

## **Killed by the 'Subhuman': Jane Longhurst's Murder and the Construction of the 'Extreme Pornography' Problem in the British National Press**

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**Abstract :** This paper looks at the crucial role of the British news media in the construction of extreme pornography as a social problem, suggesting that this paved the way for the subsequent criminalization of such material through the introduction of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008. Focusing on the high-profile case of Graham Coutts, it examines the British national press' reaction to Jane Longhurst's murder through a qualitative content analysis of 251 relevant news articles. Specifically, the paper documents the key arguments expressed in the corresponding claims-making process. It considers the different ways in which the consequent 'trial by media' presented this exceptional case as the 'tip of the iceberg' and eventually translated into policy. The analysis sheds light on the attempts to 'piggyback' the issue of extreme pornography on child sexual abuse images as well as the textual and visual mechanisms used to establish an 'us versus them' dichotomy in the pertinent media discourse. Finally, the paper assesses the severity of the actual risk posed by extreme pornography, concluding that its criminalization should not merely be dismissed as the outcome of an institutionalized media panic.

**Keywords :** criminalization, extreme pornography, social problem, trial by media

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