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crime justice and the media

CRIME, JUSTICE AND THE MEDIA

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PREFACE

The intention of this book is to provide students (and tutors) with an analysis of the relationship between the media and crime, criminals and the criminal justice system. It considers how crime and criminals have been portrayed by the media over time, and examines a number of specific areas of crime and criminal justice in terms of media representation.

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Crime, Justice and the Media starts with a consideration of the media portrayal of crime and criminals over time. Chapter 2 looks at the major theoretical perspectives on the media and their effects, from the early hypodermic syringe model to the postmodern influence and culture criminology, and applies these to the representation of crime. A separate chapter (Chapter 3) focuses on moral panics and the media's role in establishing and perpetuating such panics – it considers historic and recent examples, including the panics over hoodies and paedophiles. The next three chapters move the focus from media representations of crime to an examination of how the media portray criminals (Chapter 4), victims (Chapter 5), and criminal justice agencies (Chapter 6). In Chapter 4 we look at how the class background and environment, the age, the gender and the ethnicity of offenders influences the way they are shown and reported by the media, and how these categories can and do overlap. The ways in which the media socially construct images of victims, as deserving and undeserving for example, in discussed in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 turns to the media portrayal of the police, the courts and legal system and prisons – in both documentaries and 'real life' commentaries and in fictional contexts. Cybercrime has become one of the most prolific crimes in recent years, especially as the internet has become an integral part of social activity and businesses. Chapter 7 explores the difficulty of locating, reporting on and policing such crime and the problems of finding laws and regulations that achieve a balance between freedom and control. The final chapter (Chapter 8) offers a brief discussion of how the media can play a major role in influencing public opinion toward crime and punishment, and can thereby exert a strong influence on the style and form of punishment that particular societies use.

▨ FEATURES

Crime, Justice and the Media adopts an interactive approach which encourages students to respond to the text and think for themselves. The active engagement of students with the material is something that will distinguish this from other texts in the area and will enable it to be a real teaching resource for tutors. There are reflective questions breaks throughout the book which encourage students to consider perhaps a particular case study or the previous discussion and respond to questions on it. And at the end of the chapter there are suggestions for further reading.

This book, along with the recently published texts *Criminal Justice* (2004) and *Theories of Crime* (2006), has been a collaborative venture and the authors would like to thank Gerhard Boomgarden, Miranda Thirkettle and the rest of the production team at Routledge for their help and support with the development of the text.

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Introduction – A Brief History of the Media Portrayal of Crime and Criminals

A glance at the television schedules for tonight, or the film listings for your local cinema, or the headlines in today's national or local newspapers, will quickly indicate both the vast and seemingly insatiable interest the general population has in crime and criminals, and the key role the media play in portraying and describing all aspects of criminal behaviour. Some of this crime will be fictional, others, 'real life', and our appetite for reading and watching about both appears to be enormous – popular television programmes such as soap operas invariably include criminality in their story lines; television documentaries, news programmes and our newspapers highlight and discuss crime and criminal justice issues on a daily basis. And the knowledge and understanding the public have about crime and criminals is largely based on what they have seen or heard through the various media forms. More generally, it is impossible for us to know through direct experience everything about our society. In a study looking at crime news in the USA, Dorfman (2001) found that over three quarters (76%) of the public said they formed their opinions about crime from what they see or read in the news, more than three times the number of those who said they got their primary information on crime from personal experience (22%).

Given the popular media and general populist interest in this area, it is not surprising that the academic interest in crime and criminal justice is growing – and that there are more and more criminology courses available for students to study, with the consequent increase in the number and range of criminology textbooks such as this one.

Look at TV listings for tonight. How many programmes are clearly focused on crime and criminals? How many other programmes are likely to include criminal incidents in them (e.g. in plays, soap operas, etc.)?

Do a similar exercise with the films at a local cinema.

Look at a couple of newspapers on one particular day (ideally a 'quality' paper such as the *The Guardian*, *The Independent* or *The Times* and a popular one). How many crime stories are there and roughly what proportion of the paper do they account for?

Consider how the different newspapers report those crime stories.

