the story to the media. Social workers needed the help of the media to assist them in creating a greater level of public understanding of their profession and in particularly the difficulties that surround their role in the protection of children.

Ms Tarbun said social workers are wary of the press because often the only experience they have had of journalists is when reporters are seeking information on a case that has 'gone wrong'. Social workers complain that no-one is interested when they have achieved a good result against the odds and a family is functioning after some help from a social worker. Media workers wanted to sell newspapers or increase viewing figures and 'happy' stories don't have the impact that a tragedy does.

Ms Tarbun pointed out that even when a child has found the courage to disclose sexual abuse, 97-98 per cent of alleged child abuse cases do not get as far as court. The child pays a high price for the disclosure, particularly if the allegation is against a parent or close family friend.

Social work needs skill and judgement but, she said, the UK is the only country in the European Union that hasn't got at least a three-year training programme. Many countries have four-year degrees in social work but the British government does not see the need to change from a two-year course.

The Children Act 1989, which is founded on the exercise of parental responsibility, she went on, is the key to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. However, the Act also says that professionals should take account of the wishes of children if they are of sufficient age and understanding. It is very weak where there is conflict between parents and children. This means the public can get the impression that social workers are dithering.

Ms Tarbun said that there had been several high-profile recent cases where those involved in the care of children had been found guilty of physical and sexual abuse of those in their care. That is why BASW has campaigned for many years for a General Social Services Council to register social workers and regulate the profession.

The second speaker, journalist Marjorie Orr, founded Accuracy About Abuse in 1994 as a response to controversy about the 'False Memory Syndrome' (FMS). The term was first coined in 1992 in the United States and has been used to dismiss allegations of child abuse. She said the British False Memory Society is a largely media-driven campaign that gives voice to those who deny that abuse exists rather than to those who have been abused.

Ms Orr explained that, from a journalistic point of view, the FMS story is simple: therapists, obsessed with sexual abuse, brainwash ordinary people into believing extraordinary things about themselves that never happened.

The advantages to the media of this angle are: it is easily covered as a single issue; it is 'comfortable' (because it defuses the panic about abuse); there is no libel risk (because if journalists say people who claim to have been abused are lying, they are unlikely to sue - nor are their therapists, social workers nor psychiatrists); and it is 'easy' because those supporting FMS will readily provide case studies and experts.

The story is actually more complicated according to Ms Orr, who said few journalists have tried to find out the other side by talking to those said to be suffering from FMS. When they do, she said, they often hear of actual abuse from the adult children of False Memory Society members.

What appears to be an attack on bad therapy is often a way of silencing these adult children's voices, she said. Despite their parents' tales to the contrary, few of the adult children had happy childhoods. For some, the abuse they suffered as children has been continued through harassment by their parents in the media.

Ms Orr said the media coverage of FMS has been encouraged by the distinguished scientists and clinicians who have joined advisory bodies on the subject. She believes a major reason for their involvement is because very little is known about the relationship between trauma and memory distortion, and because psychiatrists are traditionally hostile to the idea that life drives some people mad.

According to Ms Orr, we are on the verge of an explosion of highly interesting research in neuroscience and psychology on the effects of trauma, which will help put an end to some of the contorted arguments in this area. The media, she said, has a crucial role to play in making that research accessible.

The final speaker in the first plenary session was Dean Nelson, Home News Editor of *The Observer*. He has covered child abuse cases extensively in his present job and previously at *The Independent*.

Mr Nelson told how he was shocked when 17-year-old Leslie Clements, the main witness in a story he wrote about the physical and emotional abuse of residents at Ty Mawr children's home near Abergavenny in South Wales, committed suicide by breathing in car exhaust fumes.

Mr Clements had told Mr Nelson that he didn't mind his name being used in the article because his only concern was for the truth to be known and that, in any case, he would kill himself before it was published. Mr Nelson had sat with him for hours trying to persuade him he had everything to live for, and believed the talk of suicide was just attention seeking. But within months of the interview Leslie Clements had killed himself.

An official report into the case found Mr Nelson had behaved honourably, but the experience shook his faith in journalism and he realised he had been out of his depth - trained only in how to handle a story, not how to deal with abuse victims.

Mr Nelson went on to investigate allegations of child abuse in children's homes in North Wales. He was encouraged in this by a counsellor from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) who said that by the time a paedophile has been caught he is likely to have abused 70 children so the most important thing is to expose the abuse so that people would understand how widespread it is.

On the advice of the NSPCC counsellor, Mr Nelson gave each interviewee the number of a Helpline. He began with the former deputy head of a home who had been sacked after passing children's allegations of abuse to the authorities and had tried to get some action - but without success.



He then spoke to former residents who had never told the police or social workers about their experience because they didn't trust them and thought they wouldn't be believed. They were willing to speak to him because there was no-one else they could trust or who would believe them.

His story was published, detailing the abuse by a member of staff at the Bryn Estyn home who was subsequently jailed for ten years. However his three key witnesses all committed suicide over the next few years even though they had all received counselling and had seen some justice in that their former abuser had been jailed.

They had all wanted to be believed and have their suffering acknowledged but found that they couldn't cope with confronting the abuse. A total of 12 victims of abuse in North Wales homes have killed themselves.

Mr Nelson said he feels passionately that now society has recognised the scale of abuse in the care system, more resources must be invested in finding new and better ways of counselling and helping the victims. He said throughout the investigation the North Wales Police were defensive and Gwynedd County Council refused to comment. Clwyd Council carried out a thorough investigation, but was banned from commenting by its insurers who warned they would not cover the council's compensation if it admitted liability. Through these and other investigations, Mr Nelson has found that organisations only seem to support thorough investigations when their own staff are not implicated.

Our ability to restrict paedophiles' access to vulnerable children is entirely dependent on our commitment to openness, he emphasised. The media has a powerful role to play in exposing abuse as well as a great responsibility to treat victims with care - but so do all the other organisations concerned.

During questioning, Mr Nelson said that child abuse does not sell newspapers: most people do not want to read about it because it is uncomfortable. Most of the media regard reporting of these issues as a public duty. Child abuse is expensive to investigate and dangerous because many of the people accused will sue - either individually or through their professional bodies, such as those representing social workers and the police.

Both Mr Nelson and Ms Orr agreed that victims of child abuse often turn to journalists because no-one else will listen and suggested that there should be a confidential, independent body or commissioner to whom abused children can go as soon as abuse takes place.

## **The Forum Panel Inquiry**

The Panel received 36 written submissions from which a selection were drawn for examination in public. They heard first from Tim Crook, legal affairs correspondent for nearly 20 years who now lectures in journalism at Goldsmiths College, in London.

Mr Crook asserted that a climate of censorship and secrecy enveloping child protection has been responsible for covering up widespread sexual abuse, dishonesty, corruption and incompetence on the part of social workers, lawyers and public institutions set up to provide help and care. He said lawyers, judges and social workers have joined a conspiracy of cover-up against the interests of the majority of citizens.

As a court reporter he criticised the Family Division of the High Court which uses secret hearings in which judges, with the involvement of social workers, permit "unsubstantiated allegations of child abuse" to be made by mothers in adversarial child custody proceedings against fathers and the partners they are living with.

He said the quality of procedure and judgement in the Family Division is woeful and unacceptable: judges frequently hear cases without properly reading the papers and cases are often handed from one judge to another with no judicial continuity. However, public scrutiny of "this legal shambles" is prevented by reporting restrictions.

Mr Crook said it was appalling that murderers, rapists, vandals and violent robbers aged 17 or under are given anonymity by the courts while the relatives of their victims are not. He said the cases are censored to the point where no realistic or sensible reporting can be achieved.

Mr Crook said censorship of journalists in reporting children's affairs is never in the interests of children but is in the interests of adult professionals abusing or neglecting their responsibilities. A free press is the last resort of the abused, oppressed, vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society, he insisted.

During questioning Mr Crook said that he believed that every case involving juveniles should be open to the media and that journalists should be able to use their discretion to decide what should be reported. The right to know should not be left to the discretion of the judges.

Responding to the Panel Chair's assertion that the right to know was not left to the discretion of the judges but was a matter of law, Mr Crook said that this was the case in youth courts, but in the criminal court there was some discretion and that the pendulum had swung too far in protecting the identity of young offenders.

Laws introduced as a result of moral panic have denied people the right to speak out, he claimed. Young people approach journalists to tell their stories of abuse but when the journalists start to investigate they are confronted by injunctions that prevent them giving these young people a voice.

Mr Crook said it was vital in a free society to allow journalists a basic standard of free expression and to take responsibility for their actions. Where that responsibility is abused, there should be ways of dealing with it.

