

Violence in UK Soaps: A four wave trend analysis



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Foreword from Ofcom

The Communications Act 2003 requires Ofcom to draw up a Broadcasting Code (“the Code”) which sets out standards for the content of television and radio services. The rules in the Code seek to ensure that members of the public, and in particular children, are protected from inappropriate violent material. Violence shown before the 9pm watershed must be appropriately limited and justified by the context, while violence included in a television programme broadcast at any time must comply with generally accepted standards.

Ofcom’s research about parents and pre-watershed television in 2011 indicated that violence broadcast before the watershed is a key concern for parents who expressed some concern about what their children had seen on TV before 9pm in the previous 12 months. Among all parents surveyed, violence was the concern most frequently mentioned (20 per cent), followed by sexually explicit content (17 per cent)¹. These results were broadly confirmed by similar 2012 research. In Ofcom’s latest research (published in October 2013) one in five parents of children aged 5-15 (19%) said they were concerned about what their child had seen on pre-watershed television². The key concerns mentioned by parents included offensive language, sex and sexually explicit content and violence. The types of programme most frequently mentioned by parents were soaps, reality programmes and films. In 2013 and 2014, Ofcom also investigated some high profile cases involving violent scenes broadcast before the 9pm watershed, including a number in soaps.

In applying the rules in the Code which relate to violent material, Ofcom must keep itself informed about viewers’ attitudes to violent content. We also need to understand the contextual factors which shape viewers’ opinions on the extent to which children need to be protected from violent material on television, and on how generally accepted standards should be applied in relation to this sort of content.

For these reasons in 2013 Ofcom commissioned for the first time a programme of qualitative research about the amount and type of violence in pre-watershed soaps. The research was to cover the period 2001-2013. CRG carried out this study. A brief summary of the research and its main findings are set out in the Executive Summary. Further detail is contained in the main report.

Overall we expect that this research report will in particular:

- assist Ofcom in updating its Code guidance to broadcasters about violence on TV (Sections One and Two of the Code);
- inform Ofcom’s application of the Code rules when investigating violence featured in pre-watershed soaps; and
- update viewers and other stakeholders about the amount and type of violence in TV soaps in the period 2001-2013.

¹ <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/broadcast/guidance/831193/watershed-on-tv.pdf>

² <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/october-2013/research07Oct2013.pdf>

1 Violence in UK soaps: A four-wave trend analysis (2001-2013)

1.1 Executive summary

1.1.1 *Headline findings*

- The amount of violence in soaps has varied over the years: *EastEnders* has shown a decline from 6.1 violent scenes per hour in 2001/2002 to 2.1 in 2013; *Hollyoaks* has increased from 2.1 scenes per hour in 2001/2002 to 11.5 scenes per hour in 2013; *Emmerdale* has shown a slight increase from 2.5 to over 4 scenes per hour; while the level of violence in *Coronation Street* has remained fairly steady at around 3 scenes per hour
- Strong scenes (portraying violence that might make the viewer uncomfortable) were very infrequent, at 6% overall
- The storyline analysis demonstrates that the antecedents to violence are quite clearly indicated, so viewers are unlikely to be surprised when the violence takes place in soaps

1.1.2 *Aims of the study*

The main aims were:

- To measure the frequency of violence in soaps and to determine whether it has increased since 2001
- To examine the portrayal of violence and assess whether the manner of representation has changed over time
- To understand how violent scenes relate to the continuing extended storylines of soaps

1.1.3 *Methodology*

This study reports the findings from a content analysis of four UK soaps. To do this, a systematic classification of violent scenes was developed to record fifty key attributes covering who was involved, what they did, why they did it, how they did it and where. The episodes were sampled across four waves between 2001 and 2013:³

- Wave one: 2001 and 2002
- Wave two: 2006 and 2007
- Wave three: 2011 and 2012
- Wave four: 2013

³ The first three waves were taken using exactly the same sampling frame of composite weeks and can therefore be directly compared. A composite week is comprised of successive days of the week which are recorded in consecutive weeks (e.g. Monday in week one, Tuesday in week two) over a 7 week period (see *Sample* section for more details in Appendix 1). Wave four was taken as a continuous sample of four weeks in May/June 2013. In this respect the data in wave four are not strictly comparable to those from the previous three waves. Wave four does, however, provide a robust data set which can be compared to those from the previous three waves, when examining broad trends over time. For this reason, where appropriate, wave four data are distinguished from the other three waves' data in the results below.

Each wave covered four weeks of output (two weeks per year). The sample contained a total of 282 episodes: *Coronation Street* (60 episodes); *EastEnders* (63 episodes); *Emmerdale* (83 episodes) and *Hollyoaks* (76 episodes). They are collectively referred to as the 'soaps' throughout this report.

1.1.4 Definition of violence for this project

The focus of this research was intentional interpersonal violent behaviour. A violent scene might contain more than one violent act. A 'violent act' in the context of this research, is defined below.

A violent act is any action of physical force, with or without a weapon, used against oneself, another person or an animal, where there is intent to harm, whether carried through or merely attempted, and whether the action caused injury or not. *This action of physical force must be an act of passion, cruelty, fierceness or aggression* (i.e. not playful). Petty acts such as pushing someone to guide them are not acts of physical force because they lack aggression or fierceness. Also coded under 'violent acts' are scenes of menace and intimidation where the intention of the perpetrator is to frighten the victim, or where such scenes are used as a narrative tool to indicate that further violence is likely between the characters. Note: threats that were not violent in nature (such as threatening to report someone to the police) were not included in this research.

1.2 Key findings: overall violence in soaps 2001-2013

The content analysis of all output, across all four waves of soaps, shows that violent scenes occurred in seven out of ten episodes (70%) and that a viewer might expect to see an average of four (4.1) scenes of violence per hour watched.

In over half (55%) of violent scenes, both the violent act and the result were shown, while one-fifth (19%) depicted only the results of violence. A further quarter of violent scenes (23%) portrayed violence without physical contact - namely threats and intimidation. Overall, three violent acts were logged for every two violent scenes.

The majority (73%) of violent acts comprised either threats of violence and intimidation (at 38%) or various forms of manhandling such as pushing, shoving, prodding, grabbing and tripping (at 35%). Slaps accounted for a further one in 17 (6%), while fist fights, in which punches are thrown, contributed just one in 20 (5%). The use of firearms resulting in actual shootings was very rare, at less than 1% of acts shown.

Injuries were rarely shown as serious or fatal. Indeed, in only a third (32%) of scenes containing violence was any form of injury portrayed and almost half (45%) of these were mild cuts and bruises. Serious bruising was logged in 6% of the cases where injury was shown, with the same percentage for serious gunshot wounds and serious psychological injuries. Overall, 7% of injuries featured were portrayed as 'stun' - either superficial/mild (4%) or serious/fatal (3%). Serious cuts or stab wounds (1%) were very infrequent.

Almost one in five (18%) of the cast was an instigator of violence (18% of all males; 17% of all females) while a further one in five (20%) was a victim (24% of males; 15% of females).

Overall, less than one in five (19%) scenes of violence was judged to be incidental to the plot (i.e. where the violence adds little or nothing to the plot or characterisation). The majority (81%) were either central (40%) or relevant (41%). That is, the violence was usually included for a reason - either

as a fundamental aspect of a storyline (such as an armed robbery or murder) or in terms of depicting characterisation (typically fights between alpha males) or moving plots along.

In almost three out of ten scenes of violence (29%) a character tried to negotiate out of violence. There were differences between the soaps. Negotiation appeared in around a quarter of violent scenes in both *Coronation Street* (24%) and *Hollyoaks* (24%) and in a third of violent scenes in *EastEnders* (34%) and *Emmerdale* (33%). These interventions were more likely to be successful than not (65% produced a successful outcome) and this occurred most frequently in *Coronation Street* (75%) followed by *Emmerdale* (69%), *Hollyoaks* (65%) and *EastEnders* (57%).

1.3 Key findings: changes in violent content over period 2001-2013

When looking at changes over time, a mixed picture emerges. At first sight, the summary figures across all soaps suggest that violent incidents are simply on the rise. In the first wave (2001/2002), just over six in ten (62%) episodes contained violence, averaging 3.5 scenes per hour. This increased to seven out of ten episodes in wave three (2011/2012), averaging 4.3 scenes per hour. By wave four (2013) violence occurred in almost eight out of ten (77%) episodes, at a rate of 5.0 scenes per hour.

However, on further analysis, it is clear that there has not been an increase across all the soaps. Indeed, violence in some has fallen. *EastEnders* has shown a marked decline from 6.1 violent scenes per hour in the first wave down to 3.9 in wave three, falling further in the 2013 sample to a rate of 2.1 scenes per hour. *Coronation Street* reveals a modest decline from 3.4 in wave one down to 3.0 in wave three, and 2.4 in 2013. Conversely, *Hollyoaks* saw an increase from 2.1 in wave one to 5.5 in wave three and 11.5 in 2013. In the case of *Emmerdale*, violence rose from 2.5 in wave one to 4.6 in wave three but then recorded 4.1 scenes per hour in 2013.

The proportion of violent scenes judged as incidental (i.e. where the violence adds little or nothing to the plot or characterisation) has decreased in each wave. It stood at 26% in wave one, declining to 20% in wave three, and 11% in wave four. It should be noted that this last figure is largely due to *Hollyoaks*. In the 2013 sample, this soap contributed the majority of all violent scenes. Most of these were judged as central or relevant since they occurred in the context of violent storylines.

Alongside these trends, there has been an increase in the proportion of violent scenes judged to be realistic, rising from 71% in wave one to 82% in wave three, and 86% in wave four. *Hollyoaks* in particular has shown a notable shift towards more realistic scenes. Here just one third (33%) of scenes were realistic in the first wave, increasing to 78% in wave three, and 88% in 2013.

Despite the apparent growth in the realism and relevance of violence observed, most scenes – around six in ten – were rated ‘mild’ in each wave and around one third ‘moderate’. This pattern has remained fairly stable over the four waves.

Strong scenes (portraying violence that might make the viewer uncomfortable) were very infrequent, at 6% overall (see Appendix 3 for further details of severity ratings and examples). In waves one and two, strong scenes were logged in *Coronation Street* and *EastEnders*, while in wave three they were found only in *Emmerdale*. All of the strong scenes in 2013 were in *Hollyoaks*, where none had occurred in any of the previous three waves.

1.4 Key findings: 2013 storyline analysis

In 2013, the violent scenes were tracked backwards and forwards across the four weeks before and the four weeks after the coded sample. The purpose was to identify any forewarnings (antecedents) of the violence and any repercussions (consequences) portrayed.

A wide variety of antecedents were logged. This made it difficult to pinpoint any particular one as the trigger for the violence. Rather, violence arose out of a myriad of themes and ideas played out between the characters. These antecedents derived from stressful situations and the circumstances in which characters found themselves, as well as their track record of propensity to aggress.

The storyline analysis demonstrates that the antecedents to violence were quite clearly indicated, so that it would have been unlikely to come as a surprise to viewers.

Violence usually appeared in a moral context of anti-violence messages where others disapproved of the behaviour (either immediately at the scene or later in their judgements) or the consequences of the violence were shown to be serious for those involved such as developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Those who instigated violence rarely benefited from their behaviour, even in the short term, while in the longer term, retribution was the norm.

Particularly noteworthy is the sheer complexity of the storylines revealed by this analysis. These could extend for months or even years, enveloping sub-plots and characters as they progressed. When violence occurred repercussions could ripple across far more characters than the main participants in the conflict.

1.5 Key findings: 2013 case studies of scenes containing strong violence

All the strong scenes of violence in the 2013 sample were found in *Hollyoaks*. The large majority emanated from just two violent storylines.

The **Price Slice** armed robbery storyline generated 33 violent scenes in total (14 mild; 11 moderate; 8 strong) and was effectively contained within the four weeks of the coded sample. Forewarnings of the violence were for the most part in the immediately preceding episodes when the robbery was planned, and a gun introduced. The negative consequences of the violence were clearly portrayed, both in the violent scenes (with one victim showing terror and another receiving a near-fatal gunshot wound) and in the flashbacks experienced by those suffering PTSD as a result of the robbery.

Who killed Texas Longford? was an ongoing storyline that began with Texas Longford's death in May 2013 - just prior to the coded sample. It generated 18 violent scenes in total (9 mild; 4 moderate; 5 strong). Some negative consequences were immediately apparent (such as an aggressor showing guilt and being disowned by his stepfather for his violent behaviour). One other character, who disclosed that she had committed an earlier murder, was haunted by her actions but escaped retribution during the twelve weeks covered by the storyline analysis. For others, repercussions continued during the month following the coded sample and well beyond. A major denouement took place more than six months later (in November 2013), culminating in an arrest.

1.6 Overall conclusions

The key question is whether violence in the soaps studied here has increased over the past decade. At first sight the overall figures suggest that it has – especially in recent years. However, examining the results for the individual soaps reveals a mixed picture. *EastEnders* shows a substantial decline, *Coronation Street* a more modest one. In the case of *Emmerdale*, the rate increased from a low base to one above that of *EastEnders* and *Coronation Street*. *Hollyoaks* stands out with an apparently sharp rise.

In the 2013 sample, well over half of all the violent scenes across all the soaps were found in *Hollyoaks*, as were all of the scenes with strong violence. However, closer scrutiny reveals that well over half of the violent scenes in the *Hollyoaks* sample emanated from just two violent storylines.

The conclusion must be that the amount of violence logged in a soap appears to be largely determined by the storylines running at a particular time. In *Hollyoaks* all the violent scenes with a high severity rating were either central or pivotal to the storyline in which they appeared. Violence occurred for a reason, and was used to drive the narrative along. As the storyline analyses confirm, the violence can hardly be described as gratuitous since it was so rarely incidental. In the overwhelming number of cases it was considered to add dramatic value to the plot or the characterisations.

The findings from both the quantitative content analysis and the qualitative storyline analyses point to some clear conclusions about the nature of violence in the soaps.

First of all, violence appears to be quite prevalent. It occurred in the large majority of episodes and even the remainder may be considered to have had an evident potential for violent scenes to develop. However most of the violence portrayed was quite mild. Indeed, in the majority of cases, the violent act portrayed was judged as too mild to result in any evident injuries.

It is therefore not surprising that injuries were visible in only one-third of violent scenes where cuts and bruises predominated in almost half the cases. These were judged as realistic but (consistent with the predominant pattern of mild violence) lacked graphic or gory detail.

A distinctive feature of soaps is that they have everyday settings and strong elements of realism in the portrayals, despite the extravagant nature of some of the plots. In this sample there were a number of dramatic murders, including some by serial killers. Nonetheless, opportunities to indulge in graphic portrayals of violence were offered by only a small number of scenes - notably where someone was shot, or clubbed with a brick. However, these were handled in such a way as to visually understate the severity of the injury likely to be suffered in real life.

This is not to imply that the violence was trivialised or glamorised or even condoned. The seriousness of the violence was represented elsewhere - such as by grave consequences befalling those involved or the violence being contextualised by the disapproving reactions of onlookers. Indeed, the storyline analyses identified numerous anti-violence messages accompanying the violent scenes.

If one simply asks 'would the viewer expect violence to occur within the narratives shown?' It is clear that sufficient information was supplied for the most part about characters and their propensity for violence for viewers not to have been surprised when violence occurred. This information was

presented in a variety of forms such as the dynamics of their relationships with others, the circumstances in which they found themselves and whether they belonged to a history of feuding.

2 Objectives, methodology and sample

2.1 Overall objectives

The overall aim of the study was to evaluate whether violence in UK soaps has increased since 2001, examining the frequency and portrayal of violence in *Coronation Street*, *EastEnders*, *Emmerdale* and *Hollyoaks* (the 'soaps').

The specific objectives of the study were:

- to measure the frequency of violence in soaps and determine whether it has increased since 2001;
- to examine the portrayal of violence and assess whether the manner of representation has changed over time; and
- to understand how violent scenes relate to the extended storylines of the soaps.

The focus of the research was intentional interpersonal violent behaviour. A violent *scene* might contain more than one violent *act*. These are defined below.

A 'violent act' is any action of physical force, with or without a weapon, used against oneself, another person or an animal, where there is intent to harm, whether carried through or merely attempted, and whether the action caused injury or not. This action of physical force must be acts of passion, cruelty, fierceness or aggression (i.e. not playful). Petty acts such as pushing someone to guide them are not acts of physical force because they lack aggression or fierceness. Also coded under violent acts are scenes of menace and intimidation where the intention of the perpetrator is to frighten the victim, or where such scenes are used as a narrative tool to indicate that further violence is likely between the characters. Note: threats that were not violent in nature were not included here (such as threatening to report someone to the police).

'Violence' here excludes accidents (although a separate log was kept of these). Also excluded were heated exchanges (which are perhaps a prevalent and distinctive feature of UK soaps) unless accompanied by menace, intimidation or threat of violence. Finally, the figures reported excluded brief images of violence shown repeatedly in title or credit sequences (unique to the first wave).

2.2 Methodology

The research was designed as a three-phase project:

- **Phase one:** Trend analysis: to provide a robust quantitative and qualitative content analysis of violent scenes across various time periods since 2001/2002.
- **Phase two:** Storyline analysis: A twelve-week sample taken in 2013, to allow a qualitative analysis of the narrative surrounding the violent scenes identified and assessed ('coded') in phase one (from antecedents through to consequences).

- **Phase three:** A closer look at scenes of strong violence in 2013 and the storylines in which they were embedded.

2.3 Sample

The sample contained a total of 282 episodes of the soaps: *Coronation Street* (60 episodes); *EastEnders* (63 episodes); *Emmerdale* (83 episodes) and *Hollyoaks* (76 episodes). These were captured from four waves each of four weeks' output between 2001 and 2013:

- Wave one: 2001 and 2002
- Wave two: 2006 and 2007
- Wave three: 2011 and 2012
- Wave four: 2013

Waves one to three were sourced from CRG archives. Ofcom's own resources, supplemented by material from the broadcasters, supplied the fourth wave (2013).

The first three waves were all 'composite weeks' – where each day of the week is recorded in consecutive weeks (e.g. Monday in week one, Tuesday in week two) over a seven-week period. In each of these three waves, two composite weeks were taken - one in spring/summer and one in autumn/winter. This sampling approach ensured that the episodes selected were less susceptible to the vagaries of plotlines, which might produce some clustering of violent themes in a continuous sample. As such, these three waves were directly comparable to each other and allowed robust time-trend analysis.

Wave four, the most recent sample, was of four continuous (blocked) weeks in May/June 2013, so as to follow the narratives surrounding violent scenes. In addition to this, the preceding four weeks (April/May) and the subsequent four weeks (June/July) following the sample were tracked in order to identify any antecedents and consequences relating to the violent scenes. This provided a valuable insight into the dynamics of soap life. However this richer picture incurs the expense of a narrower window of time. While wave four provided a robust set of data for 2013, it is not strictly comparable with the previous waves when comparing changes over time, due to the sampling differences. Therefore, in the results, the data from wave four are distinguished from the other three waves.

See [Appendix 1](#) for further sample details.

3 Part one: Findings - the detailed results of the trend analysis

The results outlined below begin with an account of the types of violent scene logged in the content analysis, and then report the frequency of the violence encountered in relation to time trends and differences between the soaps. Later sections reveal the nature of the violence, such as its realism, severity and relevance to the plot, again examining time trends and differences between the soaps.

3.1 Types of violence in soaps

Violent scenes: A total of 512 violent scenes were logged across the four waves. The first set of results, below, seeks to describe the kind of violence encountered, rather than deal with time trends or differences between the soaps. To simplify this ground-clearing, the initial findings provide only the *relative* proportions of the various types of violent scenes observed. See [Table 1](#) below.

