

HON DIRECTOR

David Kennington Litt.D.,

Elizabeth Goodfellow BA, Alexander Barrie AADipl, MAIE

NO/DAW/DP

11th August 1987

Ms. Lesley Aston,  
Information Officer,  
Independent Broadcasting Authority,  
70, Brompton Road,  
London, SW3 1FY.

Dear Ms. Aston,

Thank you so much for sending the copy of Barrie Gunter's and Michael Svennevig's research monograph "Behind and in Front of the Screen" which I and my committee will read and study with great interest.

During our telephone conversation last week, you mentioned another IBA research project which was due to be published later on in the year. I assume that this the survey emotively reported in last Friday's "Daily Mail", which claims to have acquired a 'draft copy'.

It appears from what I've read in that newspaper and heard on BBC Radio that the "Daily Mail"'s reportage of the survey (assuming that the copy that was 'leaked' to them is authentic) is, to say the least, distorted and, I would suggest, irresponsibly inflammatory. This does not, of course, surprise me since it was the "Daily Mail" which was largely responsible for inciting the quite unwarranted hysteria over so-called 'video-nasties' and which led to the introduction of the 1984 Video Recordings Act, which chillingly imposes 'Orwellian' state pre-censorship, something which I and the NCROPA thought we had seen the back of with the demise of the Lord Chamberlain's censoring powers by the passing of the 1968 Theatres Act.

What does surprise and worry me, however, is how one national newspaper has been able to obtain an advance copy of a publication from a Government-appointed body like the IBA. Obviously the NCROPA itself wishes to comment on such an important piece of research and, if appropriate as seems likely here, to try to redress any imbalance or wrongly-drawn conclusions that the "Daily Mail" may have published. However, we are at an impossible disadvantage when we and other interested parties have not had access to the research for ourselves.

I feel sure that you and the IBA are as concerned by this leaked report, and the premature comment on it arising thereby, as we are and it would be interesting to know how it occurred. I shall, of course, be most grateful to see a copy as soon as it is available so that we can be as fully briefed as possible before the Government's Green Paper on broadcasting is published in the Autumn. I also very much hope that you will be able to arrange for me to visit your library, as already discussed.

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Once again, many thanks for the Research Monograph and for your very kind help.

Yours sincerely,

David Webb,  
Honorary Director,  
National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts