



Jimmy Savile was not a 'sex scandal'

Last night, I caught the first 25 minutes of Panorama's latest documentary After Savile, No More Secrets? I only caught the first 25 minutes because that's all my TV recorded, possibly to save my head from exploding.

This is the write up of the program:

"Why was it so easy for paedophiles like Jimmy Savile to get away with abusing children? In other countries evidence of abuse must be reported to the authorities. But here, turning a blind eye to child abuse in a school, or a hospital, or a church is not a crime. Reporter Sanchia Berg talks to victims, police and senior figures who are now calling for Britain to change the law and uncovers secret files which show that the government knew for decades that children's homes and schools covered up abuse. Head teachers and governors routinely moved abusers, sending them on with a good reference, rather than call the police. Even today, some head teachers still fail to act on reports and complaints."

It reads as though it would be an important investigation into the legacy of the revelations about Jimmy Savile and the changes to the law to make reporting child abuse mandatory. Both of which are topics which require much more public investigation.

Unfortunately, the BBC seemed rather incapable of labelling Jimmy Savile a child rapist. Instead, they went for that age old twaddle of the "sex scandal" as if Jimmy Savile raping vulnerable children was on par with a politician cheating on his wife.

How precisely do we plan on ending rape culture and protecting vulnerable children from sexual predators if we can't even get the language right?

Raping a child isn't a "sex scandal".

Covering up the crimes of a serial sexual predator because he was famous isn't a sex scandal.

They are both criminal behaviour and everyone who knew about Savile's crimes against children should be prosecuted. A number of senior people in the BBC, NHS and elsewhere should be the focus of criminal investigations for doing nothing; as should members of the police who did nothing.

But, first we need to start changing the language we use. The term "sex scandal" is not appropriate when discussing a sexual predator. The term elides responsibility from the perpetrator and minimises the crime committed on children.

We owe our children more than this and the BBC needs to start by taking some responsibility for continually using victim-blaming languages in their reports.

Jimmy Savile was a serial child rapist; not a sex scandal.



Everyday Victim Blaming

challenging institutional disbelief around domestic & sexual violence and abuse
<http://everydayvictimblaming.com>

BBC link: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03hd8bp>