Table 1: Type of violent scene, by wave: all soaps

	Composite weeks			Blocked weeks	All waves	
	2001-2	2006-7	2011-12	2013	N	%
<i>Type of violent scene</i>	%	%	%	%	N	%
Violent act only	--	5	1	3	11	2
Violent act and result	58	57	53	54	282	55
Result only - physical	9	20	17	20	88	17
Result - psychological	3	2	--	3	9	2
Verbal threat	9	8	7	7	40	8
Intimidation/menace	16	3	10	6	43	8
Physical threat	4	3	10	8	35	7
Implied violence	--	1	2	--	4	1
Total (N=512)	(100)*	(100)*	(100)*	(100)*	512	(100)*

*N.B. % in the cells may not add to 100 due to rounding in the cells. (100) denotes the true percentage derived from the Ns

Over half (55%) of the scenes portrayed both the violent act and the result. Almost one quarter (23%) comprised threats, menaces or intimidation. The depiction of 'violent act only' was rare (at 2%).

The relatively high proportion of scenes that were 'result only' (19%) largely stemmed from reappearances, in different episodes, of characters continuing to display their injuries from previous violent encounters. Since the focus of the research was on violent behaviour, such portrayals were coded only once per episode, and not in reappearances within an episode, unless the condition deteriorated. The first wave used 'results only' more rarely (12% for physical and psychological 'result only') and relatively more 'intimidation/menace' (16%). However, the similarities between waves were more noteworthy than the differences, as will be discussed later.

Violent acts: Violent scenes could involve a number of violent acts. Of the 512 violent scenes in the sample, 97 showed 'results only' (i.e. no violent act was shown). This left 415 scenes in which acts could be coded, and here a total of 627 violent acts were logged. Thus, on average, there were three violent acts for every two violent scenes. [Table 2](#) shows the main categories of violent act depicted across the four waves.

The most frequent violent act - at just over one third (35%) of all those observed - is the category 'push', which might be best described as 'manhandling' since it includes pushing, shoving, prodding, grabbing and tripping. One of the common manifestations of this was where an aggressor angrily grabbed an opponent by the arm.

Table 2: Type of violent act, by wave: all soaps

	Composite weeks			Blocked weeks	All waves	
	2001-2002	2006-2007	2011-2012	2013	N	%
<i>Type of violent act</i>	%	%	%	%		
Push, grab, trip	31	34	34	40	222	35
Threat of violence	27	29	23	23	158	25
Intimidation/menace	16	7	18	10	79	13
Slap	7	8	8	4	40	6
Physical restraining	4	3	4	7	29	5
Punch	4	7	7	3	32	5
Hit with object	4	4	3	2	18	3
Damage to property	2	2	--	4	13	2
Burning	1	--	--	5	11	2
Drowning	--	3	--	--	4	1
Shooting	--	--	--	2	3	*
Other	5	4	3	1	18	3
Total	(100)*	(100)*	(100)*	(100)*	627	(100)*

*N.B. % in the cells may not add to 100 due to rounding in the cells. (100) denotes the true percentage derived from the Ns

The second most frequent act overall was the physical or verbal threat of violence (at 25%), followed by intimidation and menace (at 13%). If these last two are combined they make up the most frequent kind of act observed. The distinction between them is that menace and intimidation are usually less explicit than threats (although they may be more alarming for the victim).

The slap can be a powerful dramatic device, especially when delivered forcefully with the accompanying sound of palm striking cheek. However, at only 6% of cases, this is perhaps less common than might be expected.

Physical restraint, at 5%, refers to forcible restraint and does not include bystanders attempting to prevent a violent attack. This kind of intervention is not coded as violence and will be discussed later.

Fist fights, where punches provide the violent act, were also comparatively rare, at 5% of cases overall, as was hitting with an object (at 3%).

Note that 'damage to property' appears in this list only if it is part of a scene where people are known to be injured through intentional interpersonal violence. Vandalism with the purpose of intimidation would be coded as 'menace'.

'Other' (at 3%) covered a wide variety of violent acts such as poisoning, attempted rape, strangling, suffocation, crushing, psychological torture and being thrown from a height.

Injuries: It is worth noting here that the portrayal of injuries was relatively uncommon occurring in just under one third (32%) of violent scenes. Often the violent act was too mild to result in an injury but when they were portrayed, almost half (45%) were simply mild cuts and bruises. Serious bruising was logged in 6% of cases where injury was shown, as were serious gunshot wounds (6%) and psychological injuries (6%). Overall, 7% of injuries were portrayed as a 'stun' - either superficial/mild (4%) or serious/fatal (3%). Serious cuts and stabs (1%) were very rarely encountered.

There were no cases of the camera dwelling on an injury and none where bloody injuries were shown in close-up.

3.2 Frequency of violence

Proportion of episodes with violence: Across the total sample (i.e. all waves and all soaps) 70% of all episodes contained some violence. This varied from a comparative low of 62% in the case of *Hollyoaks*, to 67% in *Emmerdale*, 68% in *Coronation Street* and 84% in *EastEnders*. Therefore, only a minority of episodes were totally free of violent scenes. [Table 3](#) shows the proportion of episodes (programmes) containing violence in each wave.

Table 3: Proportion of episodes with violence, by soap

Waves	<i>Coronation Street</i>		<i>EastEnders</i>		<i>Emmerdale</i>		<i>Hollyoaks</i>		<i>All soaps</i>	
	N progs	% violent	N progs	% violent	N progs	% violent	N progs	% violent	N progs	% violent
Composite										
2001/2→	17	71	15	87	20	60	16	31	68	62
2006/7→	16	69	16	100	24	71	20	50	76	71
2011/12→	13	77	16	88	20	55	20	65	69	70
Blocked										
2013→	14	57	16	63	19	84	20	95	69	77
All waves→	60	68	63	84	83	67	76	62	282	70

Hollyoaks showed a marked increase across the first three waves, while *Coronation Street* produced a modest rise. The other soaps appear to fluctuate: in 2013 *Hollyoaks* and *Emmerdale* carried a higher proportion of episodes with violence than did *EastEnders* or *Coronation Street*.

Proportion of cast involved in violence: The cast list for each episode containing a violent scene was used to check off the characters involved. A log was kept of who initiated the first violent act (the instigator) and who received it (the victim), regardless of the moral precepts in the scene.

Overall, almost one in five (18%) of the cast were instigators (18% of the male cast, 17% of the female cast) while as many as one in five (20%) were victims (24% of males, 15% of females). Without doubt, these proportions would increase over a longer time period - the above figures are based samples of only four weeks per annum.

Proportion of scenes that were violent: A more refined measure of violence might be to consider the proportion of scenes where violence occurred. Across the total sample, an average of 30 separate scenes were logged per episode and just over 6% (6.1%) of all these were violent.

[Table 4](#) shows the results across the waves. In the first two, *EastEnders* carried far more violent scenes than the other soaps (at well over 7%) but the rate fell in wave three (to 5.7%). In 2013 this soap generated by far the lowest proportion (at just 3%).

The converse is true of *Hollyoaks*. In the first two waves it was by far the lowest generator of violent scenes (at 2.3% and 2.8% of all scenes logged) but then the rate almost tripled in wave three (to 6.4%). In wave four it carried by far the highest proportion (at 12.1%).

Table 4: Proportion of all scenes that were violent, by wave and by soap

	<i>Coronation Street</i>		<i>EastEnders</i>		<i>Emmerdale</i>		<i>Hollyoaks</i>	
	N scenes	% violent	N scenes	% violent	N scenes	% violent	N scenes	% violent
Composite								
2001/2	395	5.8	596	7.2	495	3.8	561	2.3
2006/7	457	4.8	568	7.7	536	6.9	543	2.8
2011/12	436	5.3	523	5.7	477	8.6	675	6.4
Blocked								
2013	406	4.4	535	3.0	471	7.6	735	12.1
All waves	1694	5.1	2222	6.0	1979	6.7	2514	6.4

Violent scenes per hour: A conventional way of examining rates of violence is in terms of violent scenes per hour. [Table 5](#) shows the rate for each soap in each wave. The overall rate was 4.1 scenes per hour. So on average, two violent scenes might be expected per half-hour episode. In practice, the running time of episodes varied across the samples, with *Hollyoaks* usually averaging 24 minutes. However, *Emmerdale* varied from 23 minutes in wave one to 28 minutes in wave Four. *Coronation Street* averaged 30 minutes per episode overall. In both these cases the longer average running time was due to a number of double episodes. Calculating a rate of violent scenes per hour allows the different soaps to be compared on an equal basis. It provides a standard unit of measurement regardless of the time elapsed, and so takes account of the different running times of each soap.

The pattern of findings shown in [Table 5](#) confirms the earlier results. *EastEnders* shows a marked decline in violent scenes since the earliest two waves, when it was the highest scoring of the soaps, to become the lowest scorer in 2013.

Table 5: Violent scenes per hour, by wave and by soap

	<i>Coronation Street</i>	<i>EastEnders</i>	<i>Emmerdale</i>	<i>Hollyoaks</i>	<i>All soaps</i>
Composite					
2001-2002	3.4	6.1	2.5	2.1	3.5
2006-2007	2.9	5.5	4.0	1.9	3.6
2011-2012	3.0	3.9	4.6	5.5	4.3
Blocked					
2013	2.4	2.1	4.1	11.5	5.0
Total	2.9	4.4	3.9	5.4	4.1

Hollyoaks showed the opposite trend. In the first two waves it was the least violent of the soaps, but in the third wave it was the most violent, and in the last sample it increased to a rate almost three times that of the next most violent soap, *Emmerdale*.

3.3 Severity of violence

At this stage it is useful to distinguish the levels of violence encountered. Overall (i.e. across all soaps in all waves) some 60% of violent scenes were rated '1=mild'; a further 34% were rated '2=moderate' and just 6% '3=strong'. These categories were used to capture the atmosphere of scenes and to reflect the likely impact on viewers.

Definition of severity: 'Mild' scenes tended to show pushes rather than punches, or very superficial injuries, and little or no distress by anyone in the scene. At the other extreme, 'strong' scenes were those most likely to shock, or make viewers uncomfortable, through the strength of the violence (e.g. punching or the use of a firearm), the graphic injuries shown, the vulnerability of the victims, or any participants showing horror or terror. A more detailed definition of the rating scale, with examples, can be found at [Appendix 3](#).

[Table 6a](#) shows the pattern across the waves for all soaps combined, providing both the percentages and the numbers involved, while [Table 6b](#) provides the profile simply as a percentage for each soap.

Table 6a: Severity, by wave: all soaps

	1=Mild		2=Moderate		3=Strong		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Composite weeks								
2001-2002→	59	60	33	34	6	6	98	(100)*
2006-2007→	73	62	39	33	6	5	118	(100)*
2011-2012→	84	61	51	37	2	1	137	(100)*
Blocked weeks								
2013→	93	58	51	32	15	9	159	(100)*
All waves→	309	60	174	34	29	6	512	(100)*

*N.B. % in the cells may not add to 100 due to rounding in the cells. (100) denotes the true percentage derived from the Ns

The most notable feature here is that strong scenes of violence declined over the first three waves to just two cases. They then rose in 2013 to the highest number logged - 15 cases - all of which were found in *Hollyoaks*. Here they made up 17% of all violent scenes (see [Table 6b](#)).

EastEnders showed the reverse trend. In the first wave it had the greatest proportion of strong violent scenes (at 12%) but then the rate fell to zero in the last two waves. Note that in the case of *Coronation Street* and *EastEnders*, more than eight in ten scenes were rated as mild in the 2013 sample, compared with just over half in *Hollyoaks* (51%) and *Emmerdale* (56%).

Table 6b: Severity of scenes, by wave and by soap

*Severity rating →	<i>Coronation Street</i>			<i>EastEnders</i>			<i>Emmerdale</i>			<i>Hollyoaks</i>		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Composite weeks												
2001-2002→	52	43	4	49	40	12	79	21	--	85	15	--
2006-2007→	64	27	9	68	23	9	49	51	--	73	27	--
2011-2012→	61	39	--	50	50	--	59	37	5	72	28	--
Blocked weeks												
2013→	83	17	--	81	19	--	56	44	--	51	33	17
All waves→	64	33	3	59	34	7	58	41	2	61	29	9

*Legend: 1=mild; 2=moderate; 3=strong violence

Perhaps the most important conclusion is simply that although violent scenes were prevalent in the sample, most of these were mild and only a small minority included any scenes of strong violence.

3.4 Context and reasons

Context of violence: Overall, most violence (68%) took place in the context of interpersonal conflict (32% domestic interpersonal; 36% other interpersonal) and a further 26% in the context of crime (rising to 42% in the 2013 sample). This last figure is largely due to an armed robbery in *Hollyoaks* which generated 33 violent scenes. It might perhaps be expected that more of the violent scenes would raise issues of public concern about violence – such as sexual crime, bullying, elder abuse and domestic violence. However such consciousness-raising occurred in less than 6% of scenes.

Reasons for violence: A wide variety of reasons were identified as to why the protagonists engaged in violence. See [Table 7](#). The most common were anger and frustration, at 36%, followed by the protection of a family member, at 21%. Together these provide well over half (57%) of the reasons for violence. This is understandable, given that the context of violence (above) reveals that interpersonal conflict predominates in the soaps. In line with this, revenge was the reason behind a further 7%.

Table 7: Aggressor's reason for violence

Reason for violence	2001-2002		2006-2007		2011-2012		2013		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Anger/frustration	40	41	46	39	63	46	37	23	186	36
Protect family	8	8	32	27	26	19	42	26	108	21
Acquisitive	7	7	8	7	5	4	23	14	43	8
Revenge	14	14	7	6	5	4	9	6	35	7
Self-preservation	4	4	2	2	3	2	18	11	27	5
Evil/malicious	3	3	6	5	--	--	11	7	20	4
Ambition/power	8	8	2	2	1	1	9	6	20	4
Other	14	14	15	13	34	25	10	6	73	14
Total	98	(100)*	118	(100)*	137	(100)*	159	(100)*	512	(100)*

*N.B. % in the cells may not add to 100 due to rounding in the cells. (100) denotes the true percentage derived from the Ns

Although acquisitive motives – a desire for money or material goods - was a narrative driver in many episodes, it more rarely provided the reason for violent scenes - at only 8% overall. However, it peaked at 14% in the last sample, due to the major storyline of an armed robbery in *Hollyoaks*.

3.5 Centrality

An assessment was made of how important the violence was, in the scene, for either the plot or the characterisation. The coding categories were:

Central - raises issues that are key to main plot/characterisation

Relevant - raises issues that elucidate elements of the plot/characterisation

Incidental - adds little or nothing to the plot/characterisation

[Table 8a](#) shows the results for each wave. In the large majority (81%) of scenes, the violence was rated as either central (40%) or relevant (41%). A clear minority of less than one in five scenes (19%) was judged as incidental – that is, the violence might be considered gratuitous.

Furthermore, the proportion judged as incidental has declined in each wave; from 26% in wave one down to 11% in wave four. As might be suspected, given that *Hollyoaks* contributed the majority (56%) of the violent scenes in 2013, this soap was largely responsible for these results. [Table 8b](#) provides further detail, broken down by the individual soaps.

Table 8a: Relevance of violent scenes, by wave: all soaps

	2001-2002		2006-2007		2011-2012		2013		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	30	31	39	33	57	42	78	49	204	40
Relevant	43	44	54	46	52	38	63	40	212	41
Incidental	25	26	25	21	28	20	18	11	96	19
Total*	98	(100)	118	100	137	100	159	100	512	100

*N.B. % in the cells may not add to 100 due to rounding in the cells. (100) denotes the true percentage derived from the Ns

Table 8b: Relevance of violent scenes, by wave and by soap

	Coronation St			EastEnders			Emmerdale			Hollyoaks		
	Cent	Rel	Inc	Cent	Rel	Inc	Cent	Rel	Inc	Cent	Rel	Inc
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Composite weeks												
2001-2002→	17	57	26	51	35	14	16	37	47	8	62	31
2006-2007→	50	18	32	25	61	14	46	32	22	--	73	27
2011-2012→	65	26	9	33	53	13	66	12	22	12	58	30
Blocked weeks												
2013→	33	44	22	31	44	25	50	22	28	55	45	--
Total→	42	36	22	36	49	15	49	24	27	34	53	13

* Legend: Cent = central; Rel = relevant; Inc = incidental. Base: All violent scenes, N=512

Quite remarkably, *none* of the 89 violent scenes in the 2013 sample of *Hollyoaks* was judged to be incidental, suggesting that the violence occurred in the context of violence-oriented plots. This is focus of the *storyline analyses* described later.

3.6 Realism of violent scenes

As [Table 9](#) shows, the large majority of violent scenes were judged to be realistic. Moreover, this proportion has risen over the last three waves from 72% in the second wave, to 82% in the third, peaking at 86% in the last wave (2013). The lowest proportion was for *Hollyoaks* in the first wave (33%) at a time when it had a distinctively glossy production style, compared to the other, more down-to-earth soaps. Clearly *Hollyoaks* has redefined and repositioned itself over time.

Table 9: Realism of violent scenes

	Coronation Street	EastEnders	Emmerdale	Hollyoaks	All soaps
	% realistic	% realistic	% realistic	% realistic	% realistic
Composite weeks					
2001-2002	67	92	59	33	71
2006-2007	86	88	48	77	72
2011-2012	80	88	81	78	82
Blocked weeks					
2013	69	93	86	88	86
All waves	75	90	69	79	79

Base: All violent scenes, N=512

Perhaps such a very high proportion of realistic scenes of violence should not be surprising, given that UK soaps have always relied on true-to-life realism as one of their features. But by the same token, this convention of realism increases the potential impact of scenes. This is examined in the following section.

It is worth adding that 14 of the 15 scenes rated as strong in the 2013 sample (all in *Hollyoaks*), were also coded as realistic. The one remaining scene was a flashback in stylised slow motion of Texas falling through a window to her death (see Storyline analysis: Who killed Texas Longford?).

3.7 Impact of scenes

Although the severity of the violence meted out is an important dimension, other attributes contribute to a scene's likely impact. How viewers react to violence is also influenced by the psychological distance between them and the violent scene. Therefore soaps, with their contemporary everyday sets, allow viewers to identify more closely with the action than is the case with many other genres. Violence very rarely took place in settings that were not ordinary, everyday ones. Almost all (97%) of violent scenes across the soaps were coded as either 'UK domestic' (36%) or 'UK everyday' (61%).

Overall, one in seven scenes of violence (14%) was logged as containing some disturbing elements, with only minor variation across the soaps. A similar proportion (15%) of scenes were coded as portraying significant emotional responses (such as distress, fear or terror), or used sound effects to accentuate the violence (13%).

Hollyoaks was the only soap to use music routinely as a dramatic device. It was employed to create tension in 30% of all violent scenes, with a high of 40% in 2013 where a Price Slice robbery scene gained considerable tension from the music. At the same time, it also served to attenuate the sound of the gunshot and the impact of the violent act.

The balance of power between those involved in the violence is a further variable. As noted earlier, a violent scene, in which a victim showed terror, usually received a much higher rating on the severity scale being more impactful. However, such terror does not just add emotion to the scene; it usually also reflects an imbalance of power, where the victim feels at a clear disadvantage. An example would be the Price Slice armed robbery (above), where the young and heavily pregnant shop assistant, Sinead, is threatened and pushed around. She is clearly terrified, but the scene is particularly impactful because of her obvious vulnerability.

Violent scenes where someone showed terror were rare in *EastEnders* (at 3%), *Coronation Street* (at 4%) and *Emmerdale* (5%). However it was logged in more than one out of ten scenes (11%) in *Hollyoaks*. Bystanders were present in a slight majority of scenes (56%) and rarely showed approval of violence (10% of cases). They were far more likely to show concern (35%), disapproval (29%) or shock (13%).

An imbalance of power between the protagonists was logged in almost one in five (19%) violent scenes, ranging from a low of 7% in *Coronation Street* to a more typical 19% in *Emmerdale*, 21% in *EastEnders* and 24% in *Hollyoaks*.

