

A Snap Too Far

Will the press be responsible for the introduction of a new privacy law? Lyra McKee thinks so.

Yes! They've finally done it! The scandal thirsty media in Hong Kong or to be more specific the "paps" have nailed their own coffin well and truly shut. Our snap happy friends have finally overstepped the fine line between doing their job and stalking celebrities for gratuitous titillation.

This time their telephoto lenses were focused on the young songstress, Gillian Chung, as she adjusted her bra backstage during a concert. No doubt there will be a rise in sales of Agent Provocateur lingerie in China.

If only that was the sole consequence of their foolish behaviour it wouldn't matter at all. Last week the actor Jackie Chan and other celebs marched to Hong Kong's Government headquarters to hand over a petition urging the politicians to tighten the laws regarding "lads' mags" and "gossip rags". Needless to say the local hacks are fuming and screaming censorship!

Inevitably the introduction of these laws will mean a return to some degree of press censorship. The ill-judged actions of a few could result in the punishment of the many. It would be foolish to think that it couldn't happen here.

If the British and European paparazzi and tabloid editors don't toe the line or practice some sort of self-censorship these laws will soon be introduced in our country. And who's to say that it will stop there? Tony Blair and his like will have the media by the scruff of the neck over every little bit of gossip they write about, or for every photo they take. And maybe he'd be right too.

If the Chinese government bows to the pressure - and let's face it, they've done so in the past - then journalists, photographers and every other media practitioner will suffer. Needless to say so, also, will the truth.

All of us are responsible for this fascination with the sordid goings on in the lives of the rich and famous. If we didn't want to read about it and see the pictures there would be no-one to write about it or take the photos. You get the media you deserve, I suppose. I know I have had that fascination and I really shouldn't.

If things carry on as they are then governments will act and the media will pay for their past indiscretions. Strangely enough, this was a moment foreseen by many people, an accident, we all knew, that was waiting to happen.

There is little point in journalists complaining and shouting about censorship now. It's too late. The damage has already been done. Where were these journalists when the stars complained before about media intrusion? They should have listened earlier and got their house in order. Today it is Hong Kong tomorrow it will be the world. Journalists, paparazzi and editors the world over will have nobody to blame for future censorship but themselves.

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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