

Thai Girl Raped by Boys Copying TV Love Scene

BANGKOK— The alleged gang rape of a 10-year old girl by eight boys, who said they were copying a scene from a television soap, prompted calls from Thai officials for the media to tone down portrayals of sex.

Police Lt. Col. Suthee Naerakantee, chief of Bangkok's Bangmod police station, said the boys, aged between 10 and 15 years, were taken into police custody on 2 January after the alleged rape of the girl, whom the boys said was their friend.

The young suspects told investigators that they had been mimicking a love scene from a television drama and ended up raping her, Suthee said. They will be handed over to the Social Welfare Department, which will decide how to handle the case, he said.

Dr. Thanu Chattananondh, deputy director-general of the Mental Health Department, told Ruam Duay Chuay Kan radio network here that sex abuse was often motivated by portrayals of sex in the media and urged television networks and newspapers to reduce such coverage.

There is growing criticism in Thailand of the lewd and gory content, particularly on the front pages of mass circulation dailies. The top-selling newspaper provoked a public outcry by publishing a picture

of a naked Chinese woman being arrested for prostitution during the last week of December 2001.

In another case of child sexual abuse, a 12-year-old girl was rescued by police from prostitution. She told investigators she had been forced by a pimp to provide sexual services to clients, including two senior police officers.

Police Maj. Gen. Surasit Sangkhaphong, chief of the Crime Suppression Division, said charges would be filed against the officers if investigators found that the accusation proved true.

A 43-year-old woman, Waew Suknoon, was detained in police custody on charges of forcing a girl to work as a prostitute. Waew's 16-year-old daughter was also arrested and sent to a juvenile detention centre for allegedly helping her procure sexual services, police said.

Source: The Star Online, 4 January 2002, <http://www.thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2002/1/4/asia/tsex&newspage=Search>

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