The most common reason for an imbalance of power was the victim being physically weaker (7%) than the perpetrator. This was closely followed by being psychologically weaker (at 5%). The remaining cases included a victim being outnumbered, and other imbalances. It is worth noting that it is this difference in relative power that makes threats and menaces so effective in these productions. 'Moments of madness' in which people behave 'out of character' are not the stuff of soaps. Most of those who were violent protagonists had 'form' and their violent behaviour might be expected so any threat or menace from them was not to be taken lightly.

Was the violence cued by dramatic build-up? This question was asked only in the 2013 sample. Overall, violent scenes (excluding results-only) were cued in nearly three-quarters (72%) of cases, from 62% in *Coronation Street*, to 69% in *Hollyoaks*, 79% in *Emmerdale* and 86% in *EastEnders*.

Were any elements of the violence unexpected? This question was designed to tease out the source of any surprise in violent scenes, since such scenes may have more impact. In this analysis 'results-only' scenes were excluded. However, very few scenes with violent acts (13%) were identified as having unexpected elements.

There was some variation across the various soaps. Unexpected elements were found in 7% of violent scenes in *Coronation Street*, 9% in *Emmerdale*, 12% of cases in *Hollyoaks* and 21% in *EastEnders*. In the 2013 sample, such scenes declined to zero in both *Coronation Street* and *Emmerdale*, with just two cases in *EastEnders*. However, there were 11 scenes in *Hollyoaks* containing unexpected elements, representing 16% of all violent scenes in this soap. Here the majority were unexpected, due to the lack of any build-up to the violence, and were largely accounted for by post-traumatic stress 'flashbacks' to the robbery. See [Appendix 4](#) for an analysis of the characteristics that provided the surprise element in these scenes.

3.8 Avoiding violence through negotiation

An important question to ask about violence is: 'Did any person attempt to negotiate out of, or avoid violence?' Overall, this occurred in three out of ten (29%) scenes in which there was a violent act. Intervention was somewhat more frequent in *EastEnders* (34%) and *Emmerdale* (33%) than in *Hollyoaks* (24%) and *Coronation Street* (24%). However, what is most interesting is that, in the large majority of these cases (65%), the negotiations were successful and the violence was defused. Further analysis of the kinds of negotiation deployed can be found in [Appendix 5](#).

3.9 Conclusions - trend analysis

The central question as to whether or not violence has increased in the past decade is most accurately and fairly answered by reference to each soap. *EastEnders* has shown a sharp decrease over the four waves, while the reverse seems true of *Hollyoaks*. *Coronation Street* might be described as being in a steady state with only a slight decrease in incidents. *Emmerdale* shows a measurable increase, although not on the scale of *Hollyoaks*.

Turning to the severity of the violent scenes, those rated as 'strong' were rarely encountered (at 6% of scenes). In 2013 they were logged only in *Hollyoaks*, where they contributed around one in six (17%) of all violent scenes in this soap.

The large majority of violent scenes were judged credible (at 79%) and rarely surprised. However, a small proportion was deemed to be impactful on various measures. For example, depictions of terror during violent scenes varied between 3% and 5% of scenes in most soaps. However they occurred at more than double this rate (11%) in the 2013 sample of *Hollyoaks*.

The narratives of soaps tend to be quite complex. When violence occurs, it touches very many people and the storylines connected with it run across months or even years. Very often the violence creates a cat's cradle of links across the cast. It is very probably the case that had this study covered a longer continuous period than the one month samples in each wave that an even greater proportion of the cast would have been involved in violence than recorded here. The figure of one in five (20%)

characters in the soaps being a victim or an instigator (18%) of violence clearly underestimates their annual vulnerability and exposure to violent offending or victimisation.

Finally, while violence must be considered quite pervasive in the soaps, the finding that characters can negotiate successfully out of violence shows how anti-violence narratives can be boosted by positive examples of how to prevent the escalation of conflict.⁴

Postscript: Do TV guides and published synopses predict the violent scenes?

A theme in this research was the extent to which viewers might reasonably be able to anticipate the violence. It was thought unlikely that published TV guides would provide sufficient detail for a viewer to predict that an episode would contain a number of violent scenes. But what about websites devoted to the soaps? How reliably might these predict the violent scenes logged in the content analysis?

For each episode, the published TV guide and web synopsis were examined to determine whether the violent scenes had been overtly flagged up. Across all the waves and soaps, a mere 3% of violent scenes were clearly predicted by the TV Guide (2% in 2013) and only 18% by the website synopses (13% in 2013). [Appendix 7](#) shows the details.

⁴ In this context of anti-violence narratives, it should be noted that 'Results only' were coded just once in each episode unless the injury deteriorated. It would have been misleading to count all reappearances of the same injury in the same programme. This would have over-represented results compared with violent acts which were the focus of this research. The point to be made here is that the repetition of the negative consequences of violence might be taken as support for anti-violence messages.

4 Part 2: Storyline analysis: 2013

4.1 Introduction

The overall aim of the storyline analysis was to provide an understanding of how violent scenes relate to the continuing extended storylines of soaps. The main objective was to look at where, and how, violence occurred in the narratives and whether it was embedded in the plot. The desired outcome of this analysis was to reveal and illuminate two important parameters of violence:

- The antecedents which might provide the dramatic accelerators pushing plotlines to violence
- The consequences which might provide a moral framework for understanding violence - such as whether violence is condoned or condemned. Perhaps, essentially: does violence pay?

In this report, 'storyline' is preferred as the term to describe the detail of plots as represented on screen. It is apparent that various terms are often used quite loosely to describe the narrative structure of dramatic productions - such as 'plot', 'story', 'storyline', 'theme'. The idea of 'narrative arc' - as developed from the Greek tradition of drama - is also a very useful one and has been expanded over the centuries to cover five main elements: First of all, exposition (characters and plots are introduced), then rising action (they quarrel), then climax (violent scenes), then falling action (consequences) and finally resolution (e.g. happy ending). However, in the case of soaps, episodes are open-ended and are more likely to end with a cliff-hanger than a resolution. Furthermore, the five main elements can be spread over numerous episodes, weeks, months or even years, and be riddled with a variety of subplots.

The focus of this research was on the climax of the narrative arc (i.e. the violent scene) and this section of the report deals with how this is located within a storyline across the 12-week period. Here scrutiny falls on the twists and turns of the storylines so as to detect any antecedents or consequences to the violence, viz:

- *Antecedents to violence* – may be considered as potential signposts to violence. That is, precursors or narrative cues that indicate that violent behaviour might occur – or at least that a viewer might not be surprised to witness violence between characters. An obvious example would include tension building up between characters or families.
- *Consequences of violence* – here the focus is on whether or not consequences of violence are shown, what happened to those involved, and when the violence occurred. Special attention was given to any factors that might lead a viewer to conclude there were anti-violence messages (direct or indirect) within a storyline.

Storylines were divided into two categories:

- **Violence-oriented** storylines used violence as the central driving force to the narrative. In the sample period these included murders, serial killers, armed robbery and intimidation. Quite simply, without the violence, there would be no plotline. Here violence was pivotal to the storyline and considered a primary issue. Such violence may have been used to raise issues within a storyline (such as domestic violence) or it may have formed the central narrative (such as Cameron Murray as a serial killer in *Emmerdale*).
- **Other storylines** – those in which violence was a secondary issue. For example, a central theme of a storyline might have been alcohol addiction (such as Lauren Branning's addiction in *EastEnders*) and while some violence might have occurred that related to this plot, the central narrative would not have predicated its appearance. Analyses of these storylines are detailed in [Appendix 6](#).

Analysis approach

The storyline analysis covered 12 weeks of continuous contemporary output for each soap, to allow coders to follow the narratives surrounding the violent scenes coded in the four-week sample (May/June 2013). Thus, the preceding four weeks (April/May 2013, referred to below as month 1) and the four weeks following (June/July 2013, referred to as month 3) were tracked to provide a richer qualitative picture of the dynamics of soap life.

N.B: Since the storylines of soaps are extended, they will not necessarily begin or end within this time frame. However, while all the violent scenes emanated from the four weeks of the content analysis (month 2), antecedents could be found in month 1, month 2 or even pre-sample. Similarly, consequences could be found in month 2 or month 3, or post-sample.

Results are laid out to clarify the time scale of events across the 12 weeks:

Antecedents	→	Pre-sample
	→	Month 1 (M1)
	→	Month 2 (M2)
Violent behaviour (coded sample)	→	Month 2 (M2)
Consequences	→	Month 2 (M2)
	→	Month 3 (M3)
	→	Post-sample

NB: For convenience the word 'Month' is used to denote the four-week period under scrutiny and abbreviated to M

Five violence-oriented storylines with violent scenes were identified in the 2013 sample. These contained 67 scenes of violence, contributing just under half (42%) of all such scenes in that year.

Emmerdale – Two storylines were violence-oriented:

- *Robbie Lawson's intimidation campaign* – generated 11 violent scenes
- *Cameron Murray becomes a serial killer* – generated five violent scenes
- These 16 scenes accounted for 44% of all the violence in *Emmerdale*

Hollyoaks – Two storylines were violence-oriented:

- *Price Slice armed robbery* – generated 33 violent scenes
- *Who killed Texas Longford?* – generated 18 violent scenes
- These 51 scenes accounted for 57% of all the violence in *Hollyoaks*

Coronation Street – No violence-oriented storylines with violent scenes.

- All violent scenes occurred in storylines in which violence was a secondary issue.

EastEnders – No violence-oriented storylines.

- All violent scenes were in storylines in which violence was a secondary issue.

The storylines below are those in which violence was a primary issue. Those involving violence as a secondary issue (reported in less detail) are to be found in Appendix 6.

4.2 Violence-oriented storyline: *Emmerdale*: Robbie Lawson's intimidation campaign

Antecedents

- Debbie Dingle is on a downward spiral, after Cameron, the love of her life, ends their relationship to be with Chas, her aunt (pre-sample). Debbie is angry at the world and begins to behave in ways that isolate her from her usually loyal family. She is very angry but also very vulnerable (M1).
- Debbie vows to do everything she can to secure a future for herself and her children, reasoning that the only person she can now depend on is herself. She sets up a scam selling illicit alcohol with her sidekick and only real friend, Robbie Lawson. Her dealings are seen as part of the criminal underworld as she involves herself with unsavoury characters (M1).
- When the original supplier lets her down, Robbie introduces her to Kirk Stoker, one of his contacts. Kirk is portrayed as an unpleasant, shady and untrustworthy character (M1).
- Debbie appears to be in control. Robbie remains loyal and starts to have romantic feelings for her but she hardly notices him and treats him with some contempt (M1).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 11	Mild: 6	Moderate: 5	Strong: 0
Kirk and Debbie's business relationship starts to sour. Charity and Robbie warn Kirk to stay away. Debbie tells Robbie they can still run the scam - she will find another supplier. She continues to use Robbie uncaringly and wounds his pride when she rebuffs an amorous move by him.				
Robbie begins his intimidation campaign designed to frame Kirk. He throws a bottle at Debbie's door, trashes her office and smashes her car windscreen with a crowbar (all coded as menace). At each turn, Robbie is there to support Debbie and to protect her from 'Kirk'. She grows to depend on him. Debbie's mother, Charity, discovers that it is Robbie who is responsible for the vandalism, and tells Debbie who exacts revenge. She sets Robbie up with some illicit alcohol and then calls the police. When he is finally released, and discovers Debbie is responsible for his arrest, he confronts her. They scream and fight. This is all witnessed by Sarah (Debbie's daughter) who is at home recovering from chemotherapy. She is just eight years old and looks very frightened.				

Consequences evident in the sample (including anti-violence messages)

- Debbie receives a call from Social Services – someone has reported her for putting her children at risk. She thinks Robbie is behind this (M2).
- Some time later, Sarah, Debbie's daughter, reveals that it was she who told her teacher about 'the bad men' (i.e. Kirk and Robbie) because she was so frightened (M2).
- Eventually, Social Services reprieve Debbie and life seems to be getting back to normal (M3).
- But this is not to be. Belle (Debbie's niece) finds some of the illicit alcohol hidden in a barn. She drinks half a bottle of 'vodka' and ends up in hospital with possible brain damage. Robbie lies to Debbie's family, claiming that it was Debbie who cut the alcohol and so is responsible for Belle's hospitalisation (M3).
- The family severs ties with Debbie. Andy, the children's father, takes them to live with him, fearing for their safety with Debbie and the violence now associated with her (M3).

Comments

A number of antecedents to the violence were found in the month prior (i.e. M1). Conclusions about the violence in this storyline were reached within the coded sample (i.e. M2). The violence has devastating results for the entire Dingle family, not least because, by the end of the 12-week period, Debbie is separated from her children (when they go to live with their father). This is a direct consequence of Robbie's intimidation campaign and the shady underworld in which Debbie has been living. Robbie's violent behaviour does not go unpunished, but at least Debbie's revenge on him is non-violent. Thus the violence led to some very serious consequences and may be taken as providing a strong anti-violence message.

4.3 Violence-oriented storyline: *Emmerdale*: Cameron Murray becomes a serial killer

Antecedents

- Pre-sample, in October 2012, Cameron murders Carl King and later confides this to his friend Alex Moss who urges him to confess to the police. Cameron becomes alarmed that he is now vulnerable, and silences Alex by killing him and burying his body in Sparrow Wood.
- Cameron discovers that Declan Macey, who owns the wood, is about to start building a glamping site on the land in time for the annual music festival that he organises (M1).
- Cameron panics, realising he will have to dig up and re-bury Alex's body before it is discovered, since the evidence is likely to implicate him (M1).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 5	Mild: 3	Moderate: 2	Strong: 0
On a cold dark night Cameron is seen digging up Alex's body to re-bury it. He hyperventilates and gags as he struggles with the corpse which is wrapped in black plastic. He then plays his phone messages. Several are from girlfriend Chas who is worried he may have had an accident and thinks she ought to call the police to look for him.				
Cameron, panic-stricken, drives his van straight into a tree to create the alibi of a serious accident. He is knocked unconscious. The police discover him and he is taken to hospital. Chas is devastated and protective of Cameron, unlike her sister Gennie, who is suspicious of him (for very good reason).				

Consequences evident in the sample (including anti-violence messages)

- Building work at the glamping site hits a problem and the drainage has to be re-routed. The foreman discovers some bones and reports this to Declan (M3).
- Declan buys the foreman's silence. Halting the build at this stage would bankrupt him (M3).
- His wife, Katy, finds out and issues an ultimatum – report it to the police, or she will (M3).
- Declan and Katy embark on a series of mutual double-crossings and revenge tactics which destroy their marriage (M3).
- For now Alex's body remains undiscovered in the woods and Cameron has not yet been exposed as a murderer (M3).

Comments

Some conclusions about the violence in this storyline were reached within the coded sample (M2). The violence has some very serious consequences for Declan. In choosing to cover up the discovery of the bones on his land he quarrels with his wife to the point of marital breakdown. Furthermore (post-sample) he is wrongfully arrested for the murder of Alex and his business then fails spectacularly when the festival site is closed down.

Post-sample consequences and comments

- July 2013 - Gennie's suspicions are confirmed when she overhears Cameron confessing his murders to Debbie. Hiding on the landing upstairs, she records the confession on a Dictaphone – equipment she happens to have in her bag from her office job. The stairs squeak as she leaves the house. Cameron and Debbie panic, chasing after her. In a bid to keep her quiet the couple pursue her in a car chase. Gennie is an inexperienced driver and her car crashes as it skids out of control. She is badly injured. At the scene, unobserved by Debbie, Cameron places his hand over Gennie's face and suffocates her.
- September/October 2013 - Later, Cameron is arrested for the murders, but escapes from prison to return to the village. Armed with a shotgun, he creates a hostage situation in the pub and then accidentally shoots Alicia. Finally, as rain cascades down, Cameron is electrocuted by the wet electrics in the pub and dies.

The violent storyline was not concluded fully until *after* the sample period, but there are strong anti-violence messages. Gennie's family and friends are left devastated after her 'car accident'. Justice was done when Cameron was arrested for the murders and imprisoned. His prison escape might have suggested that he had got away with it, but this might be only transitory. Poetic justice prevails in true soap style when he dies in a situation of his own making.

4.4 Violence-oriented storyline: *Hollyoaks*: The Price Slice armed robbery

Antecedents

- Bad boy Robbie Roscoe owes his brother money after stealing his drugs. He decides to rob local convenience store, Price Slice (M2).
- He blackmails Finn O'Connor into helping. He knows that Finn's sister, Sinead, had been in a stolen vehicle involved in a hit-and-run accident: do the robbery or he reports Sinead (M2).
- Callum Kane and his family are also desperate for money – they are about to be evicted. His mother has not paid the rent due to her drink problem. Callum wants to help her (M1).
- The lads come together and plan an unarmed robbery (M2).
- However, on the day, Robbie introduces a gun and insists they take it with them. Callum is adamant they should remain unarmed and backs out of the plan. Finn feels he has no choice but to go through with it - otherwise Robbie will expose his sister (M2).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes:33	Mild: 14	Moderate: 11	Strong: 8
<p>Robbie and Finn, wearing balaclavas, slam into the shop pointing a gun at shop assistant Sinead - Finn's very pregnant sister. The action is set to pulsing techno music and seen both from inside the shop and through the shop's CCTV camera. Robbie grabs Sinead and stamps on her mobile when she desperately tries to make a phone call. He pushes her against a chiller cabinet and points the gun at her. She is vulnerable and terrified.</p> <p>Darren Osborne enters the shop, having left his baby son in his pram outside. Robbie points the gun directly into Darren's face and throws him to the floor. As commanded, Sinead empties the money from the safe and hands it to Finn. Callum then arrives at the shop to stop the robbery – motivated by his conscience about the gun and having seen baby Oscar outside. He wrestles with Robbie, the gun goes off and he falls to the floor claspng his leg. Robbie and Finn escape without the money. Callum begins to lose consciousness and Sinead calls out to Darren to help, but he seems paralysed with shock. Eventually he phones the emergency services. Armed police and paramedics arrive. Callum is taken to hospital and later suffers a cardiac arrest. His life hangs in the balance.</p>				

Consequences evident in the sample (including anti-violence messages)

- Darren and Sinead show significant psychological reactions as victims of violence. Darren continues to suffer flashbacks, is not sleeping and feels guilty that he did not do more (M2).
- Sinead's flashbacks are such that, when she returns to work, she cannot be left alone. She hands in her notice. Later she gives birth to her daughter prematurely – the implication being that this was brought on by the stress of the robbery (M2).
- Callum recovers from his cardiac arrest and is later hailed a hero by the local newspaper for trying to stop the robbery. He receives a substantial financial reward from the shop but is exasperated at being called a hero and confesses all to his mother. She advises him to keep quiet about his part in the robbery. Joe Roscoe, knowing his brother Robbie was involved, persuades Callum to change his description of the robber (M2).
- Robbie's family are angry with him for carrying out an armed robbery. His mother tells him he does not deserve to be part of the family. She cuts ties with him and sends him to live with his aunt in the south (M2).
- Finn is clearly portrayed as suffering intense feelings of guilt about the robbery. He is also angry that he allowed himself to get involved in a crime where a weapon was used. He confesses all to sister Sinead who finally forgives him (M2).

Comments

Conclusions about the violence in this storyline were reached within the coded month (i.e. M2). The violence had very serious consequences for all involved. This storyline highlights a strong anti-violence message from the start, as shown by the reactions of Callum and Finn to the introduction of the gun. There are serious physical and well-observed psychological consequences to the violence, demonstrating that the effects can linger after the physical wounds have healed. Violence clearly does not pay for Robbie, whose entire family disapprove of his behaviour, and he is forced to leave *Hollyoaks*. Finn's guilt about his involvement in the violence is compounded when his sister, Sinead gives birth prematurely - brought on, it is implied, by the stress of the robbery.