Mr Crook denied suggestions that his proposals could open the floodgates to identifying the victims of abuse and said there was increasing pressure to ban all reporting of youth proceedings. He said the quality of justice in an adversarial system depends on the public and media being given access to the proceedings. It places an extra demand on witnesses to tell the truth.

Mr Colvin questioned the consequences of open reporting on young people who are not fully responsible for their actions because of their age. They will either be stigmatised by it or will act up to it. He criticised Mr Crook's "blunderbuss approach" which claimed everything was not working.

Social workers rely on the courts, said Mr Colvin, and if confidence in the system is destroyed it will do a great disservice to children and others that depend on it.

Mr Crook said he was not trying to destroy confidence in the system but to question whether the system is working in the best interests of everyone. He accepted that there were cases of abuse in which children should not be identified.

Ms Healy questioned whether having journalists present would produce better results from the courts. Mr Crook said the problem was that the big news organisations have cut back substantially on their court reporters so even if the courts were opened up, there was no guarantee that well-informed, highly-ethical journalists would cover all the relevant cases.

Ms Lawson suggested that opening up the child courts would not result in more responsible journalism but more coverage of high-profile cases in which celebrities are arguing over the custody of their child.

Mr Crook said sensationalist journalism is not the overriding force of journalistic activity but it is often used against the media as an argument for preventing access to cases where coverage would be in the public interest. It is an excuse for censorship.

The panel next heard from Chris Hook, the father of Sophie Hook who was abducted and murdered in north Wales in the summer of 1995. Mr Hook and his family became a centre of media attention when their young daughter was assaulted and murdered. They were not prepared for it because dealing with the grief, shock and trauma was enough.

However, despite their shocked state, the family realised they needed to work with the media so, with support and advice from the Press Office of North Wales Police, they gave two press conferences, establishing what they wanted to say and emphasising the positive side of Sophie's life.

As a result, Mr Hook built a relationship with the media and discovered that journalists can be supportive. The family decided Mr Hook would be the spokesperson and he went to the United States to see how they manage coverage of sexual abuse. The visit made him determined to campaign for more public awareness in Britain.

During questioning, Ms Lawson pointed out that the Hook family seemed to have been able to control the intrusion into the family's grief. However she said it raised a wider question about the extent to which people are forced into the spotlight because of a tragedy. She asked at what point the Hook family were able to say "enough is enough", particularly as journalists can return to a story years later.

Mr Hook said that almost two years after the event references are still being made to Sophie. Where possible they are notified in advance, but sometimes video footage of her would be shown on television without warning the family which is very painful. As a result, the family has stopped taking newspapers and avoid television news.

Mr Hook said he favoured a code of best practice or working protocol for the way the media should behave to protect families in the future, but everybody has their own way of dealing with a situation. Just walking into a press conference and being confronted by lights and cameras can be overwhelming. Families need to take advice from experts, he warned.

Ms Lawson commented that Mr Hook's approach of being open with the media was successful because the family were the uncomplicated victims of a tragedy committed by someone outside. But this way of handling things might not be open to another family where, for example, a child is murdered and it appears the assault may have been committed by a family member or where a missing child is described as 'street wise'.

Tim Linehan, press officer of the Children's Society spoke to a paper originally submitted to the panel by his predecessor Rachel O'Brien.

The media often treats sexual abuse in the home differently from that on the streets, said Mr Linehan. The Children's Society works with child prostitutes and this raises issues of the differences between rich and poor and the failure of society to protect children. He said the media, politicians, the authorities and the public were all responsible.

The Children's Society is a voluntary organisation that uses the power of the media to raise its own profile and that of the issues it works with. However it is frustrating, said Mr Linehan, to spend months working on a campaign about the dangers facing children on the streets to see it result in a 'Child hookers' headline in a tabloid.

The Children's Society tries to avoid this by working closely with journalists to get the message across. Mr Linehan said the Society has developed a strategy for dealing with the media, including the popular press. The strategy includes:

1. Providing the information that journalists need, including statistics and case studies (but changing details to protect the identity of the children);
2. Having an input from young people while protecting their identity where required;
3. Ensuring that images are not exploitative and always using models rather than the children themselves;
4. Being pro-active, even deciding what headlines you want on a story.

During questioning, Ms Found asked how this strategy would stand up if a big story breaks, the media pounce and sensationalism takes over.

Mr Linehan said the key is to make the ground rules clear at the start and if a journalist breaches them you can complain. He admitted that this would not solve the immediate problems but would show which journalists could not be trusted in future.

In response to further questions, Mr Linehan said openness and social justice should be at the heart of organisations such as local authorities and they should stick to these principles when they are under fire. He said the Children's Society has always been open about its activities, even in the face of allegations of child abuse, and he hoped it would deal with any future allegations honestly.

Ms Lawson questioned whether the Children's Society's attempts to shock the public over the extent of child prostitution might send a mixed message because some of the newspapers that carry the material also promote young girls as sex objects, either through fashion photos or more explicitly.

Mr Linehan agreed that there were unacceptable images of girls in newspapers and advertisements, but he felt that drawing attention to child prostitutes may help to get things done so it is worth the risk.

A press officer from Barnardos said 80 per cent of the organisation's social workers distrusted the media and refused to talk to them. She said it was up to social workers to overcome that distrust and promote the good stories in the way they want to see them portrayed.

The Panel next heard from Dr Liz Kelly of the Women and Child Abuse Unit at the University of North London. Dr Kelly presented a feminist analysis of child sexual abuse and asserted that it is primarily a problem of male violence towards children. She said that unless society comes to terms with what it means to be a man in twentieth century Britain, we will never be able to prevent this violence.

Dr Kelly was concerned about the return of the term 'paedophilia' to describe child sex abuse because this distances us from the problem and allows us to think that child abusers are sick men rather than family members or people we know. It is, she felt, a convenient way to avoid viewing child abuse in the context of the social construction of masculinity and the family. Yet sexual abuse by strangers is usually a one-off incident: if people want to abuse children on a regular basis they have to get to know them first.

Dr Kelly challenged the accepted clinical literature that said paedophiles have a certain type of sexuality and are only attracted to children. She said men who abuse are in families and still have sexual relationships with their female partner.

She also criticised the "cycle of abuse" theory that people abused as children will grow up to be abusers. Girls are between two and four times more likely to be sexually abused than boys yet women are far less likely than men to be abusers.

Dr Kelly said the media have a responsibility to listen to the testimony of young people and not to promote the line that paedophiles are distinct from other men. The media had an even bigger responsibility not to accept the cycle of abuse theory because stories that give credibility to the theory effectively tell abuse-surviving readers that they are, or will become, abusers when they may be trying to cope with their own abuse or doing something to prevent abuse elsewhere.

During questioning Dr Kelly agreed that the media should have an educative role. Several male questioners said they felt offended that the actions of a few were damning a whole gender.

Dr Kelly replied that she doesn't separate child sexual abuse from other kinds of violence against women and girls, so she was not referring to just a few men. She said she respected those men who are prepared to stand up in public and say that abuse is a problem of masculinity.

Dr Kelly said she had previously encouraged children and young people to tell their stories but she now thinks that was not a good idea because she has lost confidence in many of the processes involved. For example, a child who has been abused might also have had pornographic videos taken of them but this is rarely checked. If they then go to court and give evidence via a video link, this could be traumatic.

Gwen Thomas, Deputy Chief Executive of the Association of Photographers was then interviewed.

Members of the Association of Photographers work in advertising, fashion and publishing, and Ms Thomas said that in recent years the use of children in images has become problematic, particularly as they are encouraged to look and behave like adults in front of the camera.

The first instinct of the Association was to lobby for a code of practice but they acknowledged that children like to show off and that there is a danger of taking away some of their innocence by over-regulating. However, she said, parents who want to put their child up for commercial modelling are exposing them to potential abuse, and the Association had begun work on guidelines to alert professionals and naive parents to the dangers, and to protect children.

1. Photographers should avoid taking pictures of children in underwear, especially for mail order catalogues (a known and easily accessible source of paedophile material). Assistance needs to be sought from large mail order firms, department store groups and public relations firms.
2. Photographic collections of children held with stock libraries need to be monitored carefully to see who they are selling to and what they will be used for.
3. Manipulation of stills and films, especially pop videos - where children are often used - need to be looked into. (Asked if her son could be filmed dancing and pulling off his shirt - the plan was to then manipulate his sister's head onto his body - one mother refused consent.)
4. No child should ever go on a shoot without a chaperon.