When we look back through history it is apparent that this massive interest in crime and criminals is not just a recent phenomena; and although the forms of media have changed over time they have always reflected and reported on this interest. In the rest of this chapter we will provide an overview of the media reporting and depicting of crime over the last two hundred or so years, and in doing so, will look at how specific criminal cases have been presented by the different media of the day.

While the history of crime goes back way beyond two hundred years ago, this account will focus on the period from the late 1700s/early 1800s – the period of the industrial revolution in the western world and the democratic revolutions in France and the USA. This was a period that led to the development of the social sciences (see Nisbet 1970) and the 'birth of the prison' (Foucault 1977) and, in general terms, the development of what was seen by social theorists of the nineteenth century as the emergence of 'modern society'. In terms of the media, it was a time when the press was expanding and becoming a major source of information – as Sharpe (1999) puts it, 'By the 1760s, another literary form was making its contribution. By that decade it was possible, even in a provincial town, to witness that most modern of phenomena, the significance of a crime wave being amplified by newspaper reporting. In 1765, public fear, engendered by a series of robberies in Colchester, was considerably heightened by the hyperbolic reporting of these offences in *The Chelmsford Chronicle*'.

So our focus in this introductory history of the media reporting of crime will be on the period from the late eighteenth century, through the Victorian period and then the twentieth century. In his writings on the history of the press, Curran (1977) examines how the emerging national and local press in Britain developed its independence in the nineteenth century. He quotes Chaney's (1972) view that 'the British press is generally agreed to have attained its freedom around the middle of the nineteenth century' and argues that this has been reiterated in other histories of the British press. Curran suggests that this 'watershed in British history' came as a consequence of a struggle against state control of the press – while concessions in

terms of press reporting were gained in the eighteenth century it was only in the Victorian era that 'the forces of progress finally triumphed' and an independent press emerged free from the legal and financial control which governments had previously exercised. It should be pointed out that Curran does question this view of a sort of triumphant rise of a free press in Britain – while the emerging press may have performed a 'democratizing function for society' it is important to bear in mind the arguments that the press also served the interest of the powerful groups or classes in society and could be seen as an instrument of social control. We will look at different theoretical perspectives on the media in Chapter 2, and here it is enough to highlight the point that there are different interpretations of the emergence of the media in Britain.

In contemporary society, the media come in a massive and ever growing range of forms and formats. However, in looking at the early part of our historical period our focus will be on the press, which was very much the key media form in the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century. Broadcasting, first radio and then television, developed its mass market in the mid twentieth century. In his account of broadcasting history, Seaton (1981) points out that broadcasting is a social rather than technical invention and that the capacity for transmitting programmes for a mass audience existed long before it was utilized. Indeed, for some time after popular broadcasting started in the 1920s, the radio was seen as 'little more than an experimental toy'. However, once radio manufacturers became aware of the potentially huge market, applications for setting up broadcasting stations expanded. This new development needed to be controlled, and the BBC emerged. This is not the place to go into the academic debates concerning the development of mass broadcasting, but merely to note the emergence of the BBC as the starting point for this form of mass media in Britain and elsewhere.

We will start our review by looking at some examples of early press reporting of particular and well-known crimes. Probably the most (in)famous of all Victorian crimes were the murders attributed to the serial killer Jack the Ripper. These crimes excited a mass interest at the time and still continue to intrigue, even though there have been many more prolific and brutal serial killers since – indeed doing a Google search on 'Jack the Ripper' shows over two million online results. As Creaton (2003) puts it, 'why does one Victorian murderer still exert such world-wide fascination in an age hardly short of its own violent crime?' While a good deal of the interest in this case has been over the supposed identity of Jack the Ripper, we will refer briefly to how the crimes were reported. In 1888, five (or maybe six) prostitutes were killed and mutilated in the East End of London by an unknown murderer who was never caught. The public panic, fuelled by a 'media frenzy', according to Creaton, spread well beyond London. After four months the attacks ended. In his study *Jack the Ripper and the London Press*, Curtis (2001) examined the role of newspaper reporting during the police search for the Ripper, focusing on 15 London-based papers. They were seen as playing a key role in heightening the public's alarm by portraying the East End as inherently dangerous. The press coverage emphasized and exaggerated the stereotypical view of the East End of London as being a 'crime and disease ridden, uncivilized "jungle" full of semi-barbarians' – with the press adopting the name Jack the Ripper (taken from a letter sent to the Central News Agency, almost certainly by