4.5 Violence-oriented storyline: *Hollyoaks*: Who killed Texas Longford?

Antecedents

- Dodger's brother, Will Savage, marries Texas Longford in May 2013 (M1).
- Dodger is in love with Texas and they sleep together before her wedding. Dodger asks her to run away with him. She says that she cannot because she feels obligated to marry Will. She believes that she is responsible for his aneurism and that he is now confined to a wheelchair - unbeknown to her, both are faked (M1).
- On the day of the wedding Texas dies after falling through a window in her hotel room. Later episodes reveal that Will was responsible, but he manipulates people continually so as to deflect suspicion away from him (M2 and M3).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 18	Mild: 9	Moderate: 4	Strong: 5
Flashbacks to the wedding day show Texas and Will arguing. She threatens to leave him and is shocked and aghast when he begins to get out of his wheelchair and move towards her. They struggle but Will is too strong for her. He demands to know: Did she ever love him or was it only ever Dodger? Texas tries to escape, backing towards the window. The sound of breaking glass is heard as she falls through the window, her wedding dress billowing out in stylised slow motion.				
Various twists and turns ensue, with a number of characters being taken into police custody. Dodger will stop at nothing to find out who killed the love of his life. Adamant that she is responsible, he renews his relationship with Theresa. She finally confesses that she has killed someone ... but it is not Texas ... it is the father of her child, Calvin Valentine. Dodger has recorded the confession.				
At the funeral of Texas, Dodger makes an impassioned speech, leaving Theresa in no doubt that Dodger still loves Texas and not her. At the graveside, Theresa implores him not to tell the police that she killed Calvin but Dodger tells her it's too late – he's already told them. Theresa pulls out a gun and points it straight at him. He pleads with her to stop. Even though she is distressed, she is undeterred. Will is shown watching from the sidelines. Dodger tells her to pull the trigger – without Texas he has nothing left to lose. Will intervenes and finally talks Theresa down. She leaves.				
At the graveside, the brothers argue. Will provides the final straw for Dodger when he tells him he only took Texas to hurt him. Dodger lunges at Will, pulls him out of his wheelchair, hurls him to the ground and then punches him repeatedly. He then throws him into the open grave. Dodger's stepfather, Dirk, intervenes and pulls him away. Will looks scared and confused as he lies in the grave, soil on his face.				

Consequences evident in the sample (including anti-violence messages)

- Dodger begins to drink heavily because he has lost Texas and also because he feels guilty about fighting with his half-brother Will. His stepfather Dirk disowns him (M2).
- Incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital, Anna (Will and Dodger's mother) escapes because she fears for her children's safety at the hands of their father, Patrick, who gave Dodger a false alibi when Dodger was questioned about Texas' murder. She threatens to kill Patrick by turning on the gas, intending to blow them both up. However, he escapes unharmed. Anna is sectioned again and Patrick frames her for killing Texas. She goes along with this to protect Will, who has confessed to her that he is the murderer (M3).
- Ash becomes romantically involved with Will and discovers he can walk. He persuades her not to reveal this, saying he wants to keep it a secret until he is sure it is permanent and he has built up his strength. He further traps her by declaring that he loves her. This web of lies continues but, at this stage, Will remains at large. No-one suspects him of the murder (M3).

Comments

Some conclusions about the violence in this storyline were reached within the coded sample period. Dodger is ostracised by Dirk and he feels guilty for his behaviour towards Will. The web of deceit within the Savage family is complex and seemingly endless. However, punishments and conclusions are evident after this sample, when there are serious consequences from Will's violent crimes.

Post-sample and comments

- September 2013: Will murders his mother by drowning her in the bath when she threatens to expose him. Her death looks like suicide. Her family still think she was responsible for Texas' murder, which works in Will's favour. He continues to evade detection.
- November 2013: In a further twist, Will holds the family hostage and, after a fight with his brother, falls off a roof, only to be arrested by the police.

The violent storyline was not concluded fully until after the sample period, but there are strong anti-violence messages. Will continues to manipulate and hurt all those around him, and for some time it looks as though justice will be evaded. However, soap-style poetic justice is done when he is finally arrested for his numerous crimes.

4.6 Conclusions - storyline analysis

Antecedents

Perhaps the most notable finding is the sheer number of antecedents to violence. These are symptomatic of the pressure-cooker lives of those who inhabit soaps. Precursors to violent scenes emanate from a potpourri of stressors and it is difficult to pinpoint any particular one as the reason why violence occurred. Rather, it is the intersection of a myriad of themes and ideas played out between the characters.

If one simply asks: 'would the viewer expect violence to occur within the narrative shown?' it becomes clear that, more often than not, adequate warning has been given. This is presented in a variety of forms: the dynamics of characters' relationships with others, the circumstances in which they find themselves and whether they have a history of feuding. Earlier the term 'signposts' was used to refer to antecedents. But these are really more like a compass, pointing the traveller in the direction they are going. In soaps, the compass rarely points away from the potential for violence, and consequently, viewers might not be surprised to encounter it.

Consequences

A particular concern about the representation of violence has always been that it might be trivialised in some way, or even condoned, by implying that it can be a successful way of resolving problems. Neither concern is supported in this analysis.

The consequences of violence appear comprehensive, covering the physical and psychological effects of it. And not just on the victims. Often there are serious consequences for the wider community, both in the short term and the longer term (months or even years later).

Perhaps especially interesting is the extent to which those who instigate violence so rarely reap any reward from their behaviour. In the short term, violence is usually condemned, and in the longer term a gamut of negative consequences become apparent. These include being ostracised by family, arrested by the police and suffering a form of retribution, characteristic of soaps, in the shape of poetic justice.

Further conclusions to the storyline analysis follow in the next section, which focuses on all the violent scenes rated as 'strong' in the 2013 sample.

5 Part 3: Case studies: scenes with 'strong' violence

5.1 Introduction

The 2013 sample contained 15 scenes rated as portraying strong violence (as opposed to moderate or mild). All of these appeared in *Hollyoaks*. The following case studies examine further how these scenes fit into the individual storylines within the series over the 12-week sample (as above).

Hollyoaks contained two major storylines that could have reliably predicted violence at some point in the narrative:

- **The Price Slice robbery:** eight strong violent scenes
- **Who killed Texas Longford?:** five strong violent scenes

Additionally, two storylines contained the clear potential for violence:

- **Nancy's pill addiction:** one strong violent scene
- **Ste's drug dealing:** one strong violent scene

The fast pace and rapid development of emerging storylines in *Hollyoaks* meant that characters were frequently involved in increasingly chaotic lives. Often this was a result of ill-judged choices, with young, immature characters showing little regard for their personal actions or the consequences of them. For example, Robbie Roscoe showed no qualms about stealing his brother's drugs or his gun, nor did he stop when he ran over Finn in a stolen car. Shooting his friend, Callum, was insignificant as he 'got everything he deserved' by 'trying to act the hero.' Even when ostracised from his family he showed no contrition - only concern at disappointing his mother.

In *Hollyoaks* all the violent scenes with a strong rating were central, or pivotal, to the narrative in which they appeared. Violence occurred for a reason and was used to drive the plot forward. The potential for violence was clearly flagged up to the viewer and the consequences explored.

NB: M1 denotes the four-week period before the coded sample; M2 denotes the four weeks of the coded sample; M3 denotes the four-week period after the coded sample. The type and rating of violence scene is given in brackets after each scene described.

5.2 Storyline 1: The Price Slice robbery: predictable violence and clear consequences.

Context leading up to strong violence

Robbie Roscoe needs money to pay his brother back after stealing his drugs to sell at a party. He decides to rob the local convenience store, Price Slice, and coerces Finn O'Connor to help him. Finn had been the victim of a hit-and-run accident in which Robbie was driving the stolen vehicle. Unfortunately for Finn, his sister, Sinead O'Connor, was a passenger. Robbie threatened to tell the police and implicate his sister if Finn did not go along with the robbery. Callum Kane asked to join them, as he also needed money. His family was about to be evicted due to non-payment of rent because of his mother's drink problem (M1).

On the day of the robbery (20/05/13), the three boys plan the details and scope out the shop. They argue about who is doing which tasks. Robbie suggests using a gun: "Why don't we go in there, tooled up, force her to open the safe for us?" Callum is adamant that no weapons should be involved. Later that day, Robbie arrives with a gun. Callum backs out of the robbery, but Robbie's hold over Finn is enough to force him to continue although he is nervous and reluctant (M2).

Description of the violent scenes rated strong (with milder scenes providing context)

Robbie and Finn approach Price Slice. They are wearing balaclavas. They slam into the shop and Robbie points the gun at a very pregnant Sinead, shouting: "Get out here. Get out here now. You do exactly what I say." Sinead looks terrified. End credits roll.

(Physical threat of violence, 20/05/13 – strong, M2)

The robbery continues in the following episode with a reminder of this cliff-hanger scene in the 'previously' section heading the episode.

(Physical threat of violence, 21/05/13 – strong, M2)

The action is fast-paced and set to pulsing techno music. It is seen from both inside the shop and through the shop CCTV camera filming the event. The gun is prominent. The victim's terrified reactions are realistic.

Sinead is still held at gunpoint. Robbie grabs her and moves her across the shop. While he is distracted, Sinead tries to make a phone call, but Robbie snatches the phone from her and stamps on it. He pushes her against a display unit. Sinead cries out in fear.

(Violent act and result, 21/05/13 – strong, M2)

Robbie grabs Sinead, pushes her against a chiller cabinet and forces her to sit down. He is still pointing the gun at her.

(Violent act and result, 21/05/13 – strong, M2)

Sinead is still sitting on the floor looking terrified when Darren Osborne arrives at the shop. Robbie pulls him away from the pushchair that is placed just outside the shop doorway and pushes him towards a shelf unit. Robbie holds the gun pointed directly at Darren's face. Darren looks stunned. Robbie closes the shop door and throws Darren onto the floor towards Sinead. Sinead screams and Robbie points the gun at her, ordering her to open the till. As Sinead moves to empty the till, Finn cries out that he can't open the safe so Robbie orders Sinead to help him. Darren is again held at gunpoint and told not to move while Sinead eventually empties the money from the safe into a plastic bag. She hands the bag to Finn and is then pushed back onto the floor with Darren. Callum enters the shop and lunges at Robbie. He tries to wrestle the gun from Robbie's hand but it goes off and Callum staggers to the floor clasp his leg. Finn drops the bag of money. Robbie and Finn run out of the shop. Sinead crawls over to Callum who is beginning to lose consciousness. She cries out for Darren to do something, but he is paralysed with shock.

(Violent act and result, 21/05/13 – strong, M2)

Darren is now on his feet calling the emergency services. Sinead is leaning over Callum and crying. She tells Darren that Callum isn't breathing. Darren instructs Sinead to keep pressure on the wound. Armed police stream through the door demanding "Where's the gunman?" Darren explains that he's already run off. Paramedics arrive and attend to Callum.

(Results of violence, 21/05/13 – strong, M2)

Family members arrive at the scene of the robbery while Callum is loaded into an ambulance. Darren is dazed and has a cut on his forehead, but tells his wife, Nancy, that he is fine. Sinead is weeping, "I thought they were going to kill me with a shotgun." She bends over in pain and holds her stomach (she is heavily pregnant). Her mother, Di, tells her that she must see a doctor.

(Results of violence, 21/05/13 – moderate, M2)

As the day continues, the short-term reactions of each member involved in the robbery are examined. Robbie is angry that Finn dropped the money. He pushes Finn against a wall saying: "there was thousands in there" and "all that for nothing".

(Violent act and result, 21/05/13 – mild, M2)

Robbie shows little concern for Callum who "got everything he deserved, baling out on us, trying to act the hero". Finn and Robbie agree to deny everything if Callum talks. Robbie gives the gun to Finn telling him that he has to get rid of it.

Callum's mother and sister, Martha and Ash, arrive at the hospital. They are told that Callum has been intubated and ventilated to regulate his breathing. He has lost a lot of blood and his blood pressure is low but stable. Martha weeps, Ash comforts her.

Finn is at the hospital and hears that Sinead has had an ultrasound scan. Her baby is fine. He is still carrying the handgun and looks for various ways to dispose of it. His nervousness is put down to his worry about his sister's welfare. Sinead comforts him and he asks her if Callum will die. She hugs him

saying that he has the doctors with him and he'll be fine. Finn admits that he "can't stop thinking - what if it was you?"

Callum goes into cardiac arrest. Crash team rushes in over the sound of the monitor flat-line.
(*Results of violence, 21/05/13 – moderate, M2*)

Darren is still suffering from the effects of the robbery. He is not sleeping. He continues to serve a notice to quit on the Kane family. Nancy disapproves and cannot understand how he can evict a family that saved his life. While walking passed the shop, he has a flashback to the robbery and remembers the design on the robber's coat.
(*Flashback coded as violent act and result, 23/05/13 – strong, M2*)

Sinead's first day back at work in Price Slice. She is apprehensive and has a flashback to the robbery as she walks through the door.
(*Flashback coded as violent act and result, 28/05/13 – strong, M2*)

Sinead manipulates Holly to stay and work alongside her because she is scared. A 'hoodie' enters the shop. Sinead is clearly frightened and distressed as his clothes remind her of the robbery. When Holly says that she is leaving, Sinead hands in her notice rather than work in the shop alone.
[She barges past Mercedes McQueen on her way home. Mercedes offers her a job at her nightclub. This leads to Sinead becoming embroiled in drug dealing with further violent consequences].

Narrative development - further episodes continue to explore the effects of the violent robbery on those involved

Darren Osborne - Darren continues to suffer flashbacks to the robbery and is ashamed that he couldn't do anything while it was taking place. His wife shows little concern (she has her own problems) and tells him that it's better to be a living coward than a dead hero. Darren talks to Sienna Blake about his feelings. She comforts him and they get closer (22/05/13, M2).

Darren is still suffering from the effects of the robbery. He is not sleeping. He continues to serve a notice to quit on the Kane family. Nancy disapproves and cannot understand how he can evict a family that saved his life. While walking passed the shop, he has a flashback to the robbery and remembers the design on the robber's coat (violent act and result, 23/05/13, strong, M2). He sees a boy in the same coat (it's actually Jason Roscoe, Robbie's twin brother) and confronts him. They fight. Nancy is aghast that Darren would hit a boy. The boy returns to Darren's pub with his brothers. They intimidate him and Nancy. Nancy is portrayed as the stronger of the two and she stands her ground, refusing to be cowed. Darren, however, is disconcerted. He eventually talks to Nancy about his feelings and she becomes supportive (23/05/13, M2).

Callum Kane - Callum survives his cardiac arrest (22/05/13). He is hailed a hero in the local paper. He is recovering quickly and is moved to a ward. His sister Ash tells him that they have lost their house. Callum learns that the shop is giving him a reward of £7,000 for his bravery. Ash uses it to put a deposit down on a flat, but Callum says that he doesn't deserve it (23/05/13). Callum is exasperated at being labelled a hero. He tells his mother he wasn't stopping the robbery, he was actively taking part in it (presumably because he feels guilty for planning to be involved initially, despite doing the right thing and backing out when Robbie introduced a gun). Martha counsels him to keep quiet and not tell the police the truth. Callum gets a visit from Robbie's brother, Joe, who persuades him to change his description of the robber who shot him. Callum agrees and gives the police a false description (27/05/13, M2).

Robbie Roscoe - Freddie, Robbie's brother, is furious that Robbie stole his gun to carry out the attack on the store. Robbie hides the gun in his house. The police arrive and arrest his brother Jason for the robbery. Robbie starts to feel worried (24/05/13, M2). Jason is released from police custody and returns home. Robbie looks ashamed when he walks into the house. Jason is furious that Robbie has put the family's new start in jeopardy. The two brothers fight and their elder brother, Joe, intervenes demanding to know what they are fighting about. Joe decides to deal with the problem within the family and doesn't go to the police. He visits Callum and persuades him to change the description of the robber. The Roscoe's mother, Sandy, finds out about the robbery and Robbie looks chastened (27/05/13, M2). Robbie is trying to please his mother by working in the garage. His mother is unconvinced that he has reformed and tells him, "You went too far this time. You don't deserve to be

a part of this family anymore.” He is to move down south and live with his aunt (28/05/13, M2). Robbie pleads with his mother to be allowed to stay. She wants to know where the gun is. While she is searching his room, Freddie takes the gun and hides it in the garage. Sandy Roscoe sticks by her decision and Robbie leaves (29/05/13, M2). The gun is subsequently found by Theresa McQueen and used to threaten Dodger Savage.

Finn O'Connor - Finn hides the gun in the toilet cistern at home. He is very anxious about his part in the robbery. He is jittery when the police come to question Sinead. He is scared and frightened and hides in an old petrol station. He ignores Robbie's calls. Sinead finds the gun and realises that Finn was involved in the robbery. She confronts him at the fuel station and they fight. Finn cries and apologises to his sister (22/05/13, M2).

Sinead O'Connor - Sinead has PTSD. She is listless with no appetite and is having trouble sleeping (23/05/13, M2). She finds the gun and realises her brother had a part in the robbery. She confronts him and they fight. Sinead goes into premature labour (22/05/13, M2) and gives birth in the back of a burnt-out car (23/05/13, M2). On returning to work she suffers flashbacks and quits her job.

Observations

The potential for violence within this robbery storyline was dramatically enhanced when Robbie introduced the gun. The viewer is left in no doubt that this is unacceptable to both Callum and Finn, but Finn's weaker position meant that he felt forced to continue in the robbery. He is portrayed as being anxious and worried about his involvement.

The robbery scenes are chaotic and realistic. The victims, Sinead and Darren, show genuine fear, and there are serious long and short-term consequences of the violence for them both. Violence certainly does not pay for Robbie, who is ostracised by his family.

One of the recurring features of soaps is that characters are made to pay for past transgressions. Robbie Roscoe got his 'just deserts' within two weeks. For Theresa McQueen, her nightmare was continuing four years after she killed Calvin Valentine (broadcast in December 2009, but featured as a flash-forward sequence set in May 2010).

5.3 Storyline 2: Who killed Texas Longford? Unresolved violence in ongoing storylines - character confesses to murder committed in 2009 but actively evades justice.

Context leading up to strong violence

Will Savage and Texas Longford marry on 9th May 2013. Will's half-brother, Dodger, is in love with Texas and, prior to the wedding, sleeps with her and asks her to go away with him. Texas is having second thoughts about the wedding but feels obliged to marry Will, who cannot walk and has become a wheelchair user. She believes that she is the cause of Will's aneurysm (unbeknown to her, this, and the need for a wheelchair, are both fake). Texas' best friend, Leanne, is in love with Will and had kissed him twice before the wedding. On the day of the wedding (09/05/13, M1), Texas dies after falling through the window of her hotel room. Various characters are suspected of the killing. On 13th May 2013 it is revealed that Will Savage is the real killer. Throughout the developing story line he manipulates various characters to deflect suspicions elsewhere.

Description of the violent scenes rated strong (with milder scenes providing context)

Will is having flashbacks to his wedding day. He is seen in the hotel room with Texas. Texas threatens to leave. Will slowly gets up out of his wheelchair and moves towards her. Texas is terrified. She whimpers: "You can walk?"
(*Physical threat of violence, 13/05/13 – moderate, M2*)

Will has hold of Texas and they are struggling. Texas is crying and hitting his chest ineffectually. Will is too strong for her. He demands to know whether Texas ever loved him, or was it only ever Dodger that she loved?
(*Violent act and result, 13/05/13 – moderate, M2*)

Will has hold of Texas' arms and is screaming: "Tell me, did you ever love me?" Texas struggles to get away, shouting: "Get off me. Get off." There is a sound of breaking glass as Texas starts to fall through the window. Texas falls through the air with her wedding dress billowing out. The camera cuts back to Will who is looking shocked. Sound of glass falling to the ground.
(*Violent act and result, 13/05/13 – strong, M2*)

These scenes are interwoven with scenes from the present day in which Will gets out of his wheelchair to answer the phone. The flashback footage is stylised and not very realistic. The camera moves in a swirling motion creating a disorientating effect, and dramatic music is playing. When Will gets up from his wheelchair the action is melodramatic and filmed in a 'horror movie' fashion, reminiscent of Frankenstein's creature coming to life.