5. The chaperon should, at all times, have the right to be in the room where the child is working. If at any time the chaperon feels the child is being misused, over-worked or bullied, s/he should be able to withdraw the child from the session without forfeiting the fee - especially where the child is asked to do something different to that from which they were hired.
6. A chaperon must never leave a child in a session on her or his own.
7. If a parent cannot take a child to the shoot, s/he should notify the photographer with the name of the chaperon and make sure the photographer has a phone number to contact the parent/s in an emergency.
8. Children must not be allowed to travel unaccompanied in mini-cabs or taxis. If there is no alternative, a radio-controlled black cab should be used.
9. If a child is sent on a shoot without a chaperon, the agency and photographer/client must be notified beforehand and given the right to cancel if they are not willing to accept responsibility for the child. In all cases, the parents' contact number must be supplied in advance in case of an emergency.
10. If a model agency has a call from a photographer/client for one of their portfolios of children and the photographer or client is new to them, references need to be sought.
11. Children are often worked far too long or kept hanging about on shoots. Strict guidelines are needed as to how long each age group may work.
12. Parents must be educated, possibly through women's magazines, in what are normal modelling activities and what are not. Too many parents are keen to get their children photographed and consequently can put them in potentially dangerous situations.

During questioning, Ms Thomas said you could usually tell in a photograph if a child was comfortable with what was going on.

Most underwear advertisements in Britain are shot using older models because children are embarrassed. Reputable agencies will refuse models under 13 and those under 16 must have a chaperon, she said.

Ms Thomas said the Internet was a major problem because images can be downloaded and manipulated by paedophile circles. Pictures are usually placed on the Internet without the photographer's permission.

The Association is looking to the European Union to come up with a solution.

Journalist Mike Jempson, the Executive Director of PressWise, spoke to the paper submitted by himself and David Niven of ACHE as co-organisers of the Forum.

Mr Jempson described how he had spent two years investigating paedophile networks in South West England for a television documentary but, even though the police later admitted that the bulk of the information collected was correct, police officers, social workers, teachers, politicians, local authorities and voluntary organisations were reluctant to co-operate in the making of the film and would only speak 'off the record'. Legal advisers to the local authority's insurers had insisted on being present at one briefing.

Mr Jempson could only use 20 per cent of information gathered about suspected paedophile 'rings' that had been operating for at least 20 years. The resulting documentary had to focus on the activities of one teacher who had committed suicide rather than face charges in court.

Reporting restrictions had not been lifted on another crucial trial which resulted in long jail sentences for two abusers who had pleaded guilty to sample offences but who had had contact with many hundreds of children over many years. The programme could not even warn parents after the event.

There must be a better way of protecting children while giving greater exposure to circumstances surrounding abuse than imposing straight-jackets on journalists, he said.

During questioning, Mr Jempson said many organisations are nervous about opening up to journalists but if they were more open and explained where the sensitive areas are, most journalists would respect that.

He added that when bodies, such as the courts, deny access, journalists will want to find out why. There needed to be respect and understanding on both sides. He suggested that the only way forward is to have explicit guidelines to govern the release and use of information, and the way drama documentaries about child sexual abuse, such as *No Child of Mine*, are made.

Mr Jempson explained that PressWise provides advice and assistance to those with complaints about the media, and aims to help journalists to behave responsibly. PressWise also does a lot of training with voluntary groups about how the media operate.

Most journalists haven't got the faintest idea how social workers work, or about the courts and child protection systems. He said there is a need to get both 'sides' together to increase mutual understanding so when a story breaks, people will realise that they are on the same side - the side of the truth.

Ms Healy said the realities of how journalists work militate against that. For example if you've got half-an-hour to do a story you don't have time to learn how social workers operate. You want good, quick answers.

Mr Jempson said PressWise is there to pick up the pieces when journalists do their job badly. The organisation helps people understand how the media work and what safeguards there are.

Mr Jempson said there is a strong argument for regulations of broadcasting because serious, in-depth documentaries and current affairs programmes have been squeezed off the screen by changes in the industry in recent years.

Children now learn much more about life from *Grange Hill*, soaps and *Oprah* than from many other formal sources of education.

## **Closing plenary session: Regulating good practice**

The final session was chaired by Mike Jempson, Executive Director of PressWise.

The first speaker was David Niven, Chair of Action on Child Exploitation and co-organiser of the Forum, who said he hoped the event would help to redress the balance towards the rights and problems of children rather than simply those of adult professionals.

He cited the hypocrisy of the 'popular' press where one page of a newspaper reporting and condemning child abuse could appear beside another in the same paper displaying sexualised images of young girls.

The tabloids are not the only ones at fault, he said; a recent edition of *The Guardian* had printed images of children in sexual poses with animals under the guise of a feature about art.

Mr Niven questioned whether the guidelines covering the use of pictures of children who were sick or the victims of violence or poverty are strong enough. Media representation of children in the Third World, and the use of images by charities seeking to raise money need to be examined, he said. He thought the public could understand the children's needs without such images.

The media must be more aware of the need to protect the identity of children, he said. It is not appropriate to carry pictures and names of young tearaways or, for example, of child prostitutes in Sri Lanka. There are large communities from many different countries living in Europe and North America, he said, and regular travel between Britain and the Third World to visit relatives. It should not be assumed that 'foreigners' cannot be identified. Why should the identification of vulnerable children be any less of an issue because the child does not live in this country?

Mr Niven urged TV producers to seek structured guidance about how to present situations in which children are seen to talk frankly. He said that ACHE was delighted to have established a partnership with PressWise to develop the Forum initiative, and hoped that it demonstrated the value and potential of collaboration between the media and those primarily concerned with child protection.

Lady Elspeth Howe, Chair of the Broadcasting Standards Council, explained that as a Juvenile Court Magistrate, a member of a Care Committee in East London and as Chair of the Local Government Management Board Residential Homes Enquiry, she was very familiar with the issues under discussion. She described the work of the BSC which has statutory powers and adjudicates on complaints about taste and decency in commercial radio and television programmes.

On 1 April 1997, the BSC is to merge with the Broadcasting Complaints Commission which handles complaints about unfairness, inaccuracy and infringement of privacy in commercial television. One of the first tasks of the new body, the Broadcasting Standards Commission, will be to draw up a code of practice to avoid unjust and unfair treatment and unwarranted infringements of privacy in the making of programmes.

Consultation is already in progress, she explained, and the section on children and their rights states that 'children's vulnerability must be a concern for broadcasters', and insists that parental consent must always be sought before using a child in a programme. Only in exceptional circumstances should a child be used without consent, and then only with authorisation at senior level within the broadcasting organisation.

She described some of the research conducted by the BSC, including current work on the way children use television, and the effects of violence on viewers, and spoke of an earlier project which considered media treatment of victims and survivors of major tragedies.



Although survivors recognised that media coverage was necessary and helpful, there were plenty of criticisms - about the inappropriateness of the timing of media intrusion at moment of great distress, about harassment and the additional hurt caused by inaccurate reporting.

There was particular criticism about the lack of concern for the feelings of survivors and relatives when the media revisited tragedies on subsequent anniversaries. The study concluded 'there are plenty of ways in which the media can make tragedies more difficult to bear'.

Chat shows with live studio audiences can cause problems. She gave the example of one programme in which a mother was discussing her daughter's medical condition with the child sitting on her knee. The programme-makers had not considered whether it was right for the public to know the child's condition or the effect the exposure would have on the rest of the child's life or the mother.

She recognised that reporting of child abuse is necessary, but criticised the way the stories are handled and the inaccuracy which can creep in. The media should pay more attention to detail, she said, and consider whether their activities can exacerbate a tragedy for the victim or their relatives. This applied especially to representations of sexual relationships between adults and children. It may be a proper theme for a drama, she said, but broadcasters should consider carefully their reasons for including such material.

Lady Howe said Channel Four had the best record of involving children in programmes and in debates about what sort of programmes they want. She said there needs to be more sensitive labelling and scheduling of programmes dealing with difficult issues concerning children, and stressed that the perceived dangers statistically outweigh actual dangers in society. The media have a duty to be aware and not to exploit the uncertainty caused by such fears, she concluded.

Professor Robert Pinker of the London School of Economics is the Privacy Commissioner for the Press Complaints Commission which is responsible for enforcing professional and ethical standards in the print media.

He said the press can be responsible for collective, albeit unintentional harassment, when crowds of journalists descend on a place after a tragedy. However, if they are clearly warned, for example after the killings of school children in Dunblane in 1996, they can respond and behave responsibly.

Professor Pinker said another area of complaint is the serial or sequential invasion of privacy when, for example, the press responds to an anniversary that is not a happy occasion for those involved. Another problem area was when children were placed in the public domain by their parents, for example because of the circumstances of their conception or a medical condition.

Professor Pinker explained that the PCC relies on the support of journalists and editors in promulgating its code of practice. He felt the training of young journalists in high professional and ethical standards was particularly important.