a hoaxer after the fourth murder). And they turned the murders into a media event, assuming all the murders in that area were committed by the Ripper – only five of the nine murders in the Whitechapel area between 1887 and 1888 were eventually attributed to the Ripper, the others being just part of the routine brutality of the area. A great deal of newspaper column space was devoted to these crimes, with the newspapers varying in the amount of graphic detail they printed, with the emphasis being on the violent nature of the murders rather than the sexual aspects. The papers varied in their style of coverage according to their political allegiances, the Liberal and more radical press focusing on the police's incompetence to protect working-class Londoners and the Tory leaning press seeing the crimes as evidence of a growing semi-criminal underclass. Curtis also highlights the speed with which the newspapers managed to get their stories to the public – for instance, the Sunday paper *Lloyds Weekly* gained information about the murder of Catherine Eddowes at 2.10 a.m. on 30 September, 20 minutes after her body was found; and by 4.00 a.m. was able to print a special edition so the news could reach people's homes by breakfast that morning (impressive even by today's high-tech standards).

The almost mythical status attributed to Jack the Ripper is evidenced in contemporary reporting of murders of prostitutes where the name Ripper is typically given to the murderer – especially when the killings are unfolding and the killer has not been found. So the series of murders in Yorkshire in the late 1970s led to the hunt for the 'Yorkshire Ripper' and the more recent killings of five women in Suffolk were accompanied by headlines displaying the same (lack of) originality, such as 'Suffolk Ripper's Rampage' and 'Suffolk Ripper Body Count' (*The Sun*, 13 December 2006).

QUESTION BREAK

Find two web sources of information on Jack the Ripper and his crimes. To what extent does their description focus on – (a) the crime; (b) the criminal; and (c) the victims?

Find two similar sources on the more recent cases of the 'Yorkshire Ripper' (1970s) and the 'Suffolk Ripper' (2006). Compare the coverage of these cases with the earlier one in terms of the crime, the offenders and the victims.

Of course, reporting of brutal and sensational crime was commonplace well before these late nineteenth-century murders; however, the development of a national daily press allowed for the unfolding of a crime story to be developed – and the activities of a serial killer certainly fitted into that category of crime reporting. Other crimes got massive press coverage, both in Britain and elsewhere. Cohen (1998) cites the brutal murder of New York prostitute Helen Jewett in 1836 as being the event that 'inaugurated a sex-and-death sensationalism in news reporting' – a style of reporting very typical of contemporary media accounts. Helen Jewett was an intriguing and mysterious figure who had a number of aliases that encouraged the press to try and

outdo each other in trying to establish her identity. It turned out that Jewett was herself the source of the various different stories about her, fabricating versions of her life and circumstances to build up her clientele. Unlike many prostitutes of her time (and indeed of other times) Jewett had gained a good education and used this to establish working relationships with only selected, 'suitable' clients. However, this changed in April 1836 when one of her 'suitors' violently slashed her to death and set her brothel room on fire. The case became a classic who-done-it and encouraged the new style of reporting referred to above. As Cohen (1998) suggested:

> Up until the 1830s, most standard newspapers were very low key about crime reporting, considering it to be beneath newsworthiness or else too local to put into print. But a new kind of newspaper had emerged by mid-decade, the penny press, a humorous, irreverent, and cheap daily paper that claimed crime as news. There were three or four such papers in competition with each other in New York City in 1836, and they latched onto the Jewett murder, taking different views of it as a way to pump up circulation figures.

