

1: Influencing the Judicial Mind: Effective Written Advocacy in Practice by Andrew Goodman

The requirement to produce skeleton arguments has been with us for 10 years, but written advocacy remains in its infancy. Court of Appeal judges admit that cases are decided before oral argument on the strength of written advocacy.

What exactly is the relationship between the mass media and crime? The media serves as the primary public source of crime information. Christie argues this is so because people do not interact to the extent they once did, leading to greater social alienation. This results in an increased reliance on media for updates and news on a local and regional level. It also means reliance on the state for coping with the perceived dangers. But if the state seems to fail in handling these matters efficiently, then the public often looks upon to populist forces beyond it which promise solutions. The news media are not mirrors, simply reflecting events in society. Rather media content is shaped by economic and marketing considerations that frequently override traditional journalistic criteria for newsworthiness. The exaggeration of both the nature and extent of crime in reporting enlarges the size of this problem and the public is left alarmed about public order and safety. Because the popular media is the most consumed source of information, it also serves as an excellent inflammatory agent to public opinion at crucial times when the public opinions have can sway political decisions. Sensational crime reporting remains a staple for newspapers because it is guaranteed to boost ratings, and is increasingly presented in a style formerly associated with tabloids. After all, rating mean profits and crime sells. It has been observed that society has become more violent since the advent of the modern media industry. The arrival and growth of film, television and, latterly, computer technologies, have served to intensify public anxieties. Furthermore, the media while reporting a crime or covering a trial tend to focus more on the personal aspects by going into detail about the victims subjective emotional experiences, and ignoring the objective statistical data and most expert commentary. This approach reinforces common perceptions of crime and punitiveness but diminish chances to help truly inform public opinion. This is also the most compelling reason as to why many politicians prefer to write regularly for the popular media rather than the quality press. Fearful individuals opt for immediate and extreme solutions to the crime problem, causing their policy preferences to become punitive rather than preventative. Several research studies have established the link of increased fear to exposure to the news media. For example, recent research found a positive correlation between frequency of television watching and fear, though only for certain program types. These studies found fear levels were heightened among viewers who watched more local news, reality, and tabloid programs, though consumption of national news and news magazines were not related to fear. Thus it can be concluded that media plays a crucial role in determining the strength of the relationship between the institutions of justice and the public perception of them. All rights reserved The views expressed in this website are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.

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