The last speaker of the day was Aidan White, General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists, who co-wrote, with Kate Holman, a report for UNICEF in advance of the 1996 Stockholm World Congress Against Commercial Exploitation of Children.

He said that international respect for children's rights has come about only in the last few years and that the media has an important role to play. The media tend to have a couple of standard images of children, said Mr White, either as nameless victims or incomprehensible, problematic teenagers. This reflects the media's lack of understanding of children as individuals and their right to be heard as much as anyone else in society.

The media had been criticised during the Open Forum for using sexualised images of children to sell products in areas like music and fashion. But children are stimulated by music and

fashion which are good for their imagination, said Mr White. So those concerned about children's welfare should listen to children's views.

The cable television station MTV, which is regarded as a problem area because its music videos are full of sexual images, wanted to make programmes involving children but the regulators stopped them because that is the preserve of specialist children's channels.

Mr White suggested some ways to improve the situation:

1. The media should give children greater access to discussions and debate about content and tone.
2. Self-regulation and ethical conduct in journalism is important because the experience of the IFJ (which has member unions in 96 countries) shows that rules inevitably end in censorship. The commercial imperative in today's media means corners are being cut on professional questions. Journalists must, therefore:
  - i) seek the truth;
  - ii) be independent;
  - ii) always be aware of the consequences of their actions and minimise harm.
3. There should be training for media professionals, not just in the rights of children, but to instil greater awareness and sensitivity over the impact of a story.
4. There should be provision of accurate information for journalists. Children's charities should not exaggerate a story to grab a headline and get attention for their issue because it can discredit the organisation and lead to cynicism among journalists who won't trust them in future.
5. Journalists should play a pro-active role, for example in establishing helplines for children, providing facilities to receive feedback from them, and reviewing, from a child's point of view, processes such as how news is put together.

There needs to be real commitment to change, professionally and commercially, within the driving forces of the media, he said. He called on media proprietors to attend events like the Open Forum to answer for their actions.

Mr Jempson replied that 400 children's organisations and 500 media organisations were contacted when PressWise and ACHE began preparations for the Open Forum but no response was received from any newspaper proprietors.

During questions, the speakers were asked where they stood on media naming of convicted paedophiles after their release from prison.

Professor Pinker said that two or three newspapers had published the names and addresses of child sex offenders in their areas. He said he would not be against the practice if it would do any good but paedophiles can simply move on, change their name and carry on abusing.

Mr White disagreed and thought publishing names was irresponsible journalism because it would just create a 'hit list'.

Lady Howe was also against publishing child sex offenders' names because it is not necessarily in the public interest and could lead to vigilantism.

*Denise Searle*

## Over-exposure or cover-up?

by Mike Jempson & David Niven

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### Introduction

The key issues being debated at the Child Exploitation & the Media Forum were brought sharply into focus in the days immediately before the event by news reports that the police were to investigate one viewer's complaint that the child star of *No Child of Mine* may have suffered abuse in the making of Peter Kosminsky's controversial drama-documentary.

In previous weeks, the print and broadcast media had devoted a great deal of space and time to Kosminsky's film, broadcast on network TV by Meridian and featuring a 12-year-old actor in the role of a girl who had suffered multiple abuse; to the accompanying Children's Society leaflet which appeared to suggest that 'sex tourists' could easily obtain child prostitutes in British resorts; and to fashion designer Vivienne Westwood's use of 13-year-old child models on the catwalk for her latest collection.

Coverage of these stories was larded with a great deal of cant and sensationalism as the different arms of the mass media turned on each other.

The main protagonists may not have intended to let loose the dogs quite as wildly as happened, but none is likely to deny that the media furore achieved welcome advance publicity if not notoriety for their 'products'.

Many of the questions we have sought to identify for discussion at the Forum are now centre stage.

How should the media cover child exploitation? Do the restrictions that prevent journalists from telling the whole story justify a reliance on 'faction'? How far should (children's) charities go to get their message across? And where should the line be drawn in the exploitation of children for commercial gain?

While controversy raged about the accuracy of the 'real-life' story told in his film, Peter Kosminsky was at pains to point out the care with which the film was made, especially in the casting of a young girl in so problematic a role, and in the filming of the many distressing scenes she had to play.

Apparently 300 children were approached by casting directors, and the successful actor was selected only after six auditions.

In a press briefing Kosminsky, who has two young daughters of his own, explained:

*"Acting ability wasn't our only concern. We also had to consider the child's background, the support she was likely to get from her parents, whether one of them would be available on set at all times, the extent to which the family and the child herself understood the script.*

*"I worried about her every single day during the filming. For a while it felt like having a third daughter."*

The child's parents were very supportive, and the result, in terms of performance, was impressive. But worries remain about the film's value, especially when doubts were raised about the veracity of the original story on which it was based.

Kosminsky rightly sought to conceal the identity of his informant, but the press, with equal justification, sought to establish the accuracy of her accounts of appalling abuse, assisted by the extraordinary intervention of an unnamed Director of Social Services who contacted *The Guardian*.

The media furore that developed around the circumstances of the film's making made fresh victims of the story's source, the actor who played her part, and the actor's family. Few with much experience of dealing with child sexual abuse would say that the behaviour depicted in the film is unknown - some could tell of far worse examples of abuse.

However, some also expressed concern that *No Child of Mine* might become a soft-porn video favourite for paedophiles. And that the use of a child actor by the mainstream media could be regarded by them as intellectual and societal validation of their sexual misconduct - if it is alright for a TV company to use a 13-year-old in sexually explicit scenes, it must be alright for them to do likewise.

But if the Kosminsky film were indeed based on untruth, and so were to be dismissed as invalid, the efforts of those devoted to protecting children from very real dangers are set back rather than enhanced.

The columnist A.A.Gill, who refused to watch the film, went further in *The Sunday Times*. He described it as 'deeply immoral, prurient and fraudulent', and claimed:

*'All drama-documentaries are abuse - ironically appropriate in this case. The victim's distress is abused, and the real characters who aren't consulted or are portrayed as villains are abused. The process of law is abused, and playwriting as a vehicle for telling greater truth is abused by being hanged on the scaffold of 'fact'. Most important of all you (the viewer) are abused by being made complicit in the act.'*

Gill worried that high viewing figures for *No Child of Mine* would lead to acceptance of the genre.

*'Docu-drama will become ever more shocking, and true stories will have to justify themselves, not on the merit of public worth, but against last week's anguished offering... This is the simulated pornography of schadenfreude.'*

But if sensational TV drama, however well-intentioned or accurate, is seen as the start of a slippery slope that will inure the public to the horrors of child exploitation, what are we to make of Ms Westwood's justification for displaying her fashion goods for adults on real, live juveniles.

Appearing on a lightweight, late-night TV programme *The Show*, she claimed that she had wanted to keep her use of 13-year-old girls secret until they arrived on the catwalk. That did not go unchallenged, but she then admitted that her intention had been to demonstrate that her clothes could look sexy even on 13-year old girls.

Perhaps she was condemned by her own words, but the presenter made no comment about this condoning of commercial sexual exploitation of children. After all, Ms Westwood represents part of Britain's successful fashion revival which is supposed to be evidence that the economy is booming. Is her use of child models of any less concern or significance simply because politicians and the media are anxious to boost the collective 'feel good' factor?

The use of teenage models on the catwalk fits into a continuum which begins with sexually explicit material in teenage magazines and advertising directed at children, where the dividing lines between useful information, titillation and exploitation are sometimes hard to gauge.

The Forum is scheduled to take place when politicians are debating the Sexual Offenders Bill (sic) which may bring a form of 'Megan's Law' to Britain, and when the scandal of sustained abuse in children's homes is again under scrutiny.

### **Origins of the Forum**

The Forum's origin date back to the summer of 1996 when we were both involved in a TV programme about an alleged network of paedophiles operating within what was then Avon. Despite a great deal of evidence and personal testimony collected during a two-year investigation, it was not possible for the full extent of the allegations to be made public.

Some of the evidence was regarded as circumstantial, and might not have led to successful prosecutions. There had been an understandable reluctance on the part of some parents and children to risk the trauma of a trial by co-operating with the police.

For different, but no doubt equally legitimate reasons, the police, the local authority education and social service departments, and many welfare workers and teachers were all reluctant to co-operate in the making of the film. At the time police were investigating the murder of Daniel Hanley, whose body had been found near Bristol, and the hideous activities of Fred and Rose West were in the headlines.

Welfare workers and politicians who knew about the allegations were unable or unwilling to go public about their fears that organised abuse had been taking place in and around local schools for at least 20 years.

