

## **BRENT RENAUD ON VULNERABLE SOURCES - MINORS**

### *Rough Transcript*

Two specific areas of ethical dilemmas that I face a lot come to mind with this question. The first being when you're filming or reporting on minors in a story. For people who are under the age of 18 years old and in the United States, particularly, you need the permission of the parents in order to use a minor's voice or image on camera and to broadcast that. And that's obviously very appropriate. Not only is the idea that the kids may not understand exactly what they're getting into and be able to make an informed decision on whether to participate or not, but also it's ethical to consider it to make sure parents understand what their children are getting into. And so that is something that I always do is get releases from the parents for a child to participate in one of my programs.

But even once I get the release, sometimes there are issues where I decide I might not want to use that particular footage. And I think that often comes back to that first journalistic precept of to do no harm, when it comes to a child. Even if they have agreed to participate and their parents have agreed, there are times when I think that to use them in the particular program could do harm to them. In particular I'm thinking about if I'm making a film about a parent who might be involved in a criminal activity or a drug activity of some kind, and that child could be associated and labeled and connected to that in a way that could hurt their future. It could cause them problems at school, but it could cause them problems even beyond that.

I'm even speaking more specifically about a film I was one time making about drug-addicted couples. And there was one scene where the drug addicted couples were taking their kids on a sort-of play date. And I really liked the scene because it showed them being real people. They were good parents, despite the fact that they were involved in criminal and drug activity. They loved their children. And I thought it was a beautiful scene that showed another side of these people involved in this unsavory activity. However, even though I had the release, I chose not to use that because some of the material that I had filmed the parents doing was so extreme that I thought it could affect negatively on those particular kids in the future. And so even though I was legally able to use that footage, I chose not to.