



2017-52 Louise Yasinchuk vs Timmins Daily Press

*July 21, 2017 – for immediate release*

The National NewsMedia Council has dismissed a complaint from Louise Yasinchuk about bias, inaccuracy and lack of opportunity to provide response related to a May 12, 2017 article, “Perp avoids jail while victim haunted by assault”, in the Timmins Daily Press.

The complainant identified the accused as her son, and provided background information about a previous acquittal and the relationship between the victim and accused in the current case. The NNC is not in a position to investigate or comment on that background.

The complainant further stated that the reporter failed to accurately describe the nature of the charge, did not ask the accused for his account of events, and objected to quotation marks around the word ‘assault’ in the story headline. She also objected to the reporter’s language in a social media exchange with her.

The news media organization responded by stating that it reported information about the charge as discussed in court. The NNC agreed with the news media that widely accepted journalistic practice in court reporting is to view and rely upon the agreed statement of facts as a legitimate source that provides fair representation for both parties. In covering a plea and sentencing, it is not the job of the media to question the victim or the accused, though those and other questions may be appropriate in a follow up story.

On that basis, the NNC found no breach of journalistic standards regarding bias, accuracy or opportunity to provide response.

However, the news media organization noted corrective action had been taken to remove quotation marks around the word assault in the online version of the story, and to remove the modifier “only” in relation to the sentence imposed, as it could be viewed as editorializing. It also noted that the exchange on social media could have been more tactful and stated that policy has been adjusted accordingly.