Avon was in the process of being broken up into four unitary authorities, and lawyers representing Bristol City Council's insurance company kept a watching brief on journalistic enquiries. Teachers unions were anxious to protect the reputation of members about whom allegations were being made.

Individual social workers quite properly refused to divulge their knowledge about related incidents involving their clients. Even some local clergy preferred not to get involved because the scandal touched their parishes. And school governors, now legally responsible for what happens within their institutions under Local Management of Schools, were certainly not going to break ranks.

Reporting restrictions had not been lifted on one particularly obnoxious trial which resulted in long sentences for two local people who had pleaded guilty to sample offences when possibly hundreds of children had passed through their hands in the course of more than a decade. And HTV's lawyers were especially cautious because the company had incurred huge libel bills after an earlier programme about child sexual abuse in Wales.

The documentary eventually broadcast as a *West Eye View Special* had to focus on evidence relating to the activities of one teacher who had committed suicide in 1993 rather than face charges in court. Even so the identities of those interviewed on camera had to be obscured, either for legal reasons or to protect their jobs.

### **Children lose again**

This must have been a bitter disappointment to many of those who had come forward in the hope that their fears could be allayed or confirmed. And the confidence of those children who had suffered abuse will certainly have taken another battering as, yet again, the adults they trusted seemed powerless to put an end to their terror.

Any journalistic investigation of this kind comes up against suspicion and walls of official silence. Any journalist who hears the horrendous stories of children who have been subjected to organised abuse and equally terrifying threats, feels frustrated at the restrictions which prevent publication - and begins to suspect conspiracies extending into the very heart of the agencies that are supposed to be protecting our children.

Much of the distrust encountered by journalists has its origins in the past bad experiences of those responsible for child protection. The mass media periodically dabble in the murky

waters of child sexual abuse. There is a tendency within both the print and broadcast media not to address topics unless and until they 'hit the headlines'. As each new appalling tragedy arises there is a frantic rush to outdo each other with ever more startling, and increasingly inaccurate, revelations.

Sensational headlines, lurid tales of ritual abuse, and accusations of neglect or over-reaction by social workers have characterised much of the coverage from the Cleveland scandal in 1987 to the Orkney debacle and the West case.

The communication problem is exacerbated because few in the caring services have much experience of dealing with the media. Most are forbidden to speak directly or at least publicly to the press and regard contact with the Fourth Estate as at best a necessary evil. They all know of colleagues who have been pilloried, often quite unfairly, for their part in some dreadful tragedy that has been subjected to media scrutiny.

### **Bunker mentality**

A bunker mentality can easily develop when crises arise, and some child care organisations and social service departments frequently confuse confidentiality with secrecy, fuelling suspicion and distrust on both sides.

Journalists may not fully appreciate the constraints placed on social workers by client confidentiality, but they know about protecting sources and regard stonewalling and refusal to comment as indications that there is something to hide.

Better training of care workers about how the media operate, and how to meet their legitimate demands for information might make the minefield of publicity surrounding child protection issues less hazardous for all concerned.

However, when the hunt is on for a story many journalists do tend to treat the caring services as 'zoo keepers'; few seem to appreciate why those they approach resent being drawn into the 'rent-a-victim' culture, and seem incapable of comprehending the consequences for those who oblige and immediately find themselves public property.

### **Surviving abuse**

Little thought seems to be given to the effect upon victims of raking over the coals of past abuse, and few editors would think of ensuring that counselling is on hand before they revisit distressing stories.

Care agencies dread the inevitable telephone call each time child abuse reaches the top of the media's agenda: *"I'm researching for a TV programme. I wonder if you could find me a child who has been abused?"* Or *"We're doing an item on the evening news, could you find me a child prostitute by 5pm?"* And if everyone is after the same story, each publication must find a new angle.

There is a fine line between sensationalism as a sales gimmick and as a notice-board to warn the public of the risks faced by our children. Too often children are presented solely as victims. Under the banner of 'the public interest' their rights are ignored. Yet how many care agencies fall into the same trap when seeking funds from the public, using emotional images and mawkish language to shock people into generosity? They are the first to complain when the press go over the top.

Several years ago there was a rash of 'Safari Boy' and 'Rat Boy' stories in the press when a young offender stole things while on a visit to a holiday camp. 'Why was this allowed?' and 'How can those in charge be so stupid?' thundered the leader writers and columnists.

Those responsible for dealing with juveniles may protest that dozens of the adults visiting such resorts have criminal records and some commit offences while on holiday, yet no-one would suggest vetting *them* at the gates. Or that each year thousands of adolescents are caught offending, confronted with their wrongdoing, and are helped to sort out their lives.

Only those who don't 'respond to treatment' make the headlines. Dysfunctional families make for 'good copy', however damaging such coverage may be to their chances of recovering self-esteem and stability.

The press have a duty to expose the rottenness in society and there is no mileage in parents who don't abuse their children, or in families where intervention has greatly improved child safety. But a constant diet of shocking headlines and negative content serves only to reinforce distrust of the caring professions, generating public anxiety and making the jobs of social workers even harder.

A similar syndrome has developed around fear of crime, with the police blaming the media for frightening people with horror stories and realistic re-enactments of violent crime. Yet the police collaborate on such programmes and share the plaudits for better clear-up rates. There is no such pay off for the caring professions. When the dominant message is that social workers are failing, their confidence and capability is sapped.

And when politicians court the press with simplistic solutions to society's problems it is small wonder if the reaction among those expected to pick up the pieces is to avoid contact with journalists. For the most part the print and broadcast media appear to imagine that the public can only deal with issues if they are presented in simplistic form.

### **Demonising youth**

Child victims of acute medical conditions regularly elicit deserved sympathetic coverage. They represent a tangible and easily recognised problem. More often than not a clear and identifiable solution is available.

But life is not so clear-cut for the child born into abject poverty, surviving on minimal attention, brutalised by a damaged parent, and brought up in an environment where teachers consider themselves successful if they can maintain control in the classroom.

It is small wonder if such children offend, more often against property than people, if they have been seduced by advertisements showing fast cars and expensive clothes, and images of glamour and success that breed desire and envy. Yet when they succumb they are demonised by the very mass media which has exposed them to the blandishments of a 'take-what-you-can, no-one-is-going-to-do-it-for-you' society.

Few journalists can be comfortable with the low esteem in which they are held by the public, or with the cut-throat competition that has locked them into a cycle of simplification, generalisation and repetition. Most know that there are other agendas they would prefer to follow, which is not to say that they should not expose bad social workers, police officers, psychologists, probation officers, residential care workers, and teachers. There are bad journalists too, but it is very rare for them to be exposed by their colleagues.

### **Complexity**

Only on the margins (in smaller circulation papers and journals, and the odd current affairs programmes) are real efforts made to disentangle the complexities of childhood rather than pander to received wisdom and popular prejudices.

Acknowledging that the public can cope with complexity - we all need to if we are to survive - offers new challenges to journalists.

The messages sent out by some newspapers are very confusing to children and adults alike. Those most likely to be read by young people run campaigns against 'evil paedophiles' and at the same time carry 'Lolita'-style adverts for sex videos, masturbatory chat-lines, and restaurants where waitresses dress as (topless) schoolgirls.

At the time of the Cleveland controversy one mass circulation daily ran a 'Baby Look At You Now' series of Page 3 pin-ups in which naked women were displayed alongside photos of them as young girls. Under the banner 'It's Kids Stuff For Corinne', the caption that accompanied pictures of a model aged 5 and 22 read:

*"Corinne is a big girl now...what boy wouldn't love her to come out and play! But that's enough now you naughty rascal, you can have another page three babe tomorrow."*

On page 6 of the same issue the paper splashed news of an NSPCC report on the increase in child molestation under the headline 'Sex Abuse Horror of Under 5s'.

This type of double standard confirms the powerlessness of abused children.

Forced to submit to an adult authority figure who insists on their silence with impunity, some abused children come to think of their assailant as somehow acting within his rights.

When the public expression of sexuality as portrayed by the press - that adults can indulge their sexual whims as they wish, so long as they don't get caught - appears to confirm this attitude, the quiescence of so many for so long is hardly surprising. Abused children are haunted by the anxiety that they will be in the wrong if they tell on daddy, uncle or the man next door, yet daily they may watch their torturer openly enjoy the spectacle of equally quiescent pin-ups.

Despite all these criticisms it is important to acknowledge that the private terror of abused children has been brought out into the open in recent years thanks to much sensitive and well-researched journalistic work.

### **Campaigning journalism**

Effective if controversial campaigning journalism by Esther Rantzen on the BBC's *That's Life*, Bea Campbell and Maggie O'Kane in *The Guardian*, and Dorothy Grace Elder, of *Scotland on Sunday* and *The Express*, are among many examples of how the public's attention has been drawn to the extent and the complexity of child sexual abuse in Britain.