Another popular form of nineteenth-century media reporting of crime was printed transcripts of court cases. Publishers of these transcripts chose trials that had particular appeal – those exposing the more bizarre, mysterious or humorous cases. Nowadays these trial pamphlets look rather quaint, but they certainly captured the public interest in their day. The one detailing the trial of Albert Tirrell in 1846 sold in large numbers. Tirrell was a young man from a respectable family who murdered a prostitute in Boston and set her brothel on fire; however, his ingenious lawyer convinced the jury that Tirrell had been sleepwalking. The Tirrell pamphlet went through a number of re-printings, selling over 80,000 copies in less than a month (Crain 2002).

Trial pamphlets included those dealing with divorce cases (divorce still being a relatively rare occurrence) as well as criminal trials. Trials that involved particularly gory murders and those involving celebrities were typically popular. Another example of a trial transcript cited by Crain was *The Trial of Hon. Daniel E. Sickles*. Sickles shot his wife's lover Philip Barton Key, who was the son of the author of 'The Star Spangled Banner', giving the case a 'celebrity angle' as well. In addition to their entertainment value, the trial pamphlets were also used as evidence in court and cited as precedent in some cases.

So the penny press and trial pamphlets provided popular coverage of crime and criminal justice in the nineteenth century. Reporters were sent to court every day to write daily instalments, which were collected and issued as pamphlets at the end of the trial.

In a renowned and widely cited study of the history of street crime in Britain, Geoffrey Pearson (1983) examined the way the popular media had described and reported crime and criminals over the last two hundred or so years. He argued that popular accounts of crime showed how important it was not to view criminality in modern society as a new or unique problem. In a journey back through the history of crime and delinquency and of the popular responses to it, Pearson shows

that for generations, Britain has been plagued by the same problems and fears. As his historical account made extensive use of contemporary journalistic reporting of crime, it is worth considering Pearson's study in a little detail. His history of street crime starts by looking at current accounts of youth crime – and as the book was published in 1983, this period was the late 1970s and early 1980s. Pearson argues that as each generation tends to look back with nostalgia and fondness to the recent past, it is sensible to start with present day society and compare it with the situation a generation previously, and to compare that generation with its predecessor and so on. While there are bound to be methodological difficulties in comparing different periods of time – given the changing definitions of crime and the lack of adequate records of crime in previous times – an impression of the extent and form of street crime and, particularly, of the popular concerns about it, can be gained by looking at contemporary media accounts.

QUESTION BREAK

Before the summary of Pearson's study below, think about the images of youth at different periods of history.

How are youths typically portrayed in the media today? (Consider newspaper and television representations.)

Going back a generation, how would you describe the youth of the 1970s? What media images can you recall of 1970s youth?

Do the same for youth of the 1960s and 1950s.

As mentioned, Pearson starts his history by looking at the 'fears' of crime, and how they were reported, in the early 1980s – indeed the subtitle of his study is 'a history of respectable fears'. Here we will just provide a few newspaper headlines and comments from some of the periods Pearson considered. His study, then, commences with concerns over the inner-city riots or disorders of 1980 and 1981 and the popular media interpretation of these events as demonstrating a new and previously unknown violence in Britain. As *The Daily Express* put it in July 1981, 'there has been a revulsion of authority and discipline … there has been a permissive revolution … and now we all reap the whirlwind' and 'People are bound to ask what is happening to our country … having been one of the most law-abiding countries in the world – a byword for stability, order and decency – are we changing into somewhere else?' In similar vein, in March 1982, *The Daily Telegraph* was suggesting that 'we need to consider why the peaceful people of England are changing … over the 200 years up to 1945, Britain became so settled in internal peace.' Indeed, Pearson points to the consistently expressed view that Britain's history has been based on stability

and decency and that the moderate 'British way of life' is being undermined by an upsurge in delinquency.

