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Mr. Tim Flesher  
10 Downing Street,  
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25th October, 1983

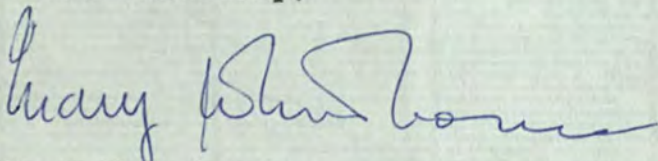
*Dear Mr. Flesher,*

I apologise for troubling you further but this extract from this weeks 'Times Educational Supplement' seemed to me of great significance and I would be grateful if you could draw it to the attention of the Prime Minister, *if you think it appropriate.*

I include also an extract from the current issue of Video Trade Weekly which spells out very clearly the policy of the trade.

With much thanks for your help.

Yours sincerely,



Mary Whitehouse  
President.

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# NEWS

## Censorship power

**IT IS unthinkable for the British Board of Film Censors to be given statutory powers for the censorship of video, according to the BVA.**

The association said the BBFC should be re-named, reconstituted, expanded and made publicly accountable for their policies.

And some procedure should be set up for appeals against BBFC decisions.

BVA chairman Donald MacLean and chief executive Norman Abbott last week told of their doubts over the certification of videos, and other aspects of proposed legislation, leading up to the second reading of Graham Bright's Private Members Bill.

MacLean said: "In so far as the Bill could put force of law behind the BVA's own voluntary classification process, Bright's Bill is welcomed by the association".

But the BVA were still apprehensive and believed that government intervention in a domestic activity was fraught with difficulties.

MacLean and Abbott said it was vital that the Bill did

## 'unthinkable'

not permit prosecution under the 1959 Obscene Publications Act of any videogram that had been officially classified.

Abbott said: "If this provision does not appear in the Bill it will create for videograms a situation of double jeopardy which specifically does not apply to broadcast or performances in a public cinema."

MacLean said there was increasing evidence during recent weeks of inconsistent action against the reputable majority of videograms.

stones of Bright's Bill — are now being flagrantly disregarded.

"If order does not rapidly replace this legal anarchy, then the BBFC will be permanently discredited and the basis of Bright's Bill will have been wrecked before it even sees the light of day.

"We feel most strongly that not only must the categories of classification (U, PG, 15, 18) be the same for both cinema films and videograms, but the manner of applying them must be uniform."

Abbott said: "In other words, a title granted an 18 certificate must not be liable for further cuts in order to be released as a videogram classified as 18.

Abbott also said it was difficult knowing what titles should be stocked in shops, because there was no such things as a list of banned films.

"There are 6,000 titles in the market at the moment and relatively few have been prosecuted," he said.

## Seizing

"In many parts of the country, the police are seizing properly classified videograms, and prosecutions under the 1959 Obscene Publications Act are being instigated against reputable companies who are trading with scrupulous regard for the BBFC categories," he said.

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**ideo special ideo**

# Mark had a video

Michael Vincent on a  
disturbing case history

**I** work in a school which serves to help children with emotional and behavioural problems and, like many of my colleagues, I have become concerned with the impact of video "nasties" upon children's emotional and social development. In the last year there has been within the school a growing concern about the video films children are watching at home. When they are asked "What did you watch on the video last night?" there follows what can only be described as obsessional discussion. They talk at great length and in great detail about the violent film they have just seen - a measure of a "good" film will be the number of "killings" it portrays. How does the daily viewing of scenes of sex and violence by young children effect their thinking and behaviour? Perhaps the following case study begins to provide an answer to this question.

\* \* \* \* \*

**M**ark is now 13. He is a frail looking child who comes from an unsettled home. His father is inconsistent in his behaviour towards his family: he is violent one day, and passive the next. He wants to mould his son into an image of himself, something Mark is currently rejecting. Mark has grown up with violence. He has seen his mother beaten, and has been encouraged by his father to adopt NF slogans and use them at school and in the surrounding council house estate. He has pursued "paki-bashing" activities with his peers, although more as a bystander. His father feels he must impress with the latest technology, even if this means that the family is deprived of food and clothing.

For Mark's father, obtaining a video became a priority and so he bought one. He joined a video club and regularly brought home for family consumption the latest "XX" rated video film. During subsequent weeks Mark watched an increasing number of these films at all hours of the day. He was allowed to invite his friends for repeat showing of the film, often in vivid slow motion in order to experience "the best bits". Instead of having breakfast Mark would watch the video. He would stay up late to watch the video, and then not being able to sleep because of the state of mind he was in. When he did sleep he had nightmares. How did all this affect Mark?

The effect was cumulative over a number of weeks. He looked increasingly tired because he could not sleep and dark patches beneath his eyes became a permanent facial feature. He lost weight because he was not eating breakfast and because he would rush his supper in order to watch the video. He was tired during lessons, finding it difficult to concentrate, and he began to make silly mistakes. He found it hard to learn new work, and his handwriting became smaller and almost illegible. In conversations his voice would shake and he could not keep his hands still. He would laugh nervously and become easily excited when given the chance to talk about his latest obsession: his father's video and the film he saw on it last night. He would embark on rambling conversations with his friends, each of whom would listen with widening eyes to the latest revelation of violence.

All aspects of Mark's academic, emotional and even physical development were affected. His writing focused on describing the latest tale of horror; his art work became a disturbing visual rendering of a mind which was obsessed with violence, with drawings full of torn bodies, blood and individuals killing one another. His emotional stability had notably deteriorated: he was aggressive, moody and tearful, and had become withdrawn and pallid. He found great difficulty in controlling his limbs, and notably in stopping his hands from shaking.

Watching video films could not alone be blamed for this behaviour. It is the incessant and indiscriminate exposure of a child to such violent material which has contributed to the deterioration in Mark's daily presentation. A similar deterioration was noted in his friends, one of whom was only exposed to this material for a week-end. The school has been able to intervene in this case, and Mark no longer has access to these video films. Within a few days he had regained some of his composure. However, the question remains: How much permanent damage had been done to a child who was already emotionally disturbed?



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