Few would criticise *The Observer* for its campaign against Internet paedophile porn, or *The Independent* for reopening questions about the Clwyd scandal.

Some will applaud the decision of two regional newspapers, *The Bournemouth Evening Echo* and *The Oxford Mail*, to set up their own paedophile register in the face of official reticence - and the co-operation of the *Manchester Evening News* with the local authority in setting up a similar register and hotline to complement its own campaign against paedophiles.

Ironically some of the legal restrictions that exist to protect the innocent (abused children and those against whom allegations have been made but not proven in court) have helped to shroud the issue in mystery, encouraging speculation rather than dispelling fears and countering ignorance. Many other laws hinder journalists' legitimate efforts to expose wrongdoing. Newspapers and broadcasters risk contempt of court proceedings if they go too far.

There are other risks, of course. PressWise has dealt with several cases of mistaken identity which have caused enormous distress to all those involved. False accusations are hard to shake off, and there is little chance of obtaining adequate redress unless you can afford to sue for libel.

### **Codes of conduct**

The Code of Practice policed by the Press Complaints Commission, the newspaper industry's self-regulatory body, provides some guidance on protecting young people from unnecessary exposure by requiring that children under 16 should only be interviewed or photographed with the consent of an adult who is responsible for them (Clause 12).

Clause 13 is more restrictive, insisting that children under 16 involved in cases concerning sexual offences should not be identified 'even where the law does not prohibit it', and sets out further guidance to avoid 'jigsaw' identification.



The 60-year-old voluntary Code of Conduct promoted by the National Union of Journalists is less specific but equally clear about the responsibilities of journalists to their readers and those whom they interview.

Radio and television journalists are governed by more detailed codes devised and policed by regulatory bodies which have the merit of statutory powers under the Broadcasting Acts.

In a recent report prepared for UNICEF and delivered to the Stockholm World Congress against Sexual Exploitation of Children, the International Federation of Journalists affirmed the need to protect the identity of children at risk, but also called:

*“for action to encourage media professionals to develop strategies which strengthen the role of the media in providing information of the highest quality, reliability and ethical standards concerning all aspects of the commercial sexual exploitation of children”.*

The report sets out a series of recommendations for journalistic practice throughout the world, and appears to be suggesting that journalists everywhere should display an unequivocal commitment to the welfare of children. It is a measure of the worldwide concern about child exploitation that two of the first organisations to associate themselves with our Forum initiative in the aftermath of the Stockholm Congress were from Thailand and Sri Lanka.

It is vital that journalists, care workers, and law enforcement agencies should co-operate where possible to expose and convict those who harm children. But it is equally important that they all appreciate how much harm can be done by thoughtless, inaccurate or sensational coverage.

The public do not need forensic detail, but straight factual information about what child abuse and exploitation really means would help to lift the topic out of the realm of seedy innuendo and taboo.

The last testament of the actor Eric Cullen, who died this summer, was to explain how he had been drawn into a network of paedophiles from an early age. He did us all a great service when he braved the BBC's cameras, despite the hostility of certain sections of the press.

We need to hear the voices of abused children. They rarely get the chance to speak. There are sound legal and therapeutic reasons why they should not be identified, but allowing them to speak out will help to empower those still caught in the web of intrigue and fear that keeps them silent.

The starting point must be the sharing of knowledge, especially among those with the power to make a difference. We need to work together to reduce ignorance and remove unnecessary impediments to the eradication of all forms of child exploitation.

We hope that this Forum, its Report and Recommendations, and the development of common guidelines about the coverage of child protection issues will lead to a new atmosphere of understanding and positive action to defend the right of children to live free from fear and silent suffering.

## **World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children - Declaration and Agenda for Action**

*This Declaration and Agenda for Action were unanimously accepted by delegates at the World Congress in Stockholm on 28 August 1996.*

1. We, gathered in Stockholm for the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, representing the Governments of 119 countries, together with non-governmental organisations, the End Child Prostitution in Asia Tourism (ECPAT) campaign, UNICEF and other agencies within the family of the United Nations, and other concerned organisations and individuals worldwide, hereby commit ourselves to a global partnership against the commercial exploitation of children.

### **The Challenge**

2. Every day, more and more children around the world are subjected to sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Concerted action is needed at the local, national, regional and international levels to bring an end to the phenomena.

3. Every child is entitled to full protection from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. This is reaffirmed by the Convention on the Rights of Child, an international legal instrument of universal significance (of which there are 187 States Parties). States are required to protect the child from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of the child victim.

4. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children, and their rights are to be enjoyed without discrimination of any kind. In all matters affecting the child, the views of the child should be given due weight, in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

5. The commercial sexual exploitation of children is a fundamental violation of children's rights. It comprises sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons. The child is treated as a sexual object and as a commercial object. The commercial sexual exploitation of children constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children, and amounts to forced labour and a contemporary form of slavery.

6. Poverty cannot be used as a justification for the commercial sexual exploitation of children, even though it contributes to an environment which may lead to such exploitation. A range of other complex contributing factors include economic disparities, inequitable socio-economic structures, dysfunctioning families, lack of education, growing consumerism, urban-rural migration, gender discrimination, irresponsible male sexual behaviour, harmful traditional practices, armed conflicts and trafficking of children. All these factors exacerbate the vulnerability of girls and boys to those who would seek to procure them for commercial sexual exploitation.

7. Criminals and criminal networks take part in procuring and channelling vulnerable children toward commercial sexual exploitation and in perpetuating such exploitation. These criminal elements service the demand in the sex market created by customers, mainly men, who seek unlawful sexual gratification with children. Corruption and collusion, absence of and/or inadequate laws, lax law enforcement, and limited sensitisation of law enforcement personnel to the harmful impact on children, are all further factors which lead, directly or indirectly, to the commercial sexual exploitation of children. It may involve the acts of a single individual, or be organised on a small scale (e.g. family and acquaintances) or a large scale (e.g. criminal networks).

8. A wide range of individuals and groups at all levels of society contribute to the exploitative practice. This includes intermediaries, family members, the business sector, service providers, customers, community leaders and government officials, all of whom may contribute to the exploitation through indifference, ignorance of the harmful consequences suffered by children, or the perpetuation of attitudes and values that view children as economic commodities.

9. The commercial sexual exploitation of children can result in serious, lifelong, even life threatening consequences for the physical, psychological, spiritual, moral and social development of children, including the threat of early pregnancy, maternal mortality, injury, retarded development, physical disabilities and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Their right to enjoy childhood and to lead a productive, rewarding and dignified life is seriously compromised.

10. While laws, policies and programmes exist to counter the commercial sexual exploitation of children, greater political will, more effective implementation measures, and adequate allocation of resources are needed to give effect to the spirit and letter of these laws, policies and programmes.

11. The primary task of combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children rests with the State and families. The civil society also has an essential role to play in preventing and protecting children from commercial sexual exploitation. It is imperative to build a strong partnership between Governments, international organisations and all sectors of society to counter such exploitation.

### **The Commitment**

12. The World Congress reiterates its commitment to the rights of the child, bearing in mind the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and calls upon all States in co-operation with national and international organisations and civil society to:

- Accord high priority to action against the commercial sexual exploitation of children and allocate adequate resources for this purpose;
- Promote stronger co-operation between States and all sectors of society to prevent children from entering the sex trade and to strengthen the role of families in protecting children against commercial sexual exploitation;
- Criminalise the commercial sexual exploitation of children, as well as other forms of sexual exploitation of children, and condemn and penalise all those offenders involved, whether local or foreign, while ensuring that the child victims of this practice are not penalised;
- Review and revise, where appropriate, laws, policies, programmes and practices to eliminate the commercial sexual exploitation of children;
- Enforce laws, policies and programmes to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation and strengthen communication and co-operation between law enforcement authorities;
- Promote adoption, implementation and dissemination of laws, policies and programmes supported by relevant regional, national and local mechanisms against the commercial sexual exploitation of children;
- Develop and implement comprehensive gender-sensitive plans and programmes to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children, to protect and assist the child victims and to facilitate their recovery and reintegration into society;
- Create a climate through education, social mobilisation, and development activities to ensure that parents and others legally responsible for children are able to fulfil their rights, duties and responsibilities to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation;
- Mobilise political and other partners, national and international communities, including intergovernmental organisations and non-governmental organisations, to assist countries in eliminating the commercial sexual exploitation of children; and
- Enhance the role of popular participation, including that of children, in preventing and eliminating the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

13. The World Congress adopts this Declaration and Agenda for Action to assist in protecting child rights, particularly the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant instruments, to put an end to the commercial exploitation of children worldwide.