However, 20 years or so previously, we find remarkably similar comments and press accounts. Youth subcultures such as the Teddy Boys in the 1950s and Mods and Rockers in the early 1960s were arousing similarly apocalyptic warnings of the end of 'civilized' British society. The reaction to the Teddy Boys was one of outrage and panic, with the press printing sensational reports of violence at cinemas and concerts featuring rock and roll films and music. An article in the London *Evening News* of 1954 suggested that 'Teddy Boys … are all of unsound mind in the sense that they are all suffering from a form of psychosis. Apart from the birch or the rope, depending on the gravity of their crimes, what they need is rehabilitation in a psychopathic institution'. And this sort of reaction was widespread; Teddy Boys were viewed by the rest of society as 'folk devils', to use Stan Cohen's phrase (see p. 40), and off-duty soldiers were banned from wearing Teddy Boy suits. Nowadays, when we look back at old photographs and films of these youth subcultures, it is difficult to imagine what all the fuss was about and groups such as the Teddy Boys are remembered with a degree of nostalgia – however, the hostile reaction and panic at the time was real and is illustrated by the media of the day.

The Mods and Rockers of the early 1960s excited similar media reaction. In a now famous comment, made during a press conference scene shown in the Beatles' movie *A Hard Day's Night*, Ringo Starr responded that he was a 'Mocker' in response to being asked whether he was a Mod or a Rocker. This was at a time when those youth groups were beginning to be news and the media of the day played a big part in creating this (and other) divisions within British youth culture. At a time when the Hell's Angels were gaining publicity and notoriety in the USA, the British press were looking for an equivalent. The phenomenon of scooter gangs – the Mods – versus motorbike gangs – the Rockers – was developed (if not caused) by the press reports of two days of comparatively mild violence in Clacton, Essex over the Easter Bank Holiday weekend of 1964. Headlines such as 'Wild Ones Invade Seaside' and 'Day of Terror by Scooter Groups' were followed up by TV and newspaper reporting of clashes between youth groups and the police at Margate over the May Bank Holiday – with the *Daily Mirror*, May 1964 front-page headline, 'Wild Ones "Beat Up" Margate', illustrating the tone of this reporting. The media response to and reporting of these post-war youth subcultures is discussed in more detail in relation to Stan Cohen's work on moral panics later (see pp. 41–45).

Returning to Pearson's historical overview, his study then looks back to the 1920s and 1930s to see if Britain before the Second World War was a more stable and law-abiding society, given that the War has sometimes been seen as a kind of watershed with the post-war period viewed as morally inferior to the 'life and culture of pre-war England'. However, when we look more closely at this period familiar allegations and concerns appear, with the media homing in on similar targets of criticism such as football hooliganism and increasing crime and disorder. As *The Times* put it in 1937, 'There has been a tendency of late to paint a rather alarming picture of the depravity of the youth of the nation … Headlines scream the menace of "boy gangsters"'. It is clear that crime was rife in the inter-war years and was characterized by razor gangs, feuds between armed gangsters, vice rackets and so on.

Moving back to the late 1800s and early 1900s there is little evidence of the traditional British way of life based on a 'healthy respect for law and order' and as ever the youth of the day were compared unfavourably with previous generations. Indeed, Pearson describes the founding of the Boy Scout movement by Baden-Powell as a response to the widely held feeling that British youth were a major problem. In 'Scouting for Boys', published in 1908, Baden-Powell comments that:

> We have at the present time in Great Britain 2 million boys of whom a quarter to a half a million are under good influence outside their school walls ... The remainder are drifting towards 'hooliganism' or bad citizenship.

It was in the late 1890s that the words 'hooligan' and 'hooliganism' were first used to describe delinquent youth and there were regular newspaper reports of hooligan gangs smashing up coffee stalls and public houses, robbing and assaulting old ladies, foreigners and the police. As with many later youth subcultures and gangs, the hooligans had a distinct look and style of dress and were no doubt over-reacted to – although, again, at the time the media and public reaction was one of alarm and panic.

Earlier in the Victorian period, in the 1860s, a major panic swept through respectable London over a new type of crime called 'garotting', a type of violent robbery that involved choking the victim. The press of the time reacted in familiar style, with *The Times* observing that it was 'becoming unsafe for a man to traverse certain parts of London at night'.

Similarly, it does not seem to be the case that it was industrialization that destroyed a stable and peaceful pre-industrial Britain – from the late seventeenth century there were complaints of increasing crime and disorder, while the streets of London were extremely dangerous, with no effective system of street lighting nor a police force.