Will's campaign to avert suspicion from himself leads to various characters being accused of killing Texas. Immediately after her death, Dodger is taken into police custody but is released when his father, Patrick Blake, provides a false alibi. Leanne is arrested next, and held in police custody. Once released, Dodger is determined to avenge Texas by finding the real killer. He does not believe that Leanne is guilty and his suspicions focus on his ex-girlfriend, Theresa.

Dodger renews his relationship with Theresa and makes a sustained effort to make her trust him enough to tell him the truth. Theresa wants to believe that Dodger loves her again, but has doubts. Nevertheless, she confesses to Dodger that she has killed someone. Only for Dodger this is not whom he is expecting, but Calvin Valentine (the father of Theresa's child). Dodger has taped her confession. At the funeral, Dodger's impassioned speech about Texas makes it clear that he always loved her. Theresa feels rejected and hurt. She goes to the Roscoes' garage and throws a brick through Dodger's car window. Freddie Roscoe takes her into the garage but leaves her alone while he makes her a cup of tea. Theresa finds the gun from the Price Slice robbery and leaves to find Dodger.

Theresa walks up to Dodger who is laying flowers on Texas' grave. She tells him that everything she said was a lie, but Dodger says that it's too late – he's already been to the police with the tape. He advises her to hand herself in. Theresa sobs that she didn't kill Texas, but Dodger gets angry, demanding, "Why does everyone else have to suffer, but you don't?" Theresa cries: "Because I've got a baby girl and she needs me." Dodger says: "You should have thought about that before you put a bullet in her dad." He turns back to the grave and Theresa holds out the gun. She takes off the safety catch saying: "I'm sorry, Dodger. You made me do this." She is holding the gun at shoulder level pointing it straight at him. We look down the barrel of the gun. Advert break.
(*Physical threat of violence, 30/5/13 – strong, M2*)

Dodger is backing away from the gun, pleading with Theresa to stop. He says that the police told him to stop wasting their time. There is no need to do this. Theresa is distressed but undeterred, "I thought this ... this was the real deal. I told Aunty Myra how much I cared about you ... just ... you just lied." Dodger says that he only wanted to find out who killed Texas. Theresa is still sobbing and says, "Oh, you're a lot like Calvin. All the lies, the little smiles. It wasn't even a challenge getting me into bed." Dodger asks, "Why are you doing this? I told you the police don't care." Theresa says, "Because you said you cared about me. He was sweet to me as well, until I got pregnant. Then he treated me like I was nothing, but I'm not." She lunges forward and Dodger holds out his hands, "I'm not, am I Dodge?" Dodger agrees: "I know you're not." Theresa continues: "It was one stupid moment that, I don't even remember." Dodger says, "Don't make the same mistake again, please." The camera has moved to long shot and we hear Theresa saying: "I'd give anything to go back and not pick up that gun. Don't you wish things were different, Dodge?" Dodger nods in agreement: "Yes, T. I do" Theresa smiles at him, "With me?" Dodger shakes his head. "No. No T - with Tex". The music plays a deep menacing beat. Is Dodger's fate sealed? Theresa starts breathing heavily. There is a close-up of the gun. Theresa thrusts the gun towards Dodger's face and says, "The one time that it's OK to lie and you still can't even do that right." Will, who has been watching from a distance, wheels himself towards them and says to Dodger, "You're making a habit of it today, aren't you, Dodge? Saying the wrong thing". He looks pleased. The music is still deep and menacing. There is a long shot of Theresa holding the gun at Dodger. Will is by her side looking on.
(*Physical threat of violence, 30/05/13 – strong, M2*)

Back in the graveyard, the characters have changed position. Will, Dodger and Theresa now form a triangle. It is in long shot and Theresa still has the gun pointing at Dodger. The music has become dramatic and pulsing. Dodger pleads: "Theresa, don't throw your life away like this." A close-up of Theresa's face shows that she is still upset: "Why did you have to lie to me?" Dodger says: "OK. I'm sorry. I'm sorry for telling you I loved you, but I didn't. But I loved Texas and I always have." Will is listening. "So if you want to shoot then do it. 'Cos I have nothing else". Theresa straightens her arm as if to shoot. Will says: "Theresa? This isn't you. I know you." Theresa glances at him. Will points his finger at Dodger and says loudly: "And he has lied to me too. But he is not worth you throwing your life away for." Theresa adjusts her hands on the gun. The camera is looking down the gun barrel into Theresa's face. She appears determined. She looks at Will and says: "What if it's too late?" The music quickens. There is a close-up of the gun moving slightly. Theresa takes a breath. She grits her teeth. Will says, "It's not. 'Cos this never happened. Did it Dodger?" Theresa looks at Dodger who says: "No." Will continues: "You could be at home playing with Kathleen Angel." Theresa starts to cry and Will continues to negotiate: "Not here. And you have my word that if you go now this is over." Theresa looks at Will, sobs and lowers the gun, cradling it in her hands. She looks at Will and says: "I'm sorry." Will replies: "It's OK. Just go." Dodger holds his hands to his face and takes a deep breath. Theresa leaves. Dodger says: "Oh, I thought I had ended it." Will smiles, "Yeah, me too." (*Physical threat of violence, 30/05/13 – strong, M2*)

Observations about Theresa's behaviour

Despite confessing to the murder of Calvin Valentine and it being reported to the police, Theresa is not arrested. She is, however, haunted by her actions. Dodger clearly makes the point: "Why does everyone else have to suffer, but you don't?" Theresa's justification is: "Because I've got a baby girl and she needs me". Dodger's position is reinforced quite brutally: "You should have thought about that before you put a bullet in her dad".

The use of a handgun in an everyday setting, and Dodger's pleading and negotiations to try to get an unstable Theresa to stop, create a series of scenes with heightened tension. Distraught over Texas' death, Dodger later becomes accepting of his fate: "If you want to shoot, then do it, 'cos I have nothing else". Will's arrival, and obvious pleasure at the situation Dodger finds himself in, is impactful. But it is Will who brings Theresa to her senses, as he points out that Dodger is not worth throwing her life away for – she should be at home playing with her child. Believing that neither Will nor Dodger will take the incident any further she backs down and walks away – free and unharmed. There are no immediate consequences for Theresa, but Dodger and Will continue the storyline.

Will cannot let the chance pass to goad his brother, who is already in a vulnerable state of mind.

Dodger asks Will what he is still doing there. Will says that he was saying his last goodbye when he saw Dodger and Theresa walking off. "First Mum left, now Texas. You've certainly got a way with the ladies, haven't you?" Dodger tells him to shut up. As Dodger walks away Will shouts after him: "The day she died, she wanted to leave with you, didn't she?" Dodger stops in his tracks, "What do you want me to say?" Will replies: "The truth. You're not going to get me into bed, so there's no point in lying. I'm not one of your whores." Will laughs. Dodger turns and sees him laughing. He says, "Yeah. Yeah, she wanted to leave with me, but I said no. You happy now?" Will says: "Do you know what's funny? I only married her so you couldn't have her - the only thing that you've ever really wanted. And I took her from you. How does it feel to be finally beaten by your little brother?" Dodger says: "Please tell me you're lying." Will retorts: "Oh Dodger. I grew out of your hand-me-downs a long time ago. Even if she was a nice fit." Dodger lunges at Will and drags him out of his wheelchair. He throws him on the ground and punches him, again and again whilst shouting: "I should kill you." Dodger pulls him up and hurls him into the grave. He throws soil on top of him and shouts: "I wish it was you, I wish it was you in there." Dirk, Will's father, runs up and grabs Dodger in a bear-hug saying: "Dodger, stop! Get away from him, get away!" Dodger throws him off and stands at the grave. He points down at Will and says: "You stay away from me or I will kill you!" As he runs off we see Will splayed out in the grave with soil on his face looking scared and confused. End credits roll. (*Violent act and result, 30/05/13 – strong, M2*)

Observations about Will and Dodger's behaviour

Notwithstanding the fact that the viewer knows Will was responsible for Texas' death, and despite knowing that Will can actually walk, this scene is emotionally charged. Dodger essentially pulls his

'disabled' sibling from his wheelchair, punches him repeatedly and throws him into an open grave while threatening to kill him. Will looks helpless and his father, Dirk, is incensed.

In the following episode (31/05/13, M2) Dodger sees Will with cuts and bruises to his face. He is ashamed and drowns his sorrows in alcohol. Will, however, is pleased to have his father's sympathy, and gloats. Dirk demands that Dodger apologises to Will, but he refuses to do so. Dirk gives the ultimatum: "You walk out without so much as a sorry, and you don't bother coming back". Dodger walks out.

So, while Theresa is free and unharmed, Will has physical injuries and has gained the sympathy of his father and Dodger is ostracised. It appears that, for now, the guilty walk free.

Narrative development - further episodes continue to explore the effects of the violent altercation between Dodger and Will

Sienna (Dodger's twin sister) finds Dodger in the street, drunk. Dodger tells her that Dirk has disowned him and his family hates him. Sienna comforts him and takes him home. She tells him that he can stay there. That evening Patrick and Maxine (Dodger's biological father and his new girlfriend) arrive for dinner. Dodger is drinking heavily and Patrick challenges him, saying that if that's how he behaves he's not surprised that Dirk has disowned him. Sienna says that it is not Dodger's fault. Texas has ruined his life – she is like poisoned blood even when she's dead. Dodger shouts at Sienna that he's never felt the 'twin' connection. They'll never understand what Texas meant to him. He leaves, saying, 'I'm getting away from you – from all of you.'

Dodger's vulnerability is reinforced by an encounter with Joe Roscoe - a newly-arrived character. Dodger is drunk and weaving down the street. He barges into Joe Roscoe. They square up to each other. Dodger backs down and walks off saying, "No, you're welcome to your place." Joe is established as an alpha male, taking Dodger's place in the pecking order (violent act and result, 31/05/13 – mild, M2). Not only has Dodger lost the support of both his stepfather and biological father, he has relinquished his status in the community.

With Dodger out of the way, the plot continues with further twists. Dirk tells Anna (the mother of Dodger, Sienna and Will) that Patrick (Anna's ex-husband and father to Dodger and Sienna) gave Dodger his false alibi. Anna is fearful for her children. She escapes from a psychiatric unit where she is incarcerated and threatens to kill Patrick. She goes to the stove and turns on the gas on, intending to blow them both up. Sienna arrives and chooses to stay with her father and die alongside him. Maxine (Patrick's new girlfriend) arrives and helps them escape. Anna is taken back into care. Patrick frames her for the murder of Texas. Will confesses to his mother, Anna, that he killed Texas. Anna plays along to protect Will. Anna is taken into custody and Leanne is released. The relationship between Leanne and Will is now strained. Ash becomes romantically involved with Will and discovers that he can walk. Will persuades her not to reveal this. He wants to keep it a secret until he's sure it's permanent and he's built up his strength. Will tells Ash that he loves her (M3).

Neither Theresa, nor Will, has yet been made to pay for their violent behaviour. The reintroduction of the handgun used in the Price Slice robbery, along with Theresa's previous history of shooting a character dead, clearly flags up the potential for violence, as does the sibling rivalry between Will and Dodger and their fight for Texas' affections.

5.4 Storyline 3: Nancy's pill addiction. Cold and detached aggressor.

Context leading up to strong violence

Nancy and Darren Osborne have a strained marriage. Nancy is usually domineering, but she is finding it hard to cope with their small child, Oscar, who is profoundly deaf. She has a long-term addiction to prescription painkillers. Darren thinks that Nancy has stopped taking these pills, and she goes to increasing lengths to keep her habit a secret. Sienna Blake, Oscar's nanny, knows about this and disapproves. She begins to manipulate Nancy and Darren's relationship. She tells Nancy that Darren is lying about his lads' weekend with Tony, and tells Darren that Nancy is being unreasonable and controlling. Darren was a victim in the Price Slice robbery. When Nancy is unsympathetic he

turns to Sienna, who comforts him. They get closer. Darren finds Nancy's painkillers but Nancy lies, saying she hasn't taken any for weeks. She swears on Oscar's life. Sienna overhears this and thinks that Nancy doesn't deserve a family life with Oscar and Darren. Sienna tells Darren that she can't stand by and watch Nancy destroy her family (M2).

Description of the violent scenes rated strong (with milder scenes providing context)

Nancy is asleep on the sofa. Sienna walks in. She looks in Nancy's bag and sees the pills. She is angry and disapproving. The music is tense. She walks over to the iron and in a cold and calculating manner turns it on at the plug then places it face down on the ironing board. As she walks out of the door, she glances back at Nancy.

(Violent act and result, 03/06/13 – moderate, M2)

The ironing board cover starts to burn. Nancy is still fast asleep on the sofa. The baby is in the crib beside her. The baby is awake but not crying. The camera pans around the room and smoke is seen billowing from the ironing board. End credits roll.

(Violent act and result, 03/06/13 – moderate, M2)

In the following episode the fire takes hold. The sound of the fire crackling is heard over dramatic music. The tension mounts, scene by scene. The fire builds but Nancy remains asleep. Oscar is shown in the crib beside her.

(5 scenes, 04/06/13 – moderate, M2)

(Eventually): Smoke fills the room, almost blanketing Oscar's crib. Oscar is screaming and Nancy is still asleep. The camera focuses on Oscar and his vulnerability.

(Violent act and result, 04/06/13 – strong, M2)

Downstairs in the pub, Sienna looks horrified when she learns that the baby, Oscar, is in the flat with Nancy. Darren raises the fire alarm and he and Sienna rescue Nancy and the baby. Sienna runs down the stairs with Oscar, coughing from the smoke. She cradles his head and apologises to him. Darren manages to rouse Nancy and they escape.

Nancy is shocked but physically unharmed. Sienna again shows remorse and apologises to Oscar once more. However, at this stage, her attempt at murder is not recognised. Nancy feels guilty about the fire, believing that it was her fault. Darren admits that he hadn't replaced the batteries in the smoke alarm. They argue about whose fault it was, neither realising that a third party was the culprit. Darren accuses Nancy of taking pills, which she denies. When he finds her sleeping tablets and a blank prescription pad he is furious with her. Later, Darren accuses Nancy of behaving irrationally because of the pills – she almost killed herself and Oscar because she couldn't wake up. Nancy insists that she is just tired, but Darren doesn't believe her. He tells her that he can't trust her around Oscar and she must leave. Sienna hugs Nancy as she is leaving and tells her: "Don't worry. We'll look after him". (M2)

Narrative development - further episodes continue to explore the effects of Sienna's actions

Away from Oscar and Darren, Nancy realises the serious consequences of her addiction and flushes the pills down the toilet. Darren takes his wedding ring off - for him the relationship is over. Darren gets a call and has to tell Nancy that her mother has died. Nancy comes back home and the relationship rekindles as Darren comforts her. As Nancy leaves to organise the funeral she vows to spend the time away coming off the pills. When she returns they'll sort things out. As she departs she sees that Darren has taken his wedding ring off. She is angry and they part on bad terms.

While Nancy is away, Sienna begins to take over the household, becoming indispensable to Darren. They become closer. Sienna manages to delete Nancy's conciliatory texts to Darren, thereby facilitating their split. Just as Darren is about to tell Sienna that he is falling in love with her, Nancy returns. Darren and Nancy work hard to rebuild their relationship and Nancy succeeds in marginalising Sienna's role in the household. Sienna is not happy (M3).

That Sienna is becoming increasingly desperate to usurp Nancy from the household is clearly indicated to the viewer. While the nature of the violence itself may not have been premeditated,

Sienna is cold and calculating as she takes full advantage of Darren's absence and the fact that Nancy was unconscious – although she was unaware that Oscar was in the room. Sienna is remorseful and apologetic about this aspect, but not towards Nancy.

5.5 Storyline 4: Sinead gets involved in Ste's drug dealing. Character placed in potentially dangerous situations

Context leading up to strong violence

For Sinead, life after the Price Slice robbery spirals seriously out of control.

Having discovered that her brother, Finn, was involved in the robbery, Sinead confronts him at a disused fuel station. They argue, and this results in Sinead giving premature birth in an abandoned car. She hands over the baby to her mother, Di. They have agreed it would be better for Di to bring up the baby as her own, since Sinead is too young to look after her and needs to continue her schooling. Five days after giving birth, Sinead goes back to work where she experiences flashbacks to the robbery. Suffering from heightened stress and anxiety she hands in her notice – or rather tells her co-worker Holly to “tell Cindy [manageress] she can stick her job”. Striding away from the shop, she bumps into Mercedes McQueen, who offers her a job at the nightclub (M2).

Unable to cope with seeing her mother with her baby daughter, Katy, Sinead decides to leave home and live with Ste Hay in his flat. Ste is upset that the local night club has been bought and is due to re-open. He feels it is his by right, as he had a relationship with the previous co-owner. In an attempt to raise enough money to buy the club, he turns to drug dealing. Ste is getting his drugs from Freddie Roscoe, but makes the mistake of using Freddie's brother, Jason Roscoe, as a runner. Freddie cuts off his supply after Jason messes up (M2).

Sinead needs some money so that she can go on holiday with her friends. Although she is initially reluctant, Ste persuades her to sell drugs at the club, for one night only, until his supply has all gone. That night, Sinead is seen selling a pill to a punter for £10. She has a bag full of them. The following morning Sinead is gleefully counting all the money she made from selling the drugs but is less impressed when Ste takes his cut. Ste explains that Freddie has cut off his supply and she helps Ste find Freddie's supplier by stealing Freddie's phone. Ste has a meeting with Trevor (Freddie's supplier) but fails to get any drugs from him. Sinead decides that she needs more money and resolves to sell painkillers as drugs (M2).

Description of the violent scenes rated strong (with milder scenes providing context)

Sinead is pushing drugs at the club. Freddie is also there drinking. A punter hassles Sinead for her number. He grabs her but she shrugs him off. The punter grabs her again and she tries to get free. Freddie storms over. The punter has her by the arms and is saying, “All I want to know is your name.” Freddie interjects: “Fifteen feet.” The punter asks: “What?” Freddie replies: “That's how high you're going to fall off that balcony when I launch you off it.” The punter backs away, smiling. Freddie shouts after him: “Thought not.” Sinead introduces herself and Freddie asks her to tell him what her business with that man was all about.

(Violent act and result, 6/06/13 – mild, M2)

Sinead has shown Freddie the painkillers. Freddie says that he's not seen many drug dealers like her around. Then again, he doesn't meet many painkiller pushers! Sinead says that she doesn't know what he's talking about. Freddie asks her what will happen when someone twigs that she's sold them a dud. He doesn't think they'll take too kindly to it. Sinead asks if she looks scared and Freddie says: “No. But you're playing a dangerous game. And you should be.” Freddie says he has “half a mind to take them off you myself”. Sinead says that she knows it's risky, but she's not doing too well at the moment. She needs the money. Freddie says he's leaving before all her punters come off their painkillers and things get a little bit crazy.

This is a clear warning of the potential danger.

At the end of her shift Sinead is seen leaving the club. She is outside in a dark alley. The punter from the club is following her. He shouts after her: “I didn't get much of a buzz off that pill.” He walks

towards her: "Do you know anything about that?" Sinead says: "Look. It's not my problem, mate. You bought it as you saw it." Pulsing music starts. The punter grabs her by the arms and slams her against the wall. He holds his hand over her mouth so she can't scream. Sinead's bag falls to the floor. She is whimpering. The man bends to pick up her bag and Sinead says: "Look. I'm sorry. Just take it, take. You've got it." The punter stands up and again covers her mouth. He says: "No. Not yet." The camera is on their faces, but the implication is that he pushes his hand into her groin. She gives a muffled scream.

(Violent act and result, 06/06/13 – strong, M2)

This is a shocking scene with implied sexual assault. Sinead is a vulnerable young woman in a dark alley. Freddie's warning of danger becomes a stark reality.

The following morning Sinead has extensive bruising to her face. She is unable to hide the cause of her injuries from Ste, but she tries to play down the incident, saying: "It's all part and parcel, isn't it?" Ste is concerned and angry that she could do anything like that (M2).

