

Savile/BBC/Mail/Media

Tuesday, 23 October 2012

Are these allegations true?

Or are they exaggerated?

Are we, as a species, unable to ask this question? The media rule appears to be - believe any and all claims of sexual abuse.

Why? Because, in most cases, it's a private event; one person's word against another's.

Of course, when one party is dead, it's impossible to prove it either way.

But shouldn't our assumptions be - 50/50. Might be true; might not.

The famous police/CPS and (thanks to Michael Howard) legal proof is... similar accusations are evidence.

This relies on the witnesses not having met and compared details.

It does not take into account THIRD PARTIES - police officers or journalists - being the conduit between witnesses. In most cases, with honest and honourable police or hacks, this does not influence statements. But if there's a motive ("a good story"... "promotion due to high profile convictions"... "targets"...) such assistance (often unintentional) exists.

Why would people lie or inflate stories? Money, compensation, greed, a desire for sympathy, attention, revenge, "victim empathy", delusion - there are dozens of very genuine reasons.

The answer? Lie detectors? Not much use if the victim clearly has convinced herself or himself that their imaginary abuse actually happened.

It's not the false accusers I find disturbing. It's the outsiders simply accepting their claims. When I see John Whittingdale MP (a man I know personally to be honest and decent) talk about "revelations" as opposed to "allegations", I realise... even considering the other solution is apparently impossible for most people.