

READING - "Famous People"

You are going to read a newspaper article about the British media's treatment of famous people. Then do the multiple choice.



Week after week, British tabloid newspapers carry pictures which intrude into people's privacy and break the newspaper editors' code of practice. Although pop stars do pose for paparazzi on occasion, this is not typical. More usually, great damage is done to individuals **in the public eye** when they see their most private moments captured on the front page. Yet very few call on the services of the Press Complaints Commission (PCC), an organization that was set up to deal with issues of this kind.

Rarely, if ever, are these pictures in the public interest. Do intimate shots of pop stars help to detect a crime? In what way did the picture of a famous actress on a hotel bedroom balcony protect public health and safety? The actress has made a fuss about long-lens pictures in the past and since she was in a hotel, a place where, to quote the code of practice, "there is a reasonable expectation of privacy," she had good cause for complaint, but she didn't take any action.

That the PCC did not launch an investigation itself is a scandal. It should also be looking into the outrageous story published recently about a pop star's love life. The pop star, like the famous actress, has held back from making a formal complaint. Shouldn't the PCC take the initiative on **this** and other shameful attacks?

To begin with, this seems like a great idea. It would surely lead to many decisions against newspapers. These would be reported by their rivals and broadcast on TV and radio. The public would not be sympathetic and editors would have to refuse to publish such material. Even photographers would be affected, no longer finding it financially possible to spend their days hidden behind trees waiting to snap unsuspecting celebrities.

If the PCC decided to take on this role of "police officer", which it technically could, there would be several problems. How would it decide whether or not to launch an inquiry? Should it approach the victim and encourage him or her to make a complaint? And if the person involved still refused to do anything, should it proceed nevertheless? In addition, celebrities and members of royalty might well expect that any story involving them would be taken up, and then be outraged to find it wasn't. Above all, the role itself is too enormous. How could the PCC realistically monitor the whole of the British press: national, regional and magazines?

Then there is the embarrassment factor to consider. However seriously someone's privacy has been invaded, would they really want the further embarrassment of an investigation? I suspect the majority simply want to put it behind them and get on with their lives. Of course, one or two may have other reasons for keeping quiet. A worse story may exist, that they have managed to keep from the press, and they realize that this may also become public knowledge if they complain. In other words, even the PCC might become the enemy.

One British comedian also suffered at the hands of the press when he and his wife were secretly photographed on their honeymoon in the Caribbean. He didn't complain then, nor more recently, when he and his family were again victims of a sneak photographer during a family holiday. His reason for this was fear that the newspaper, "News of the World" would re-run the pictures with a new story about his "fury", saying that they thought it was just a bit of fun, and that, being a film star who made comedies, they thought he had a sense of humor. This fear is understandable. People believe they will again become targets if they dare to challenge the tabloids. It is hard to see an easy solution to this serious problem.

1. What does the phrase "in the public eye" in line 6 mean?
A of great appeal B in the news C under attack D on screen

2. Why would the actress have had reason to complain recently?
A The photographer had not used a long lens.
B Her personal safety had been threatened.
C The newspaper had criticized her acting.
D She had been in a fairly private place.

3 What does "this" (highlighted in bold in paragraph 3) refer to?
A the story about the pop star
B the PCC's lack of initiative
C the pop star's complaint
D the picture of the actress

4 If the PCC became more involved, the writer believes that
A TV and radio would take over the role of newspapers.
B newspaper editors could no longer behave in the same way
C photographers would demand more money for their work
D members of the public might stop buying newspapers

5 Why would it be difficult for the PCC to take action?
A It would never be able to persuade anyone to help
B Famous people would regularly object to the PCC.
C There would be too many cases to investigate.
D No rules actually exist to allow the PCC to act.

6 According to the writer, most famous people
A would rather forget about what has taken place.
B have something further to hide from the press
C regard the PCC in a negative way
D are used to being embarrassed in public

7 The comedian chose not to complain because
A he didn't want to make his wife more upset than she was.
B he believed the press would link his career with the story.
C he hadn't really minded the pictures being printed.
D he was worried that his family might see the pictures

8 What would be a suitable title for this article?
A Media attention is welcomed by the stars
B The truth behind the latest shocking pictures
C A Public organization is facing a difficult decision

