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To: Andreas Whittam Smith  
President BBFC

23 Budgen Drive  
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15th June 2000

Sir, PORNOGRAPHIC VIDEOS AND CHILDREN

Further to your article published in "The Independent" on 22nd May inviting comments, mine are as follows.

You are mistaken in your implied claim that pornographic videos are more disturbing to children than accidentally seeing their parents copulating. The latter would be traumatic because of the emotional relationships involved (eg Oedipean). Inadvertently seeing impersonal sexually explicit material would be trivial by comparison.

The censoring by the BBFC of all clear sight of sexual penetration, masturbation or ejaculation is illogical and unwarranted. Magazines explicitly depicting these normal activities are lawfully on sale in sex shops and are taken home by purchasers. This is because juries will no longer find such material obscene if it is published to consenting adults. There is no justification for imposing stricter restrictions on video recordings, still less on "18" films which can only be shown to adults in cinemas. The same law of obscenity should apply.

To avoid being insular, introverted and useless, the research being conducted by the BBFC must encompass other European Union countries, especially Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands and Sweden, in each of which hardcore pornography has been lawful for over 25 years without demonstrable harm to minors, or anyone else.

In addition the BBFC must note the English laws preventing minors having access to alcohol and cigarettes<sup>\*</sup> both of which, unlike video recordings, can be proved to cause demonstrable harm. It is a criminal offence to supply any of these items to minors. That is sufficient for "R18" videos. Censoring the latter as well is unnecessary and unacceptable. There is no justification for denying British adults access to all material, visual or otherwise, which might harm children. That is Orwellian nannyism gone mad!

Yours,

Cllr E Goodman

\* see enclosed copy <sup>'Quality First'</sup> press report.