## **Agenda for Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children**

1. The Agenda for Action aims to highlight existing international commitments, to identify priorities for action and to assist in the implementation of relevant international instruments (see Annex I). It calls for action from States, all sectors of society, and national, regional, and international organisations, against the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

### **2. Co-ordination and Co-operation**

#### **i) Local/National Levels**

a) urgently strengthen comprehensive, cross-sectoral and integrated strategies and measures, so that by the year 2000 there are national agenda(s) for action and indicators of progress, with set goals and time frame for implementation, targeted to reducing the number of children vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation and nurturing an environment, attitudes and practices responsive to child rights;

b) urgently develop implementation and monitoring mechanism(s) or focal point(s) at the national and local levels, in co-operation with civil society, so that by the year 2000 there are databases on children vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, and on their exploiters, with relevant research and special attention to desegregating data by age, gender, ethnicity, indigenous status, circumstances influencing commercial sexual exploitation, and respect for confidentiality of the child victims especially in regard to public disclosures;

c) foster close interaction and co-operation between the government and non-government sectors to plan, implement and evaluate measures against the commercial sexual exploitation of children, coupled with campaigns to mobilise families and communities to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation, and with adequate allocation of resources;

#### **ii) Regional/International Levels**

d) promote better co-operation between countries and international organisations, including regional organisations, and other catalysts which have a key role in eliminating the commercial sexual exploitation of children, including the Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF, ILO, UNESCO, UNDP, WHO, UNAIDS, UNHCR, IOM, the World Bank/IMF, INTERPOL, UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division, UNFPA, the World Tourism Organization, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Centre for Human Rights, the UN Commission on Human Rights and its Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, and the Working Group on Human Rights and its Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, and the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, each taking guidance from the Agenda for Action in their activities in accordance with their respective mandates;

e) advocate and mobilise support for child rights, and ensure that adequate resources are available to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation; and

f) press for full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of The Child by State Parties, including requirements for reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in accordance with existing deadlines, and encourage follow-up of countries' progress towards full realisation of child rights in the context of other relevant United Nations organs, bodies and mechanisms, including the UN Commission on Human Rights and its Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children.

### **3. Prevention**

a) provide children with access to education as a means of improving their status and make primary education compulsory and available free to all;

b) improve access and provide relevant health services, education, training, recreation and a supportive environment to families and children vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, including those who are displaced, homeless, refugees, stateless, unregistered, in detention and/or in state institutions;

c) maximise education on child rights and incorporate, where appropriate, the Convention on the Rights of Child into formal and non-formal education for all communities, families and children;

d) initiate gender-sensitive communication, media and information campaigns to raise awareness and educate government personnel and other members of the public about child rights and the illegality and harmful impact of the commercial sexual exploitation of children, and promote responsible sexual attitudes and behaviour in society, in keeping with the child's development, sense of dignity and self-esteem;

e) promote child rights in family education and family development assistance, including an understanding that both parents are equally responsible for their children, with special intervention to prevent sexual violence against children;

f) identify or establish peer education programmes and monitoring networks to counter the commercial sexual exploitation of children;

g) formulate or strengthen and implement gender-sensitive national social and economic policies and programmes to assist children vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, families and communities in resisting acts that lead to the commercial sexual exploitation of children, with special attention to family abuse, harmful traditional practices and their impact on girls, and to promoting the value of children as human beings rather than commodities; and reduce poverty by promoting gainful employment, income generation and other supports;

h) develop or strengthen, implement and publicise relevant laws, policies and programmes, to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children, bearing in mind the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

i) review laws, policies, programmes and practices which lead to or facilitate the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adopt effective reforms;

j) mobilise the business sector, including the tourism industry, against the use of its networks and establishments for the commercial sexual exploitation of children;

k) encourage media professionals to develop strategies which strengthen the role of the media in providing information of the highest quality, reliability and ethical standards concerning all aspects of commercial sexual exploitation of children; and

l) target those involved with commercial sexual exploitation of children with information, education and outreach campaigns and programmes to promote behavioural changes to counter the practice.

#### **4. Protection**

a) develop or strengthen and implement laws, policies and programmes to protect children and to prohibit the commercial sexual exploitation of children, bearing in mind that the different types of perpetrators and ages and circumstances of victims require differing legal and programmatic responses;

b) develop or strengthen and implement national laws to establish the criminal responsibility of service providers, customers and intermediaries in child prostitution, child trafficking, child pornography, including possession of child pornography, and other unlawful sexual activity;

c) develop or strengthen and implement national laws, policies and programmes that protect child victims of commercial sexual exploitation from being penalised as criminals and ensure that they have full access to child-friendly personnel and support services in all sectors, and particularly in the legal, social and health fields;

d) in the case of sex tourism, develop or strengthen and implement laws to criminalise the acts of the nationals of the countries of origin when committed against children in the countries of destination ("extra-territorial criminal laws"); promote extradition and other

arrangements to ensure that a person who exploits a child for sexual purposes in another country (the destination country) is prosecuted either in the country of origin or the destination country; strengthen laws and law enforcement, including confiscation and seizure of assets and profits, and other sanctions, against those who commit sexual crimes against children in destination countries; and share relevant data;

e) in the case of trafficking of children, develop and implement national laws, policies and programmes to protect children from being trafficked within or across borders and penalise the traffickers; in cross border situations, treat these children humanely under national immigration laws, and establish re-admission agreements to ensure their safe return to their countries of origin accompanied by supportive services; and share relevant data;

f) identify and strengthen or establish networks between national and international law enforcement authorities, including INTERPOL, and civil society to monitor against the commercial sexual exploitation of children; set up special units among law enforcement personnel, with adequate resources and child-friendly facilities, to counter the commercial sexual exploitation of children; appoint liaison officers aimed at guaranteeing child rights in police investigations and judicial procedures for the exchange of key information; and train all law enforcement personnel on child development and child rights, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child, other relevant human rights standards and national legislation;

g) identify and encourage the establishment of national and international networks and coalitions among the civil society to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation; foster action and interaction among communities, families, non-governmental organisations, the business sector, including tourist agencies, the World Tourism Organization, employers and trade unions, computer and technology industry, the mass media, professional associations, and service providers to monitor and report cases to the authorities, and to adopt voluntary ethical codes of conduct; and

h) create safe havens for children escaping from commercial sexual exploitation, and protect those who provide assistance to child victims of commercial sexual exploitation from intimidation and harassment.

## **5. Recovery and Reintegration**

a) adopt a non-punitive approach to child victims of commercial sexual exploitation in keeping with the rights of the child, taking particular care that judicial procedures do not aggravate the trauma already experienced by the child and that the response of the system be coupled with legal aid assistance, where appropriate, and provision of judicial remedies to the child victims;

b) provide social, medical, psychological counselling and other support to child victims of commercial sexual exploitation, and their families, paying particular attention to those with sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and with a view to promoting the self-respect, dignity and rights of the child;

c) undertake gender-sensitive training of medical personnel, teachers, social workers, non-governmental organisations and others working to help victims of commercial sexual exploitation on child development and child rights, bearing in mind the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant human rights standards;

d) take effective action to prevent and remove societal stigmatisation of child victims and their children; facilitate the recovery and reintegration of child victims in communities and families; and where institutionalisation of the child is necessary, ensure that it is for the shortest possible period in accordance with the child's best interests;

e) promote alternative means of livelihood with adequate support services to child victims and their families so as to prevent further commercial sexual exploitation; and

f) adopt not only legal sanctions against the perpetrators of sexual crimes against children, but also socio-medical and psychological measures to create behavioural changes on the part of the perpetrators.

## **6. Child Participation**

a) promote the participation of children, including child victims, young people, their families, peers and others who are potential helpers of children so that they are able to express their views and to take action to prevent and protect children from commercial sexual exploitation and to assist child victims to be reintegrated into society; and

b) identify or establish and support networks of children and young people as advocates of child rights, and include children, according to their evolving capacity, in developing and implementing government and other programmes concerning them.

## Annex I

The Agenda for Action refers to many international instruments, recommendations and targets which have bearing on children and their families. They include the following:

- 1930 ILO Convention No. 29 concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour;
- 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others;
- 1957 ILO Convention No. 105 concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour;
- 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- 1973 ILO Convention No. 138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment;
- 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- 1990 World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and its Plan of Action;
- 1991 Programme of Action of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights for the Prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography;
- 1992 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights;
- 1993 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women;
- 1994 Cairo Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Population and Development;
- 1995 Copenhagen Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit on Social Development;
- 1996 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women;
- 1997 Programme of Action of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights for the Prevention of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.