Despite her bravado, Sinead is anxious when she returns to work at the club and asks to go home early. As she leaves, she is arrested under suspicion of possessing a controlled substance.

Narrative development - further episodes continue to explore the effects of Sinead's actions

Sinead is held in a police cell. She is distressed and weeping. When questioned by the police, she lies to them, saying that she doesn't know who supplied the drugs to her. She bought them for her own use, then changed her mind about taking them and sold them instead. Her mother, Di, arrives and insists that Sinead return home. Sinead is released but bound over to return when her toxicology results arrive. She apologises to Di, admitting that she has messed up. Back at home, life is unbearable for Sinead. She is ashamed of her behaviour and has lost her new job at the club. She is drawn to her baby and resents Di who is planning the official adoption of Katy. On 11th June 2013 Sinead announces that she is moving back to Ste's and taking Katy with her (M3).

Sinead has a fight with her friend, Holly, who then spitefully reports her to Social Services. Sinead believes it was her mother who reported her, and their relationship disintegrates. Sinead is now estranged from her family and friends, and in danger of losing custody of her baby. Once again without a job, Sinead has no money to pay the rent. Possible employers in the community are reluctant to employ her, given that she has been arrested for drug dealing. She decides to have a night at the club in the hope of meeting a rich footballer. The manager of a football team offers her £200 for sex. Sinead refuses him that night, but meets him in his hotel room the following day. Before having any sex, she steals money from his wallet and leaves. Sinead throws a party (rather than pay the rent) and her money is stolen. Again, needing money to pay the rent, she starts 'clipping' (offering sex for money then taking the money without having sex). On 1st June 2013 Phoebe sees her get into a car with a man then run away. She gives her a dire warning: "You might think that it's a good idea – that it's easy money, but it's not. There are some dodgy people out there." Sinead argues that she doesn't have a choice right now, but Phoebe points out that there's always a choice (M3).

Here, the viewer sees the recurring pattern of a young person becoming increasingly involved in dangerous situations. Sinead's initial reluctance to sell drugs or offer sex for money is based on her knowledge of what is right and wrong and what's socially unacceptable, but this is quickly overridden by her desire for easy money. The consequences of her choices are made clear: sexual assault, arrest, shame and remorse, loss of employment, estrangement from family and friends, and so on.

5.6 Conclusions – case studies

In *Hollyoaks* all the violent scenes with a high rating were central or pivotal to the storyline in which they appeared. Violence occurred for a reason and was used to drive the narrative along. The potential for violence was clearly flagged up to the viewer and the consequences explored. In scenes where violence was less impactful (rated as moderate or mild) the ways in which violence was used, and contributed to the narrative, becomes less clearly defined.

Appendix 1: The sample

Table A1a: Sample episodes and length of output, by wave (N)

	<i>Coronation Street</i>		<i>EastEnders</i>		<i>Emmerdale</i>		<i>Hollyoaks</i>		<i>All soaps</i>	
	N progs	N mins	N progs	N mins	N progs	N mins	N progs	N mins	N progs	N mins
Composite										
2001-2002	17	411	15	422	20	458	16	379	68	1670
2006-2007	16	462	16	480	24	549	20	472	76	1963
2011-2012	13	466	16	459	20	535	20	473	69	1933
Blocked										
2013	14	446	16	451	19	530	20	465	69	1892
Total	60	1785	63	1812	83	2072	76	1789	282	7458

Table A1b: Sample episodes and length of output, by wave (%)

	<i>Coronation Street</i>		<i>EastEnders</i>		<i>Emmerdale</i>		<i>Hollyoaks</i>		<i>All soaps</i>	
	% progs	% mins	% progs	% mins	% progs	% mins	% progs	% mins	% progs	% mins
Composite										
2001-2002	28	23	24	23	24	22	21	21	24	22
2006-2007	27	26	25	26	29	26	26	26	27	26
2011-2012	22	26	25	25	24	26	26	26	24	26
Blocked										
2013	23	25	25	25	23	26	26	26	24	25
Total	100	100	99	99	100	100	99	99	99	99

Table A1c: All soaps – overall figures

	Total episodes	Total length of episodes (mins)	Total number of scenes	Total number of scenes with violence	% of scenes with violence
2001-2002	68	1670	2047	98	4.8
2006-2007	76	1963	2104	118	5.6
2011-2012	69	1933	2111	137	6.5
2013	69	1892	2147	159	7.4
Total	282	7458	8409	512	6.1

Table A1d: *Coronation Street* – overall figures

	Total episodes	Total length of episodes (mins)	Total number of scenes	Total number of scenes with violence	% of scenes with violence
2001-2002	17	411	395	23	5.8
2006-2007	16	462	457	22	4.8
2011-2012	13	466	436	23	5.3
2013	14	446	406	18	4.4
Total	60	1785	1694	86	5.1

Table A1e: *EastEnders* – overall figures

	Total episodes	Total length of episodes (mins)	Total number of scenes	Total number of scenes with violence	% of scenes with violence
2001-2002	15	422	596	43	7.2
2006-2007	16	480	568	44	7.7
2011-2012	16	459	523	30	5.7
2013	16	451	535	16	3.0
Total	63	1812	2222	133	6.0

Table A1f: *Emmerdale* – overall figures

	Total episodes	Total length of episodes (mins)	Total number of scenes	Total number of scenes with violence	% of scenes with violence
2001-2002	20	458	495	19	3.8
2006-2007	24	549	536	37	6.9
2011-2012	20	535	477	41	8.6
2013	19	530	471	36	7.6
Total	83	2072	1979	133	6.7

Table A1g: *Hollyoaks* – overall figures

	Total episodes	Total length of episodes (mins)	Total number of scenes	Total number of scenes with violence	% of scenes with violence
2001-2002	16	379	561	13	2.3
2006-2007	20	472	543	15	2.8
2011-2012	20	473	675	43	6.4
2013	20	465	735	89	12.1
Total	76	1789	2514	160	6.4

Appendix 2: Content analysis method

Two coding schedules were used. The first logged various programme details of each episode including a count of the total number of scenes produced, and the number of scenes where violence was portrayed. 'Scenes' here refers to events taking place with the same characters, at the same location, at one time.

Violence coding schedule: Each violent scene was logged on a separate coding schedule, which covered over 50 key attributes including the 'dramatic pentad' of who was involved, what they did, why they did it, how they did it and where. As well as the realism and credibility of the portrayal, each violent scene was rated for its relevance to the narrative, and whether it was unexpected or cued in some way. Details of the mood and production style were also recorded.

A distinctive feature of this coding schedule was that it was designed to measure the impact of the scene, according to a number of attributes identified through audience research. These included the graphic detail shown, whether sounds accentuated the violence, the extent to which the violence transgressed rules of fairness (such as kicking someone when they were down), the vulnerability of the victim and the emotional reactions of all involved (including any bystanders).

Team meetings (at all stages, from training through coding, analysis and interpretation) ensured that the content analysis was carried out in a consistent and reliable way. In order to provide a simple summary of the violent scenes for statistical purposes, these were categorised as:
Severity: 1=mild, 2=moderate, 3=strong.

All scenes rated '3=strong' were viewed by the whole team, as were those on the boundaries of each category. The coded schedules were entered on a database and analysed using the statistical package SPSS.

Definition of violence: The focus of this research was intentional interpersonal violent behaviour. A violent *scene* might contain more than one violent *act*. These were defined as:

'A violent act is any action of physical force, with or without a weapon, used against oneself, another person or an animal, where there is intent to harm, whether carried through or merely attempted and whether the action caused injury or not. *This action of physical force must be an act of passion, cruelty, fierceness or aggression* (i.e. not playful). Petty acts, such as pushing someone to guide them, are not acts of physical force because they lack aggression or fierceness. Also coded under violent acts are scenes of menace and intimidation, where the intention of the perpetrator is to frighten the victim, or where such scenes are used as a narrative tool to indicate that further violence is likely between the characters. Note: threats that are not violent in nature are not included here (such as threatening to report someone to the police).

Violence here excludes accidents (although a separate log was kept of these). Also excluded were heated exchanges (which are perhaps a prevalent and distinctive feature of UK soaps) unless accompanied by menace, intimidation or threat of violence. Finally, the figures reported exclude brief images of violence shown repeatedly in title or credit sequences - unique to the first wave.

Appendix 3: Severity ratings of violent scenes

Severity rating of violent scenes

- 1= mild: mild scenes would have little or no impact on the viewer; they would typically show no (or very superficial) injuries, little or no distress, little or no emotional response from anyone involved, etc. This category includes mild pushes, trips, shoves, grabs and throws.
- 2 = moderate scenes: the violence would be more impactful (hard punches, head-butts, repeated kicking), aggressors might show real vehemence and aggression, onlookers might show shock and disapproval, victims might have serious injuries and/or severe pain, or be frightened.
- 3 = strong scenes: these scenes are likely to shock, or make the viewer very uncomfortable in some way; either through the violent acts shown, or through other aspects of the content. The use of handguns and knives at close quarters, rape, torture and brutal beatings come into this category. Gory injuries, actual murders and violence towards vulnerable people may also be included. Any participants showing great distress, terror or genuine horror may elevate the violence rating to this category.

Mild violence - examples

- Tina and her boyfriend, Tommy, are arguing in the street. Tina believes Tommy is simply being jealous when he tells her that Gary is attracted to her. She says it is not true. Tyrone intervenes, but Tommy pushes him away telling him to mind his own business (*Coronation Street*, 13/05/13).
- Tanya's fiancé, Greg, is angry that Tanya's ex-husband, Max, is talking to her on her wedding day. Max is upsetting her. Greg grabs Max, pushes him and tells him to leave. Max shrugs him off (*EastEnders*, 14/04/11).
- Gennie and her partner, Nikhil, are at a wedding party when her waters break and she goes into labour. Nikhil gives her instructions about what she should be doing, but Gennie is in too much pain to comply and responds by pinching his nose hard to silence him (*Emmerdale*, 17/10/12).
- Mercedes punches her sister Michaela on her arm when she helps herself to some pizza before dinner (*Hollyoaks*, 06/11/06).

Moderate violence – examples

- Hayley Cropper has been pretending to her estranged son, Christian, that she is his aunt. She has not been brave enough to tell him the truth. In fact, she is his father; she had gender reassignment many years previously. When she finally reveals the truth to Christian, he is mortified. He starts to walk away from her, upset and then angry. She moves to stop him, but he furiously tells her to back off. He pushes her away and slaps her round the face, causing her to tumble to the ground. Both of them are crying. She holds out her hand for him to help her up, but he walks away from her. Hayley is seen with cut hands, bloodied nose and clothes. She cries as she wipes the blood from her face (*Coronation Street*, 24/09/07).

- Derek Branning taunts Phil, pretending that he has slept with Phil's ex-partner, Shirley Carter. Derek continues to goad him in the pub, suggesting that Shirley was 'fair game' but not his 'usual type'. Phil walks across the bar to Derek without saying a word and punches him hard in the face. Derek falls to the floor with a groan. Phil stands over him shouting: "Come on! Let's see what you're made of. Come on!" Derek sits up in obvious pain – he has a split lip (*EastEnders*, 24/04/12).
- Pearl is at the graveside of her partner, Len. She is with Edna and they are arguing because Pearl believes that Len really loved Edna, and not her. The argument escalates until Pearl slaps Edna hard around the face. Edna stumbles back from the force of the blow (*Emmerdale*, 28/05/07).
- Mike visits his daughter, Amy, after being away, and is furious to discover that Ste has been staying with her. He manhandles Ste out of the flat and pushes him over. Amy screams at him to stop. Mike is about to throw Ste down the stairs when Ste discloses that he is the father of Amy's child. This stops Mike in his tracks (*Hollyoaks*, 19/10/07).

Strong violence – examples

- Dev hears that his arch-enemy, Joe, is looking for him so he goes to find him in the pub, spoiling for a fight. Dev riles Joe who snaps, turning on him and punching him repeatedly. Dev is knocked over a table and falls to the floor – glasses smash to the ground. Bystanders in the pub look horrified and scream in shock. One turns away as she cannot bear to look. The fight spills out into the street and Dev is pushed over a car parked outside, setting off the alarm. Dev is on the ground with a bloodied face, in great pain. A friend shows concern and tries to comfort him. Geena, Joe's girlfriend, is furious with him and his temper, and tells him their relationship is over. He has gone too far this time. (*Coronation Street*, 16/09/02).
- After being treated for a gunshot wound, Phil Mitchell has discharged himself from hospital and arrives at his ex-girlfriend's house. It is she, Lisa, who fired the shot, and Phil has come to confront her. In a very tense, emotionally-charged scene, Phil is extremely menacing. He grabs her round the neck and backs her into a room as he advances towards her. Phil tells her she should have finished him off when she still had the chance and in a cool, sinister manner, makes the shape of a gun with his hand and points it at her (*EastEnders*, 05/04/01).
- In a later scene, Lisa is crying, and is clearly very afraid. Phil grabs her by the back of the neck and forces her to get the gun which she used to shoot him. He pushes her down onto the sofa and slowly loads the gun. She tries to reason with him, but he advances towards her, gesturing the gun in her direction. He coolly sits on the arm of the sofa and humiliates her telling her how eager she was to please him – especially in bed. The scene ends with Lisa becoming angry, feeling she has nothing to lose: "I pulled that trigger and it thrilled me. So why don't you just be the big man and do what you have to? Go on! Do it! Right here! Right now! I want you to!" (*EastEnders*, 05/04/01).
- In the fortieth anniversary episode of *Emmerdale*, Carl King is attacked by Chas Dingle, and then murdered by Cameron Murray. In a very tense and chaotic scene, Carl is shown overpowering Chas as she struggles to escape. Carl tells her he killed his own father – indicating clearly that he is a real danger to her too. She is very frightened and slaps him in a

bid to free herself. He restrains her and throws her to the ground, putting his hands around her throat. As he tries to kiss her, she grasps a brick from the ground and clubs him on the back of his head (*Emmerdale*, 17/10/12).

- An armed robbery storyline in *Hollyoaks* generated eight scenes of strong violence. These included a scene in which shop assistant, Sinead, is held at gunpoint. Robbie, gun in hand, grabs her and steers her across the shop. While he is distracted, Sinead tries to make a phone call, but Robbie snatches the phone from her and stamps on it. He pushes her against a display unit. Sinead cries out in fear (*Hollyoaks*, 21/05/13).

Appendix 4: Elements of violent scenes that were unexpected

An underlying concern in this research is whether or not the violence might reasonably have been anticipated. One question asked whether there were any elements of the violent scene that were unexpected, and coders recorded descriptions of these. These responses were categorised into five sub-types, defined as follows:

No build-up – the violence came ‘out of nowhere’ or, while tensions might have been high between characters, violence was not necessarily inevitable or predictable.

The act itself – some violence was likely within the scene but the act itself was stronger than might have been expected because it was, for example, excessive, unusual, poignant or startling.

Role reversal – cues may have led viewers to expect that one character would be the aggressor and another, the victim. On occasion the expected victim was the first to behave violently.

Weaponry – the fact that a weapon was used at all, or the choice of weapon, was surprising.

Character or role expectations – where the violent behaviour seemed out of character.

Overall there were 53 scenes with unexpected elements (13% of all scenes where a violent act occurred). *EastEnders* contained the majority of these (N=23), followed by *Hollyoaks* (N=15). Only a handful occurred in *Emmerdale* and *Coronation Street* (N=10 and N=5 respectively). Results are shown in the table below:

Table A4: Unexpected elements, by soap

	<i>Coronation Street</i>	<i>EastEnders</i>	<i>Emmerdale</i>	<i>Hollyoaks</i>	<i>All soaps</i>	
	N	N	N	N	N	%
No build-up	2	5	4	8	19	36
Violent act itself	2	14	1	3	20	38
Role reversal	1	2	--	--	3	6
Weaponry	--	--	1	1	2	4
Character/role expectations	--	2	4	3	9	17
Total (N)	5	23	10	15	53	101

Base: Scenes where there was an unexpected element to the violence (excludes results only scenes)

Overall, the violent act itself (38%), and there being no build-up to the violence (36%), were the two most frequently occurring categories. The act itself as the unexpected element was by far most frequent in *EastEnders* (N=14) and relatively rare in the other soaps. No build-up, on the other hand, was more evenly distributed across the various soaps, with the exception of *Coronation Street*, where only two such scenes occurred. Examples of these categories are given below.

The violent act itself

Sean Slater has just discovered that his sister, Stacey, has been having an affair with Max Branning. It is Stacey’s wedding day and she is about to marry Max’s son, Bradley. Sean is furious and arrives at Max’s house drunk and carrying a champagne bottle. The men fight in the street and Max falls to the ground. Although some violence is expected, the act of Sean smashing the champagne bottle and holding it to Max’s face is not (*EastEnders*, 01/11/07).

After an impassioned speech about Texas, the love of his life, Dodger and his half-brother Will are at her graveside arguing. Will, (who can walk but pretends to be a wheelchair user), is goading Dodger about Texas, saying he proposed to Texas only so that Dodger should not have her. Predictably, Dodger rises to the bait and loses his temper, falling on Will and punching him repeatedly. The element that is unexpected and shocking occurs when he hurls the seemingly disabled Will into Texas's open grave and throws soil on top of him, shouting: "I wish it was *you* in there!" (*Hollyoaks*, 30/05/13).

No build-up to the violence

For months Gail has received anonymous cards in the post purporting to be from her late husband, serial killer Richard Hillman. Gail discovers that her disturbed son David is the culprit and she tries to understand why he has done this. They have reached a state of calm and are sitting on a sofa, gently discussing why he did it as Gail comforts him. At this point, Audrey, Gail's mother, bursts through the door. She is furious and starts slapping David viciously around his face and body, screaming at him for what he has done. She stands over him as she does this. Gail shouts at her to get off him and a furious row ensues (*Coronation Street*, 22/05/06).

Dr Adam Forsyth is seen dropping tranquillisers into Steph's tea. There is no build-up to this scene, and it is particularly unexpected, as the couple had only recently married. [It is later revealed that he is trying to drug her in a bid to keep her quiet about the fact that she had witnessed him killing her brother Terence] (*Emmerdale*, 14/05/06)

Character/ role expectations

John Barton arrives at the garage where Cain Dingle (fearless hard man) works as a mechanic, to return some loan money to him. Cain has been having an illicit affair with John's wife, Moira. In a heated argument, Cain strongly hints at what he and Moira have been up to, and John is incensed. He lunges at Cain, threatening him and spoiling for a fight. Rather than respond, as would be more in character, Cain runs into the garage and locks himself in. This infuriates John even more and he kicks at the doors for Cain to come out (*Emmerdale*, 10/11/11).

Role reversal

David Platt has been spiteful to Sophie Webster in a previous scene and continues his campaign when they meet in the local café. Uncharacteristically, she takes revenge by kicking him under the table, out of sight of the mothers accompanying them. Furthermore, she has the last laugh when his retaliation (he pushes her) is witnessed by the adults, who berate him for being unkind to Sophie (*Coronation Street*, 23/04/01).

Trevor Morgan, portrayed in previous episodes as a controlling, psychopathic wife-beater, is now dating Sam Mitchell. They are having dinner at her house. Things become heated between them when Sam criticises Trevor's ex-wife, Mo. Trevor turns aggressive, as expected, and calls Sam a slapper. Completely unfazed by Trevor, his violent past and what he could do to her, Sam retaliates and tells him he should not talk to her like that. When Trevor replies that he can do as he pleases, Sam throws a glass of wine in his face demanding angrily, "Who do you think you are? You can't bully me, Trevor. What are you going to do about it? Are you going to hit me? Yeah, that's what you do isn't it?" When Trevor disrespects her further by saying that she lacks class, Sam slaps him in the face and angrily throws a glass of wine at the wall (*EastEnders*, 15/10/02).

Weaponry

Carl and Chas are seen physically fighting over her affair with another man. As she struggles to free herself from him, he overpowers her and throws her to the ground, putting his hands around her throat. She grasps a brick which happens to lie on the ground next to her, and hits him with it on the back of the head. This is a surprise, as the scene was shot at night and the brick was not visible to viewers before this point (*Emmerdale Live*, 17/10/12).