Time and again, then, a permissive present is contrasted with the not too distant past and if such accusations were accepted uncritically, we would be forced to conclude that with each generation crime and disorder have increased dramatically. Looking back over Pearson's historical review it is difficult to believe that Britain's cities are any more perilous nowadays than those of pre-industrial Britain or when they were frequented by garrotters and hooligans. What Pearson shows is that a pre-occupation with violence and lawlessness is part of a long tradition, rather than a uniquely modern phenomenon, and that media commentaries have taken a similarly outraged and moralistic stance over many years.

In a more recent analysis of press reporting of crime, Reiner *et al.* (2003) looked at the media reporting of crime from the end of the Second World War in 1945 to the 1990s. In particular, they analysed samples of stories from *The Times* and the *Daily Mirror*, in order to compare a 'quality/broadsheet' paper with a 'popular/tabloid' one. They considered a random 10% of all home news stories between 1945 and 1991 as the basis for their analysis. Their study was set in the context of a review of previous work on media representations of crime, whereby they highlighted certain distinctive characteristics of the media reporting of crime stories. Reiner and colleagues aimed to consider whether their content analysis supported these general findings.

These key characteristics of the media reporting of crime stories are summarized below:

- Both news (factual) and entertainment (fictional) crime stories are prominent in all media;
- These stories overwhelmingly focus on serious violent crime, especially murder;
- Offenders and victims in these stories are of higher status and older than actual offenders and victims (as processed by the criminal justice system);
- The risks of crime are portrayed as more serious than the actual figures on victimization would indicate;
- The effectiveness of the police and the wider criminal justice system tends to be shown in a positive light;
- Stories focus on specific cases and events rather than on general trends or policy issues.

(adapted from Reiner *et al.* 2003, pp. 15–16)

Without going into great detail on their study, Reiner and colleagues found that the reporting of violent crime was as great in *The Times* as in *The Daily Mirror*, although the reporting of sex offences was slightly lower. Over the period of their study, they found that the reporting of property crime declined markedly and was only rarely reported at the end of the period unless such crime related to celebrities or had some particularly unusual features. This is in contrast to the fact that over 90% of officially reported crime is property crime. Fraud stories were reported more frequently in *The Times* than the *Daily Mirror*, as were drug offences. In relation to the list of general characteristics highlighted above, the majority of offenders in the crime reports were older than the official figures would suggest and of a higher social status. Overall, they found that 'the pattern of crime news found in previous studies holds for most of the half-century we studied – but even more so … Crime in the news is overwhelmingly violent … Perpetrators and victims are typically older and higher in social status than their counterparts in the official statistics. The police are presented as honest and effective guardians of the public against crime' (Reiner *et al.* 2003, p. 24).

QUESTION BREAK

Look at two current newspapers from the same day (possibly use the ones suggested for the question break on page 2 – a 'popular' and a 'quality' newspaper).

Compare their reporting of crime stories to the findings of Reiner *et al.* (2003) and consider the extent to which they support the differences between quality and popular newspapers referred to above.

One aspect of this study, the reporting of victims of crime, did indicate a significant change in approach over the period of the study. They referred to a case of serious child abuse reported in the *Daily Mirror* in 1945 – after detailing the injuries to a two-year-old girl the majority of the story focused on the offender, who was sentenced to six months hard labour and whose behaviour was explained by the suffering he endured in the war. Reiner and colleagues point out the absence of any demonization of the offender and the concern with understanding his point of view. Recent cases of child abuse are reported in a very different manner, with much more emotional language to emphasize the offender's evilness (see Chapter 3, pp. 60–65).

In the following chapters, we will be referring to the reporting of particular crimes to illustrate wider arguments and comment on, for example, moral panics, media portrayal of criminals and victims and of criminal justice agencies. It is clear that certain crimes become massive media stories and capture the interest and mood of a particular time. Studying the manner of the reporting of these crimes is essential for an understanding of the relationship between the media and crime and here we will refer briefly to such 'signal crimes' (Innes 2003).