The Agenda for Action takes note of the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children. It acknowledges the initiatives of many international and regional organisations, including INTERPOL, World Tourism Organization (in particular, the 1995 World Tourism Organization Statement on the Prevention of Organised Sex Tourism) and the Council of Europe (in particular, the 1991 Recommendation No. R91 11 concerning Sexual Exploitation, Pornography and Prostitution of, and Trafficking in, Children and Young Adults).

It also recognises the process of evolving a possible Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.



## Forum Documentation

### Managing Grief in the Media Spotlight

A personal point of view

**Chris Hook**, the father of *Sophie Hook*, describes his experience of coping with media interest when his daughter was abducted and murdered in 1995.

### Press on the Alert

The special need for vigilance when tackling stories about children

**Mairi McElhill-Putt**, a journalist and the mother of two children who died young, is the Founder Director of the *Nigel Clare Network Trust* which assists families with children suffering from a life-limiting condition.

### Leave My Child Alone!

How the cuttings files can haunt a child's development

**George X** writes anonymously about the long term consequences of media coverage of children.

### Breaking the Silence

Recollections of abuse

**Marion Hitchings**. Controversy in the press about the making and broadcast of Peter Kosminsky's disturbing film *NO CHILD OF MINE* gave rise to this personal statement.

### More Power to the Fourth Estate

Exposing state-sanctioned exploitation of children

**Gerry Howard**, a former private investigator, founded the *National Child Rescue Organisation* in 1987, to assist children and families who had, through no fault of their own, come into conflict with local authority social services departments.

### Secrecy in Children's Cases

**Jane Hoyal**, a barrister specialising in family law, founder of a radical barristers chambers, and a senior member of the 20-strong *Family Law Team*. She is also Chair of the *Trustees of Parents against Injustice (PAIN)*. This article first appeared in *Family Law*, May 1996.

### Privacy, Confidentiality and Publicity in Children's Cases

**Jane Hoyal**, a barrister specialising in family law, examines the conflict between the right to privacy of children and parents and the right to freedom of expression in the context of international conventions and domestic British law. This paper is based upon notes for a law symposium.

### Lifting the Lid

Unnecessary secrecy in family courts

**Tim Crook**, a legal affairs correspondent for *Independent Radio News* and *LBC* for nearly twenty years, is also a journalism lecturer at *Goldsmiths College* in London.

### Treading on Eggshells

The law, the media and public attitudes to children

**Mark Stephens**, media lawyer of *Stephens Innocent*, solicitors to *PressWise* and formerly to the *National Union of Journalists*, has experience of handling child abuse, human rights and defamation cases.

### Sexual Humiliation is No Joke

The case for increased reporting restrictions

A Solicitor, whose identity was withheld to protect client confidentiality and in order not to prejudice cases currently before the courts.

### Sexual Tourism and Child Pornography

**Claire Wilson Thomas**, Parliamentary Campaigns Manager for *Christian Action Research & Education* summarises material submitted to the *World Congress against Commercial Sexual*

*Exploitation of Children by CARE's Public Policy Department. She is also author of 'Laid Bare: A Path through the Pornography Maze'.*

### **The Media and Children's Privacy - Lessons from American Law**

**Jaclyn Moriarty**, at the time working on a PhD about children and privacy at Cambridge University, condenses her Master of Law thesis at Yale University, which considers how children fare in the USA where press freedom is enshrined in the First Amendment to the Constitution.

### **Be Prepared for the Media**

How caring agencies can improve public understanding

**Rachel O'Brien**, co-author of *The Game's Up* report, prepared this paper for a workshop at the World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, when she was Senior Press Officer with The Children's Society and editor of the magazine *Children in Focus*.

### **Protecting Young People**

Covering the gap between childhood and citizenship

**Mary Durkin**, head of Communications at the National Youth Agency, looks at the gap between young people and the media caused by conflicting messages about young people's position in society.

### **The Press and the Pendulum**

How the media took sides

**Niall Dickson**, the BBC's Social Affairs Editor, reviews media coverage of child abuse scandals, in an article reproduced with the kind permission of Guardian Society, where it was first published on 23 October 1996.

### **'How Could this Man Go Free?'**

Privacy, the press & the paedophile

**Terry Thomas**, a Senior Lecturer in Social Work at Leeds Metropolitan University. A shorter version of this article appeared as "A Perversion of Justice" in *The Guardian*, 8 January 1997.

### **Playing Safe**

Media coverage of child sexual abuse prevention strategies

**Jenny Kitlinger & Paula Skidmore** of the Glasgow University Media Group first wrote this article for a special issue of *'Child Abuse Review'*, the BASPCAN journal, Vol. 4 (1995).

### **Media Representations of Sexual Abuse Risks**

**Jenny Kitlinger**, Senior Research Fellow at Glasgow University's Department of Sociology (Media Unit), produced this paper for the *'Child Abuse Review'* Vol. 5 (1996).

### **False Memory**

The media's fascination with the unknown

**Marjorie Orr**, the journalist-founder of *Accuracy About Abuse* delves into the risks associated with media coverage of new theories and vociferous special pleading.

### **Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy**

A study in secrecy

**Brian Morgan**, an investigative journalist, describes the problems faced by those confronted with 'professional secrecy' when seeking to unearth information about controversial diagnostic techniques.

### **Satan's Disciples**

Media myth-making and 'Satanic child abuse'

**Suzanne Ruthven**, a Buddhist and author of *'Malleus Satani: The Hammer of Satan'*, is an occult specialist. She points up contradictions and inaccuracies in the media's fascination with so-called Satanic abuse and questions whether investigations into child abuse are ever likely to be helped by ill-informed speculation.

### **Top Shelf & Teen Mags**

The normalising of child pornography and prostitution

**Penny Iveson & Anne Mayne**, members of the Campaign Against Pornography who are concerned that attitudes to sexuality and some of the explicit information and advice about sexual behaviour available in teenage magazines may place girls and young women at risk by making them more vulnerable to sexual exploitation, pornography and prostitution.

### **What Are They Really After?**

Dealing with enquiries from overseas journalists

**Judith Bockemuehl & Chris McMahon**, members of the International Relations Team at the Center for the Protection of Children's Rights in Bangkok, Thailand, explain their experience of foreign journalists investigating the sexual tourism trade.

### **Prime Time For Children**

Media, ethics and reporting of commercial sexual exploitation

**Kate Holman & Aidan White**. This summary of their a prepared for UNICEF in advance of the 1996 Stockholm World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children first appeared in the August 1996 issue of *CROSSLINES Global Report*.

### **Challenging the Stereotypes**

**N. T. Barlow**, chair of the British Psychological Society's Special Group, Psychologists and Social Services, prepared this paper on behalf of the BPS Professional Affairs Board.

### **Media and Exploitation of Children**

**Loretta Hieber**, a Switzerland-based radio journalist considers the delicate balancing act the media must achieve between drawing the attention of the public to child exploitation and becoming a part of it. Her article originally appeared in the September 1996 issue of *CROSSLINES Global Report*.

### **Twisted Images**

The police, the media and naked censorship

**Sal Shuel**, the former administrator of the British Association of Picture Libraries, considers paranoia about family snaps, and the risks professional photographers now face from a new type of censorship fuelled by the media's response to public fears of paedophilia. She writes on behalf of the British Photographers Liaison Committee.

### **Exposures of Innocence**

Practising 'safe shots'

**David Kampfner**, Association of Photographers Council member and freelance photographer investigates the impact of changing social attitudes on those who produce images of the naked human form, in a piece first published in *Image Magazine*, No. 251 August 1995.

### **Child Model Issues**

Getting the terms right

**Gwen Thomas**, the Deputy Chief Executive of The Association of Photographers, outlines some of the issues being addressed in consultation with model agencies about best practice, to avoid the risk of exploiting children, or exposing them to abuse.

### **Time to Modify Reporting Restrictions**

**Mike McKay**, a senior BBC TV News reporter reflects on the problems of covering child abuse, in a paper prepared on behalf of the National Union of Journalists.

### **Constant Attention**

Supervising television broadcasts for and about children

**Andrea Millwood Hargrave**, the Research Director of the Broadcasting Standards Council explains how an eye is kept on the impact of TV coverage on the young.

**Sex, Computers and Videotapes**

**Eve Porter**, a US-based journalist, is an assistant editor and bureau manager of *CROSSLINES Global Report*, in which this article first appeared (September 1996 Vol. 4(6) No. 24).

**Policing the Internet**

Ethical issues & the law

**Claire Wilson-Thomas**. *A survey of the opportunities offered in current British law to regulate the Internet in order to protect children from its abuse for pornographic purposes. An edited version of a submission by CARE (Christian Action, Research and Education) to the House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee in 1995.*