

## Another Sick 'Gotcha' GMTV Style

**Broadcasters should really know better than broadcast scenes of horrific violence at breakfast, says Lyra McKee.**

GMTV, the morning broadcaster, received a wrap on the knuckles this week from the television watchdog Ofcom, for showing what they called “exceptionally violent” footage of a knife attack on two young students. All this before people had finished their cornflakes.

After many years in the breakfast broadcasting business you'd think programme editors would avoid compounding their error by trying to defend their actions. Apparently not. The broadcaster continues to insist that it did nothing wrong. Tasteful or what?

My mother watches GMTV every morning and had the misfortune of seeing those images. “Brutal” was the word she used to describe the scene. Hours later the images continued to haunt her. If that was the effect the scene had on a grown woman. Can you imagine what a child watching it would have felt?

Common sense should have told the producers and news editors at GMTV that this footage was not suitable for breakfast time television. Who, generally, arises at seven o'clock in the morning, aside from commuters preparing to go to work? Mums, grans, and, of course, children.

This has developed into a moral issue. GMTV risked traumatising sensitive viewers (and upsetting the families of those murdered even more) in the unending quest for ratings. Their judgment was questionable and they continue to fail to disguise what most viewers already know. GMTV is no longer a quality news station and it is even questionable to say it ever was. It relies on sensationalism, scandal, titillation and trivia - 'Ooh my God, look at Posh Beck's new hairstyle.' And it is not the only supposed “news” gatherer guilty of those particular ‘crimes’ against journalism.

When US troops killed Saddam Hussein's two sons, the Sun newspaper published photos of their mutilated bodies. I was about twelve or thirteen at the time and had been reading the paper since I was eight.

Since the Sun considers itself to be a family newspaper—though the presence of page 3 “lovelies” does suggest otherwise—I assumed that the images would not be overly graphic. Word of advice here, never assume anything when it comes to the media! I couldn't rid myself of the sight of their faces. Even now, I fear writing about the experience, in case the images resurface in my consciousness.

### About this team

This article was written by Lyra McKee, 16, from our Belfast newsroom. It was published on the [Reach for the Sky](#) website.

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