



## **2016-11 Rex vs Prince George Citizen**

February 17, 2016

The National NewsMedia Council has dismissed a complaint about the Prince George Citizen related to reporting on a sexual assault and subsequent handling of the comment section.

Complainant Stephanie Rex stated that the article contained detail that could identify the child and family. She also stated that articles related to First Nations people create opportunity for “racist tirades” and for that reason the comments section should not be open.

The news media organization said it complied with the publication ban, and denied that the details reported were insufficient to reveal the child’s identity to anyone outside her own circle.

The news media organization noted that comments were closed 11 hours after the story was posted, following a phone call and an email from concerned readers. The editor also reported a thoughtful email exchange with a concerned reader, which became the basis of an editorial on the balancing the sensitivities of victims of crime with the need to report on a public courts process. The editor stated he is open to further discussion on how to improve reporting on delicate cases such as this in the future.

In dismissing the complaint, the NewsMedia Council found the Prince George Citizen was compliant with the publication ban, took prompt steps to stop comments when alerted to a problem, and provided an editorial that examined issues around handling a story of this nature.