Recent such crimes in Britain include the killings of Rhys Jones (2007), Anthony Walker (2005), Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in Soham (2002), Damilola Taylor (2000), Sarah Payne (2000), Stephen Lawrence (1993) and James Bulger (1993). In all these cases, the victims were children/youths and the detailed and extensive media reporting led to a social reaction that seemed to go well beyond the cases themselves. They lead to, as Innes puts it, 'widespread popular concern that it signals that something is wrong with British society and its criminal justice process, which requires some sort of corrective response' (2003, p. 51). Innes defines signal crimes as 'events that, in addition to affecting the immediate participants (i.e. victims, witnesses, offenders) and those known to them, impact in some way upon a wider audience'. Such crimes are responded to with decisions to do something about preventing such crimes in future through more policing, better risk-avoidance techniques, situational crime-prevention measures, and so on.

The response to such crimes overlaps with the notion of moral panics (Cohen 1972 and see Chapter 3) and the way in which the media present key factors as representing a symbolically loaded 'crime problem' which then leads to the wider population, egged on by the media, demanding that something be done, typically through widening the 'social control net' (Cohen 1985). In concluding his discussion, Innes argues that, in order to understand such signal crimes, it is necessary to examine the role of journalists and broadcasters in relation to the activities of the police and criminal justice system, with the police, for instance, often actively encouraging media publicity for a case so as to assist them in their detection work. Indeed, it is often in the interests of both detectives and journalists to work together to, on the one hand, get help in 'cracking' the case and, on the other hand, to get a 'newsworthy' story. However, such collaboration will, according to Innes, amplify the signal value of a crime and 'either intentionally or unintentionally transform it into a focal point for public concerns about crime and crime control'.

These signal crimes, though, do not just relate to child or youthful victims, who are perceived as innocent and/or defenceless, and we will finish by considering the coverage of the recent murders of prostitutes in and around Ipswich, Suffolk in 2006.

The Suffolk Ripper murders – 2006

As mentioned, it is conventional and sensible to compare the coverage of a particular event or crime provided in a quality newspaper with that from a popular newspaper – in old terminology to compare a broadsheet with a tabloid (although the quality newspapers in Britain have now abandoned the broadsheet format).

Below, we include extracts from *The Sun* and *The Guardian*. Read them and consider the questions at the end.

Suffolk Ripper Body Count Rises
The bodies of two more victims of the Suffolk Ripper were found yesterday – taking the monster's grim tally to FIVE.

The dead girls are thought to be missing Ipswich hookers Annette Nicholls, 29, and Paula Clennell, 24.

Shaken cops described the shocking speed at which the fiend is claiming his victims as 'unprecedented'. He has murdered the five prostitutes – all were Heroin addicts and three were mothers – in less than six weeks.

By comparison, it took Yorkshire Ripper Peter Sutcliffe SIX YEARS to kill the first five of his 13 victims. And his reign of terror in the 1970s and 1980s spanned a total of 11 years …

The spree has already equalled the toll of the original Ripper – Jack, who strangled prostitutes in London in 1888 …

It is thought the Suffolk monster murders girls, then STORES their bodies before disposing of them at the dead of night from his car or van …

Experts offered a series of theories about the Ripper's motives and actions.

Psychologist Dr Wilson, 63, said: 'The killer seems to have embarked on a rampage – a kind of pre-Christmas spree … He seems to be racing against time to kill as many times as possible before he is caught. And he is certainly not going to stop until he is caught. He is killing at a much faster rate than Peter Sutcliffe did, possibly because he fears he could get caught at any moment and wants to pack in as much excitement as possible'.

From: Troop J. and Sullivan M. *The Sun* 13 December 2006

Snatched, Killed and Discarded
The man walking along Old Felixstowe Road, near the village of Levington, could not be sure at first. In the failing light he stepped off the road and approached the darkened form. Only then was he sure. She was naked, lying in the wet scrubland where she had been dumped. It was 3.05 pm.

Forty minutes later a police helicopter hovered over the open ground south of Ipswich as detectives sealed off the area and covered the body with tarpaulin …