After hearing Dodger's tribute speech to Texas at the funeral, his girlfriend Theresa realises that he does not love her. In fact, Dodger believes that Theresa was responsible for killing Texas, and has been dating her under false pretences in order to discover the truth. Theresa confesses to murder, not of Texas, but of Calvin Valentine, the father of her own child. Heartbroken, she follows Dodger to Texas' graveside and tells him that her confession was a lie. He says it is too late – he has already gone to the police. Then suddenly, Theresa takes out a gun from her bag, releases the safety catch, and points it at him (*Hollyoaks*, 30/05/13).

Appendix 5: Negotiating out of violence

The research explored whether any characters attempted to negotiate their way out of, or avoid, violence. Overall, this occurred in a minority (29%) of scenes where there was a violent act. It was somewhat more frequent in *EastEnders* (34%) and *Emmerdale* (33%) than in *Hollyoaks* (24%) or *Coronation Street* (24%).

The large majority of these cases (65% overall) produced a successful outcome and the violence was defused. This occurred most frequently in *Coronation Street* (75%) followed by *Emmerdale* (69%), *Hollyoaks* (65%) and *EastEnders* (57%).

Examples of negotiating out of violence *successfully*

In an altercation between Joe and Dev about a business matter that has gone wrong, Joe becomes aggressive and stands close to Dev in a threatening manner. Mike Baldwin steps in and says: "Quit it, the pair of you! Pointing the finger is getting us nowhere" (*Coronation Street*, 08/09/02).

Sonia witnesses a fight between her boyfriend, Jamie Mitchell, and Steve Owen. She runs up to them and demands of Steve: "What are you doing? Just leave him alone!" (*EastEnders*, 05/01/01).

Matt is furious with Daz for getting his under-age daughter very drunk the night before. He confronts Daz in the street, pushing him and threatening to set him up with a stolen car. Jack interrupts them and asks Matt: "What the hell do you think you're doing?" Matt backs off. Jack then says to Daz: "If he lays a finger on you, you tell me. We'll be straight down that [police] station" (*Emmerdale*, 21/04/06).

Mercedes has jeopardised Carmel's theme night at their nightclub and a fight breaks out between them. After an intervention by Myra McQueen and Dr Browning, the sisters stop fighting (*Hollyoaks*, 16/05/13).

Examples of negotiating out of violence *unsuccessfully*

Carla angrily lunges for Rob (her brother) who has defrauded her. Peter (her partner) tries to pull her off but she is too angry and pushes him away, shouting at him to 'back off' (*Coronation Street*, 31/05/13).

In an attempt to force Jay Brown to accompany him, Phil Mitchell grabs his arm and shouts a countdown in a threatening way. Jay's girlfriend tells Phil to 'leave him', while her father reasons: "Come on, you're in my house." However, that is not what stops Phil but the fact that Jay refuses to move. Phil eventually walks away (*EastEnders*, 11/05/12).

Cain pushes Cameron because he is angry with him for cheating on his daughter, Debbie. Lisa tells him to stop, that it will not help matters, but Cain takes no notice. He then holds Cameron by his collar and threatens him (*Emmerdale*, 25/10/12).

Mercedes tells Riley at the altar that she cannot marry him because she has slept with his father whom Riley then punches. Seth tries to intervene but Riley pushes him out of the way as the fight continues (*Hollyoaks*, 18/10/11).

Who instigated the negotiation?

As shown in the table below, bystanders were the most likely party to intervene to prevent violence. This occurred in a large majority of cases in *Coronation Street* (93%), *Emmerdale* and *Hollyoaks* (both 81%) followed by *EastEnders* at 68%.

Table A5a: Who instigated the negotiation by soap

	<i>Coronation Street</i>		<i>EastEnders</i>		<i>Emmerdale</i>		<i>Hollyoaks</i>		<i>All soaps</i>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Bystander	14	93	25	68	29	81	25	81	93	78
Victim	1	7	12	32	7	19	5	16	25	21
Victim & bystander	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	3	1	1
Total	15	100	37	100	36	100	31	100	119	100

Base: Number of scenes where negotiation was noted

Victims negotiated out of violence more often in *EastEnders*, accounting for almost one third (32%) of all cases in this series. These included Lisa begging Phil to forgive her for shooting him (“I didn’t know what I was doing ... Phil, please ...”) and pleading with him in a number of other ways during three emotionally-charged scenes in which he confronts her with her crime (*EastEnders*, 05/04/01).

Emmerdale and *Hollyoaks* produced similar results (19% and 16% respectively) while in *Coronation Street* there was only one incidence of negotiation. Rape victim Toyah Battersby, home alone, receives an anonymous and menacing phone call. She is terrified, repeatedly asking the caller to identify himself, and pleading with him to leave her alone. He hangs up in mid-sentence and she is left shaking and crying (*Coronation Street*, 29/04/01).

A single scene involved negotiation by both a victim and a bystander. In *Hollyoaks*, Darren thinks he recognises one of the Price Slice robbers by the pattern of his coat. He hauls the boy into the pub as the latter shouts: “Get off me!” The boy turns out to be Jason, the twin brother of Robbie, who was the real perpetrator. Jason tries to get away but Darren catches him, shaking him and throwing him over a table, calling him ‘scum’. Nancy, a bystander, is visibly shocked and points out that he is only a boy (*Hollyoaks*, 23/05/13).

Types of negotiation

Six sub-types of negotiation were evident when characters tried to stop the violence – five were verbal while the sixth comprised (non-violent) physical intervention:

- *Reasoning* – verbal negotiation based on logic (“Think about what you’re doing”).
- *Calming* – measures and words used to defuse the situation (“Calm down, the pair of you”).
- *Non-violent threat/intervention* – such as threatening to call the police or a neighbour for help.
- *Emotional appeal* – when a victim or bystander appeals to the instigator not to act violently.
- *Commanding* – when the instigator is ordered to stop (“Get off him immediately!”).
- *Physical interruption* – when someone physically intervenes to curtail the violence.

The following table examines the different types of negotiation in this sample. On some occasions a negotiation included more than one category. For example, a character may physically restrain another while at the same time telling them to calm down. In such cases both categories (physical interruption and calming) were logged.

Table A5b: Type of negotiation by soap

	<i>Coronation Street</i>		<i>EastEnders</i>		<i>Emmerdale</i>		<i>Hollyoaks</i>		<i>All soaps</i>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reasoning	3	14	7	15	8	16	3	9	21	14
Calming	1	5	5	10	4	8	1	3	11	7
Non-violent threat	--	--	1	2	1	2	--	--	2	1
Emotional appeal	1	5	7	15	4	8	3	9	15	10
Commanding	8	36	16	33	16	32	13	37	53	34
Physical interruption	9	41	12	25	17	34	15	43	53	34
Total	22	101	48	100	50	100	35	101	155	100

Base: All types of negotiation

Overall, the most frequent types of negotiation were commanding, and physical interruption, each generating over one-third of all negotiations in their respective series (both 34%). Much less common were reasoning (14%), emotional appeal (10%), calming (7%) and non-violent threat (1%).

Commanding negotiations were slightly more frequent in *Hollyoaks* (37%) and *Coronation Street* (36%) than in the other two soaps (*EastEnders* at 33%; *Emmerdale* at 32%). Some examples are given below.

Jamie Baldwin and Frankie (stepmother) have been having an affair. Jamie's father (Danny) is devastated when he finds out. In an emotionally charged scene, Frankie arrives with Jamie at their quayside apartment to collect her belongings, whereupon a brutal and prolonged fight ensues between the two men, spilling over onto the quayside. Danny repeatedly punches and shouts at Jamie and they eventually fall into the river. Frankie watches hysterically from the water's edge, screaming for Danny to stop. But this is to no avail. The fight stops only when Jamie disappears under the water and Danny thinks his son has drowned (*Coronation Street*, 24/11/06).

Deano has stolen the statue from the Queen Vic and landlord Grant Mitchell chases after him. He pushes Deano down onto the bench and, when Deano continues to be cheeky, grabs his jacket and lifts him off the ground. Carly Wicks shouts to Grant: "Oi, stop it!" Grant lets Deano go and reasons: "You're lucky I'm in a good mood!" (*EastEnders* 28/04/06).

Believing that Ste has been dealing drugs in a nightclub, the bouncer grabs him and throws him out. Ste protests, demanding that the bouncer take his hands off him, but he ignores him and continues his aggression, pushing Ste out onto the street (*Hollyoaks*, 05/06/13).

Physical interruptions were most frequent in *Hollyoaks*, at four in ten incidences (43%) followed by *Coronation Street* (41%) and *Emmerdale* (34%). *EastEnders* contained the fewest, at one quarter of all negotiation types (25%).

During a police interview, Lindsey provokes Silas and he lunges at her. A police officer restrains him to stop the violence from escalating (*Hollyoaks*, 03/11/11).

Katy and her new boyfriend, Ryan, are drinking together in the Rover's Return. Also in the pub is Katy's ex-boyfriend, Chesney, who pushes Ryan during an angry exchange in which he reveals his jealousy. Several people intervene – Karl pulls Ryan off, Tyrone pulls Chesney off and Fiz tells Chesney to sit down (*Coronation Street* – 26/05/13).

Negotiation using reasoning occurred in 14% of cases overall - almost the same rate across all the soaps (14%-16%) with the exception of *Hollyoaks* (9%).

Adam is portrayed goading Cain, whose relationship with Adam's mother is a bone of contention. There is a heated argument, watched by Cain's father, Zak, who comments: "Just walk away. That's what he wants" (i.e. for Cain to hit him). (*Emmerdale*, 31/05/13)

Syed is angry with Danny who is threatening to report Syed's boyfriend, Christian, for assault. Danny tells Syed he wants some money or else Christian goes to prison. Knowing he has goaded Syed, Danny reasons with him that there is CCTV outside the police station. Syed looks up at the camera and decides not to hit him (*EastEnders*, 02/11/12).

Emotional pleas were found in only 10% of negotiations overall. This sub-type was most frequent in *EastEnders* (15%) and least so in *Coronation Street* (5%). *Hollyoaks* and *Emmerdale* showed similar results in this category (9% and 8% respectively).

Will has hold of Texas and they are struggling. Texas is crying and hitting his chest ineffectually. Will is too strong for her. He demands to know whether she ever loved him, or did she only ever love Dodger? Will has hold of Texas' arms and is screaming: "Tell me, did you ever love me?" Texas struggles to get away, shouting: "Get off me. Get off". The sound of breaking glass is heard as Texas starts to fall through the window (*Hollyoaks*, 13/05/13).

Calming techniques were rare overall, at 6%, and found more frequently in *EastEnders* than the other soaps (10% versus 6% in *Emmerdale*, 5% in *Coronation Street* and 3% in *Hollyoaks*).

Dexter is squaring up to Sam in the café, but his grandmother Cora intervenes and tells him to calm down. Dexter turns away and walks out (*EastEnders*, 20/05/13).

Cameron confronts Carl about fermenting trouble between himself and his girlfriend, Debbie. An altercation follows in which they push one another. This is witnessed by Edna, who demands: "Just calm down, the pair of you!" Cameron moves to leave but then turns around and punches Carl in the face (*Emmerdale*, 24/05/11).

Gary attends a reunion with his old army friends. When he shows them a photo of Izzy (his partner) and Tina (surrogate mother to his child), one of the party teases him about being attracted to Tina. This hits a nerve and he gets out of his chair and threatens the perpetrator. Another friend tells Gary to calm down. Gary sits down and apologises, although he is still angry (*Coronation Street*, 13/05/13).

When Jim jumps a queue in the shop, Robbie threatens him with a smack. Callum restrains Robbie, tells him to calm down and they leave the premises (*Hollyoaks*, 20/05/13).

Non-verbal threats occurred only twice overall (3% of all types of negotiation):

Phil is furious with Jane as she has failed to ensure that his son, Ben, is available for him to pick up. He is intimidating in a way that only Phil can be, and Jane is frightened. She tells him to leave her alone or she will call the police (*EastEnders*, 04/04/06).

Matt is behaving in a threatening manner towards Daz. Jack interrupts with: "What the hell d'you think you're doing?" He turns to Daz, stating: "If he lays a finger on you, you tell me and we'll be straight down that [police] station" (*Emmerdale*, 21/04/06).

Appendix 6: Storylines in which violence was a secondary issue

Coronation Street: Surrogacy story

Mild violence used to highlight the pressure felt by characters in a highly unusual situation

Antecedents: Partners Gary Windass and Izzy Armstrong ask Tina McIntyre to become a surrogate mother after Izzy miscarries and is unwilling to try again. Tina and her partner Tommy Duckworth agree because their debts could be wiped out with the surrogacy money (pre-sample). Unbeknown to Izzy, the lines become blurred for her partner Gary, as he begins to have feelings for the unsuspecting Tina, whose partner Tommy becomes jealous. Eventually Tommy and Tina split up – the pressure has become too great (M1).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 7	Mild: 7	Moderate: 0	Strong: 0
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There are several scenes highlighting tension between the characters in this storyline. When Gary attends an army reunion he shows his mates a photo of Izzy and Tina. They tease him, saying he is attracted to Tina. This hits a nerve and Gary becomes aggressive - threatening one of them. His friends tell him to calm down and Gary apologises. When he finally attempts to kiss Tina, she is furious and pushes him away. There are various scenes during which Tommy threatens Gary when ordering him to stay away from Tina. As more people discover that he tried to kiss Tina, and the likelihood of Izzy finding this out increases, there are further aggressive altercations between the various characters.

Consequences and comments: The violence in this storyline is used to represent the tension between Gary, Izzy, Tina and Tommy. Tommy squares up to Gary to protect Tina and to express his jealousy. The violence tends to be in the form of threats, often with the disapproval of witnesses who tell the protagonists to calm down, or to leave it be (M2).

Coronation Street: The question of Marcus' sexuality

Mild violence used as an expression of frustration from an otherwise gentle character

Antecedents: Marcus has always seen himself as a gay man but finds that he has fallen in love with Maria. They now cohabit, much to everyone's surprise, including his former partner, Sean (pre-sample). Marcus has been avoiding telling Maria that he and Sean have been invited to a gay friend's wedding reception. He is reluctant to attend, knowing how his gay friends will judge him for being with a woman (M1).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 1	Mild: 1	Moderate: 0	Strong: 0
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Sean asks Marcus whether he has told Maria about the wedding party yet. When Marcus admits he has not, Sean mocks him and tells him that it will end in tears. Losing patience with Sean's taunts, Marcus threatens to hit him.

Consequences and comments: Long-term viewers of this series will know that this mild threat of violence from Marcus is out of character - he is usually portrayed as gentle and rational. This aggressive outburst is perhaps symptomatic of some confusion about his sexuality (M2).

Coronation Street: Chesney-Katy-Ryan triangle***Mild violence used to highlight tension and frustration in a broken relationship***

Antecedents: Teenage couple Chesney Brown and Katy Armstrong have recently spilt up, as she was cheating on him with Ryan Connor (pre-sample). Chesney is angry about the split – more so after an attempt at reconciliation fails. Childcare issues surrounding their son, Joseph, come to the fore. Katy's father, Owen, disapproves of Ryan and thinks his daughter ought to make it up with Chesney so they can be a family again. Chesney starts to date Sinead to get his own back on Katy (M1).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 4	Mild: 2	Moderate: 2	Strong: 0
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A number of violent scenes are connected to this storyline, all mild or moderate. There are two aggressive confrontations between Chesney and Ryan, and on both occasions onlookers intervene to stop the aggression escalating. Scenes involving hard man, Owen Armstrong, are stronger, but still portray non-violent solutions. When Owen comes home early to find his daughter Katy and Ryan kissing after sex, he is furious and angrily pushes Ryan out onto the street. A major row ensues and Ryan's mother, Michelle, comes over to stand up for her son.

Consequences and comments: Various characters frown upon the violence throughout this storyline. The violence achieves very little, or is used by otherwise gentle characters – highlighting how they have been pushed to their limit and are expressing pent-up frustration. Onlookers intervene to curb any escalation: "That's enough. I think everyone's had their money's worth" says Anna when Chesney and Ryan threaten each other in the street. After Ryan's altercation with Owen, he discusses the situation with his mother and her partner, who both suggest that he should sort the problem out by talking it through with Owen. Long-term viewers of the series might have been surprised by Chesney's aggressive behaviour, as his is normally a quiet and gentle character. In a much later episode, he is seen pumping weights in a bid to develop his muscles. He tells his sister, Fiz, that this must be what girls want. Fiz tells him he must not change - any girl would be lucky to have him just the way he is (M2).

Coronation Street: Rob and Tracy seek revenge on Carla***Violence used to make a theft look realistic but the 'baddies' are found out***

Antecedents: Tension between factory-owner Carla Connor and her brother Rob reaches a high after a series of altercations. When she refuses to treat him as an equal at her factory, Rob and girlfriend Tracy Barlow plot their revenge. Tracy is asked to drive some expensive silk to a supplier; the plan is that she will get 'robbed' and they will sell the silk which is worth £20k. They reason that Carla will be insured and so will not lose out (M1).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 6	Mild: 5	Moderate: 1	Strong: 0
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Although the robbery itself is not portrayed, Tracy returns to the factory in tears, dishevelled and with a cut lip, saying the van had been hijacked and the silk stolen. Rob's respect for Tracy increases – they are the new Bonnie and Clyde! Carla becomes suspicious and sees through the story. She is devastated that her brother could do this to her. Rob arranges a meeting with a potential buyer only to be greeted by Carla. She lunges at him in fury.

Consequences and comments: Rob and Tracy's deception (the crime and the violence Tracy endured to make it look realistic) does not pay. Carla threatens to report them to the police and, as ex-cons, neither of them wants to go back to prison (M2). They are therefore forced to leave their jobs at the factory and have difficulty getting other work, due to their criminal records and the fact that Carla has told her colleagues what the pair did to her (M3).

EastEnders: Sharon Rickman's pill addiction / Custody of baby Lexi
Violence highlighting great tension within one family

Antecedents: Sharon's long-term addiction to painkillers is contextualised by a series of life stressors which include being jilted at the altar (pre-sample). After her relationship breaks down, she moves in with ex-husband and friend Phil Mitchell. Phil is helping Lola (mother to his grandchild) regain custody of her child (Lexi). Sharon becomes a key part of a care plan, as does Lola's grandfather, Billy Mitchell (M1 and M2).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 5	Mild: 5	Moderate: 0	Strong: 0
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There are several scenes highlighting tension between the characters in this storyline. Phil is aggressive towards Sharon when he finds her unconscious after taking too many pills, when she should have been caring for Lexi. He manhandles her out of his house. When Sharon appears at the custody hearing, Phil tries to push her away but Billy and Lola defuse the situation. On discovering that the pair knew of Sharon's addiction, Phil storms out and gets into his car to drive away. Billy stands in front of the car to stop him, whereupon Phil moves the vehicle forward several times, threatening to run Billy over unless he moves. Billy refuses to allow Phil to bully him and instead gives an impassioned speech about family. Finally Phil returns to the courtroom to stand up for Lola.

Consequences and comments: Phil Mitchell is the archetypal East End hard man, not afraid to use his fists with little provocation. This is juxtaposed with Sharon's vulnerability as she battles with addiction and heartache. Although Phil is not made to pay for his violent behaviour, his threat to run over Billy does not have the desired effect. Billy refuses to be intimidated and Phil is forced to reconsider his family responsibilities. Baby Lexi is returned to Lola's care (M2).

