[GB] High Court Judge Allows Documentary to Proceed, in the Public Interest

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An episode of Channel 4's documentary series, "Undercover Britain", dealt with the funeral industry. The reporter worked, undercover, as a trainee undertaker in a firm of funeral directors. The episode, called "Last Rights", which was screened on 12 May, claimed that coffins were being used as rubbish bins and corpses were manhandled in "fun". American funeral group Service Corporation International and its British subsidiary, Associated Funeral Directors (AFD) sought an injunction banning parts of the programme which investigated the company's activities. However, Mr Justice Lightman refused, saying that the documentary appeared to reveal a "scandalous state of affairs". He supported the film-maker's argument that the industry should be regulated, which was a "matter of substantial public interest" and he said the press and broadcasters "should not be silenced on a matter so deeply affecting the public". Counsel for AFD argued that the programme constituted a breach of copyright and confidence and a trespass.

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