[GB] Television Programme Code Revised

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On 15 November 2001, the Independent Television Commission published a revision to its Programme Code ("the ITC Programme Code"). The Section in question is 2.11 and it deals with the reporting of offences (including sexual offences) involving children (i.e., anyone under the age of 18). The Section now reads: "Reporting of sexual and other offences involving children

Where children are or have been involved in police enquiries or court proceedings concerning sexual offences, special care needs to be taken to avoid the so called 'jigsaw effect'. This happens when several reports in different media give different details of a case which, when pieced together, reveal the identity of a child involved.

Particular care needs to be taken when reporting sexual crimes within a family. Naming the accused and describing the crime can have the effect of identifying the victim. Giving information about an accused person's address may contribute to the jigsaw which identifies the victim.

In 1993 most of the media agreed in principle to name the accused/convicted person (provided this is not a child) and not to name the victim. The ITC expects licensees to abide by this principle. The offence should be described as `a serious sexual offence'. If the accused and victim are related, the victim should be described as 'a young woman' or 'a child' and so on.

When covering any pre-trial investigation into an alleged criminal offence in the UK, licensees should pay particular regard to the potentially vulnerable position of any person under 18 involved as a witness or victim, before broadcasting their name, address, identity of school or other educational establishment, place of work, or any still or moving picture of this person.

Particular justification is also required for the broadcasting of such material related to the identity of any person under 18 who is involved in the offence as a defendant or potential defendant."

"ITC Revises Programme Code", News Release No. 67/01 of 15 November 2001

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Independent Television Commission Programme Code

http://www.itc.org.uk/itc_publications/codes_guidance/programme_code/index.asp

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