EastEnders: Lauren Branning's alcohol addiction
A vulnerable young woman is forced to consider the consequences of her own violence

Antecedents: In an ongoing storyline, Lauren's increasing dependency on alcohol is shown to affect her relationships with her friends and family: her boyfriend, Joey, ends their relationship (M1), her best friend breaks ties with her (M1), and her mother asks the pub and the local shop to refuse her alcohol (M2). Driven by her dependency, Lauren's behaviour becomes increasingly erratic (M2).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 5	Mild: 4	Moderate: 1	Strong: 0
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When Lauren is refused service at The Queen Vic, she storms out of the pub, followed closely by her sister who begs her to come home. Lauren pushes her away. Joey sees that Lauren is upset and hugs her. His new girlfriend Lucy watches jealously outside the café and is spiteful to Lauren, who then snaps. She grabs Lucy and punches her in the face. Lucy falls to the ground with a bloody nose. Lauren then picks up a sugar canister and throws it defiantly through the café window.

Consequences and comments: The police arrest Lauren for assault and criminal damage. Lucy's father is adamant that Lauren should be prosecuted. Lauren's mother apologises on her daughter's behalf and promises to pay for the damage caused. Joey and Lauren's father convince Lucy not to prosecute – she agrees as long as Lauren apologises. Lauren faces the consequences of her own violence by apologising to Lucy – albeit somewhat reluctantly. The consequences of violence are shown to be quite serious – both physically and interpersonally (M2).

EastEnders: Kirsty Branning's fake pregnancy***Violence encouraged as an expression of manliness but with negative consequences***

Antecedents: After a series of marital differences, Kirsty pretends to new husband Max that she is pregnant, to assuage her greatest fear: that he will return to his ex-wife, Tanya. When Tanya makes it clear there will be no reconciliation, Max becomes more solicitous of Kirsty's welfare (M1). Kirsty begins to receive phone calls from Adam, the brother of her former boyfriend, hard man Carl. She is scared. Max promises to protect her and their baby, and wants to deal with Adam. Kirsty is adamant that this is not a good idea. Max confides in his brother, Jack, who assures him: "She likes tough men, don't she? And she wants people that can look after her. You want to sort that one out!" (M2).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 3	Mild: 2	Moderate: 1	Strong: 0
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Max confronts Adam and tells him to warn Carl off. Adam is dismissive and when Max tries to stop him leaving, Adam punches him in the stomach. Max doubles up in pain and his brother Jack intervenes, grabbing Adam's arms, twisting them behind his back and pushing him to the floor. Max restrains Jack from going further, ordering him: "Enough!" Back at home, Kirsty is furious and refuses to speak to Max.

Consequences and comments: For Max, violence does not pay. Intending to be the aggressor, he becomes the victim and ends up in a lot of pain. When his brother Jack intervenes it is Max who negotiates him down so that the violence does not escalate further. Kirsty's negative reaction to Max using violence also confirms that Max is in the wrong (M2).

EastEnders: Michael Moon and Janine Butcher's custody battle***Tensions simmer between a couple both capable of extremely violent behaviour***

Antecedents: Having had sole custody of his daughter Scarlett, Michael Moon is devastated when her mother, Janine Butcher, returns to the square and takes Scarlett back (M1). Knowing that Scarlett's nanny, Alice, is in love with him, Michael persuades her to work for Janine so that he can see his daughter. Alice agrees, but her loyalties are torn as she becomes close to Janine. Janine threatens to call the police when Alice steals from her, but Alice breaks down and reveals that she has been working covertly for Michael. Janine decides to leave the square and thanks Alice for all her help – watched by Michael, who is incensed (M2).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 1	Mild: 0	Moderate: 1	Strong: 0
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Michael grabs Alice by the chin and says, "If I never see my daughter again, I will destroy you." She looks afraid and cries with despair.

Consequences and comments: Alice is portrayed as a vulnerable young woman at the beck and call of the psychopathic Michael. Her extreme anxiety and stress culminate in shoplifting, for which she is found out (M2). Long-term viewers of this series will know that both Janine and Michael are highly capable of deceit and violent behaviour. The seeds are sown here for an explosive battle between them to gain the upper hand in the custody battle.

EastEnders: The snake, the vicar and the brothel***Threat of violence***

Antecedents: Dot is interviewed for the post of church warden. She suggests to the vicar that they target local prostitutes to bring them to God. She calls the number of one (obtained from the local newspaper). Dot hears Jenna's phone ring (she is a guest in the same B&B where the interview is taking place). Dot is outraged and makes to leave. As she opens her bag to pay for the tea, Bobby Beale's lost snake slithers out. (M2).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 1	Mild: 1	Moderate: 0	Strong: 0
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A reporter has come to the B&B to gather information for the story. He mistakes Shirley for a prostitute and says: "Oh and by the way, I don't blame you women. Like me you're just doing a job, ain't yer?" Shirley is furious and threatens: "Do you want a smack in the mouth?" The reporter smiles: "Not really my thing, sweetheart. Thanks for the offer though, yeah."

Consequences and comments: None – knowing the character, her threat of violence was real enough (if mild) but not taken seriously by the reporter. The headline in the local paper the following day was: 'The snake, the vicar and the brothel (M2).'

Emmerdale: Rhona Goskirk's addiction to prescription drugs***Violence used to show increasing vulnerability and desperation felt by an addict, with immediate regret***

Antecedents: Rhona's long-term addiction to prescription painkillers following a back injury (pre-sample) is addressed as the primary focus of this ongoing storyline. Rhona has created a complex web of deceit – lying to her husband and her best friend and veterinary business partner, Vanessa, who is trying to help wean her off the pills. Rhona's addiction is such that she resorts to stealing from the medicine cabinet in their practice and even from an older arthritic neighbour, Sandy Thomas (M1).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 2	Mild: 1	Moderate: 1	Strong: 0
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The most significant scene is one that takes place between the two women. When Vanessa discovers Rhona has stolen from Sandy, she is disgusted that her friend could stoop so low and refuses to help her further. She walks away from Rhona, taking her painkillers with her. Rhona panics at the thought of losing them, and runs after Vanessa. She pulls her round by the arm and slaps her viciously round the face, demanding: "Give them to me, you bitch!" Both aggressor and victim look devastated.

Consequences and comments: Rhona immediately begs Vanessa for forgiveness. Rhona's violence is indicative of her desperation, pushed to the limits by an addiction that has spiralled completely out of control. She promises Vanessa that she will attend a support group (M2). The story is ongoing – Rhona starts to score from someone she meets at the group and also begins to order painkillers on the internet (M3).

Emmerdale: Megan Macey evicts the Spencer family
A violent act leads to eviction with terrible consequences

Antecedents: After a rocky start, the Spencer family have finally settled in the village. They have rented a cottage from Megan Macey, who, on discovering that they have broken their tenancy agreement by keeping a dog in the house, takes the opportunity to serve a notice to quit. In reality, Megan wants to move in with her son, Robbie, with whom she has a tense relationship (she had given him away as a baby). When Ali Spencer's sister, Rachel, finds out what Megan has done, she punches her in the face. Megan threatens to report the incident to the police unless they move out within 24 hours. Rachel's violence does not pay, for any of the parties. Ali is furious at her behaviour and Rachel is cornered – she cannot risk prison as she has a young baby (M1). Angry teenager, Sean Spencer, hates Megan for what she is doing to his family and retaliates by smashing up the cottage. He nearly loses his life when he hits a wall light and is electrocuted. It is Megan who revives him and saves his life. She is also hurt in the process (M2).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 2	Mild: 2	Moderate: 0	Strong: 0
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Ali goes to beat up Megan in the hospital because she is so angry, blaming her for uprooting the whole family. She angrily pushes Megan up against a wall, and Megan starts to cry.

Consequences and comments: Rather than strike Megan, Ali starts to cry too and backs down. Tension between the two women remains high but eases somewhat when Megan admits that she envies Ali for her close and loving family, as her own relationship with son Robbie is broken. When Ruby (Ali's partner) says she has not given up the fight to get the cottage back, it is Ali who talks her down, reminding her that Sean nearly died in the house and saying "just leave it, it's not worth it." (M2)

Emmerdale: The Barton and Dingle families

Temptation to act violently as a test for a character who has turned over a new leaf

Antecedents: Moira Barton and Cain Dingle come together as a surprisingly loving couple after Moira's husband dies. Moira and Cain had an affair some time before the death. Moira's son, Adam, hates Cain – and they too have history, but of a violent nature (all pre-sample). However, Moira seems to have turned hard-man Cain's head, and his bad-boy image of crime, fighting and women seems to be a thing of the past (M1). Adam worries that this is just a front, and that Cain will hurt his mother. Tension between the two men is high, and this is well in evidence, leading up to the violence between them. In a bid to break them up, Adam sets a 'honey trap' for Cain in the shape of an attractive farmhand, Natalie, who is to make a pass at Cain at Adam's birthday party. If Cain falls for this, Adam will have enough ammunition for his mother to end the relationship (M2).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 8	Mild: 5	Moderate: 3	Strong: 0
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Natalie makes a pass at Cain, who rejects it. Adam walks in and goads Cain, who pushes him against a wall. Adam shouts: "Go on then! Do it!" Cain lets Adam go. Onlookers appear angry at Cain, but he explains he has been set up. Adam later follows Cain out of the house but Cain refuses to be sucked into Adam's further invitation to violence. Cain's father, Zak, tells him to walk away and not to play into Adam's hands. However, when Adam talks gloatingly about Moira miscarrying Cain's baby, Cain can restrain himself no longer and punches Adam in the face.

Consequences and comments: It is significant that a hard man such as Cain should walk away from violence at the party. His initial self-restraint is testimony to his love for Moira. When he finally snaps, it is the result of severe provocation. Violence does not pay, either for Cain or for Adam. Zak and Moira disapprove of their actions. Cain's violence is the final straw for Adam, who decides to leave home, much to Moira's distress (M2). In a later twist, Adam gets himself into serious trouble when he is the drunk driver in a hit-and-run accident. Ironically, it is Cain he turns to for help – which he does without informing Moira. When Moira discovers this secret, she is furious with both of them but insists this is 'page one' and they should all start again and care for each other (M3).

Emmerdale: Tensions between Amy Wyatt and Kerry lead to disaster***Fall-outs lead to near-disaster, which leads to heightened responses***

Outline: Archetypal 'bad mother' Kerry has a difficult relationship with her daughter Amy, who was in and out of care when she was a child (pre-sample). Amy is in love with Kerry's boyfriend, Andy, who has two children. Amy becomes increasingly dismayed as she witnesses Kerry leaving the children by themselves – painfully mirroring her own experiences (M1). After an argument with Amy, Kerry becomes very depressed, and then drunk, while Andy's children are asleep upstairs. A lit cigarette drops to the floor and the cottage catches fire. Although all survive, Kerry becomes isolated as everyone turns against her (M2).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 4	Mild: 0	Moderate: 4	Strong: 0
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Actual and threatened violence towards Kerry ensue when emotions run high at what might have happened to the children. Their grandfather, Cain, is furious with her, as is Andy, and they both threaten her. Later, when the children's mother (Debbie) finds Kerry, she storms across the street, angry and upset, and pushes Kerry to the ground, shouting at her that she is 'scum.'

Consequences and comments: Violent behaviour here is the consequence of anger at what happened and relief at what did not. At every impassioned, violent outburst there is a witness to talk the aggressor down. When Andy threatens Kerry, Dom steps in and tells Andy to "leave it." Andy stops in his tracks and, although still furious, walks away. Dom's girlfriend, Alicia, makes reference to Andy's history of violence and that he has attended anger management classes. In the altercation between Debbie and Kerry, it is Andy who holds her back, telling her: "Don't! She's not worth it." Debbie walks away. Andy ends their relationship (M2).

Emmerdale: David and Priya's on-off relationship***Mild violence based on a misunderstanding***

Antecedents: Priya Sharma's and David Metcalfe's relationship is a rocky affair. She calls off the engagement and David tries to reconcile with his ex-wife Alicia. When that too goes wrong he decides that he wants to marry Priya after all (M2).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 1	Mild: 1	Moderate: 0	Strong: 0
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When David finds Priya in the pub and tells her he wants the engagement ring back she is furious with him and slaps him on the face. What she does not realise is that he is about to propose to her for a second time.

Consequences and comments: Witnesses in the pub disapprove of Priya's violent behaviour. However, all's well that ends well. David is not deterred and makes his romantic overture. Priya squeals with delight and accepts (M2).

Emmerdale: Jai Sharma is Archie's dad***Mild violence as an expression of frustration from an otherwise gentle, in-control character***

Antecedents: Jai Sharma is the father of Rachel Breckle's child, Archie – conceived after a drunken heart-to-heart following Jai's argument with his wife Charity (pre-sample). Only Jai's father, Rishi, knows the truth. After a series of events, Charity begins to suspect Archie's paternity. When she confronts Jai, Rishi steps in and lies, claiming he fathered Archie. Rishi's other children Nikhil and Priya are devastated by the news of a half-brother (M1).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 1	Mild: 1	Moderate: 0	Strong: 0
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Priya is very upset at the news. Her brother, Nikhil, attempts to comfort her. When Rishi tries to enter the house to explain himself, Nikhil is furious and pushes him out, telling him to leave them alone.

Consequences and comments: There are no consequences to Nikhil's behaviour as such. However, long-term viewers will know him as a restrained and disciplined character who would never normally resort to violence, however mild (as in this case). His response suggests an extreme reaction to extreme circumstances (M2). NB: The storyline of Archie's paternity continues after month 3.

Hollyoaks: Nancy's pill addiction***Violent tactics used by love rival to hurt a woman addicted to prescription drugs***

Antecedents: Nancy and Darren's marriage is strained. They have a small child and Nancy is struggling to cope with him alongside her ongoing addiction to prescription drugs. Sienna, the children's nanny, cautions her to stop but she herself is secretly in love with Darren, so her motives become confused. Her campaign, aimed at causing a rift between the two, escalates: Sienna tells Darren she cannot stand by and watch Nancy destroy her family. In an argument with Darren, Nancy lies to him, insisting she has not taken any pills for weeks (M2).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 13	Mild: 5	Moderate: 7	Strong: 1
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Sienna sees Nancy asleep on the sofa. There are pills in the handbag next to her. Sienna links the two and is angry with Nancy. The scene shows an iron and ironing board. Sienna walks over to the iron, turns it on, places it flat on the ironing board and leaves the room. A fire starts and takes hold. It is only at this point that the camera reveals that baby Oscar is also in the room. Darren discovers the fire and puts it out. Sienna looks aghast at the result of her actions and rescues baby Oscar.

Consequences and comments: Fire fighters arrive at the scene and Nancy looks stunned. She is shivering and in shock. Sienna feels very guilty about putting Oscar in such danger and apologises to him. Thus the narrative provides an anti-violence message. Nancy believes the fire was her fault, as does Darren. He tells her he cannot risk this happening again. When Nancy tries to leave with Oscar, he stops her, insisting the baby stay with him. Nancy's and Darren's relationship breaks down after a series of arguments and misunderstandings (M2). They later reconcile. The violent tactics used by Sienna failed to achieve her goal: to depose Nancy and to start a relationship with Darren (M3).

Hollyoaks: The Roscoe family and Dr Browning***Alpha male versus alpha male***

Antecedents: New *Hollyoaks* family, the Roscoes, have moved to the area for a fresh start. There are some stereotypical elements in their portrayal as East End Londoners, headed by a matriarch in charge of her boys. For this reason their involvement in the more edgy type of storyline is to be expected. The Roscoes fall out with Dr Browning – an aggressive alpha male. The Roscoe men run a car repair business. When the diabetic brother, Jason, gets trapped inside Browning's car without his insulin pen, his brothers have to break into the car to save his life. Dr Browning is furious with them, especially on learning that they have no insurance and will struggle to find the money to repair the damage caused to his 'valuable' car (M2).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 6	Mild: 4	Moderate: 2	Strong: 0
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There are several fights between Browning and the brothers.

Consequences and comments: When Jason Roscoe strikes Dr Browning, Freddie Roscoe intervenes and separates the two men. Browning is seen in pain with a cut lip (M2). He threatens them with his solicitor and the police, indicating that their violence could have serious consequences (M3).

Hollyoaks: Ste resorts to drug dealing***Violence shown as part of the drug underworld and dealings with 'baddie' characters***

Antecedents: Ste Hay needs money to buy the nightclub where he used to work. He cannot generate enough by selling his share of a business so turns to drug dealing as a way to make quick and easy money. He buys his first drugs from Robbie Roscoe (M1) and then moves to a more reliable supplier; Robbie's brother, Freddie. Ste tries to sabotage the club opening by planting drugs there. The club owner, Dr Browning, discovers that Ste is responsible (M2).

Coded month (M2)	Total violent scenes: 14	Mild: 8	Moderate: 5	Strong: 1
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There are multiple and complex threads to the violence in this storyline - Browning's threats to Ste, the tension between the Roscoe brothers as the drug dealing becomes more convoluted, and the violent altercation between the Roscoe matriarch and Ste after she discovers his involvement in drug dealing (she slaps him on the face and warns him to stay away from her family). Freddie's drug supplier, Trevor, is portrayed as having psychopathic tendencies. He becomes involved in violence, as does Dr Browning who is portrayed as cold, ambitious and ruthless.

Perhaps the most poignant scene involves Sinead, who is dealing drugs for Ste. Unimpressed with her cut, and with no genuine drugs to trade, Sinead decides to push fakes behind Ste's back to increase her earnings. At the nightclub, she deceives a drug punter by selling him painkillers. Later he follows her down a dark alleyway and challenges her over the deal. He grabs her by the arm and slams her against a wall, covering her mouth so that she cannot scream. She tells him to take the money from her bag but he refuses. In this scene only their faces are filmed and there is an implication that Sinead is then sexually assaulted. The following morning she has serious facial bruising. Ste is very concerned but she shrugs it off saying it is all part of the process.

Consequences and comments: Much of the violence relating to this storyline produces serious physical consequences – such as Sinead's bruised face after her assault (M2). Violence is seen as a secondary issue in a storyline that is dominated by issues relating to drugs. However, given the links between violence and drugs, some violent scenes might well have been expected.

Appendix 7: Do episode synopses predict the violence found in the content analysis?

5.6.1 Table A7a: All soaps		TV guide		Soap website	
Wave	Violent scenes coded	Predicted scenes		Predicted scenes	
	N	N	%	N	%
2001 and 2002	98	2	2	16	16
2006 and 2007	118	6	5	19	16
2011 and 2012	137	3	2	39	28
2013	159	3	2	20	13
All years	512	14	3	94	18

5.6.2 Table A7b: Coronation Street		TV guide		Soap website	
Wave	Violent scenes coded	Predicted scenes		Predicted scenes	
	N	N	%	N	%
2001 and 2002	23	1	4	3	13
2006 and 2007	22	2	9	9	41
2011 and 2012	23	3	13	7	30
2013	18	1	6	4	22
All years	86	7	8	23	27

5.6.3 Table A7c: EastEnders		TV guide		Soap website	
Wave	Violent scenes coded	Predicted scenes		Predicted scenes	
	N	N	%	N	%
2001 and 2002	43	1	2	11	26
2006 and 2007	44	2	5	7	16
2011 and 2012	30	None	--	8	27
2013	16	1	6	3	19
All years	133	4	3	29	22

5.6.4 Table A7d: Emmerdale		TV guide		Soap website	
Wave	Violent scenes coded	Predicted scenes		Predicted scenes	
	N	N	%	N	%
2001 and 2002	19	None	--	2	11
2006 and 2007	37	1	3	1	3
2011 and 2012	41	None	--	22	54
2013	36	1	3	8	22
All years	133	2	2	33	25

5.6.5 Table A7e: Hollyoaks		TV guide		Soap website	
Wave	Violent scenes coded	Predicted scenes		Predicted scenes	
	N	N	%	N	%
2001 and 2002	13	None	--	None	--
2006 and 2007	15	1	7	2	13
2011 and 2012	43	None	--	2	5
2013	89	None	--	5	6
All years	160	1	1	9	6

TV guide: all Radio Times

Coronation Street: http://coronationstreet.wikia.com/wiki/coronation_street_episodes

EastEnders: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006m86d/episodes/guide>

Emmerdale: http://emmerdale.wikia.com/wiki/emmerdale_episodes

Hollyoaks: www.locatetv.com/hollyoaks