**Case Study 4, transcript B: Fictional interview with the two boys regarding the suicide death of a high school student.**

**\*Please note that this interview is one part of a set of four interviews making up this case study.
\*\*The transcript features a series of questions (highlighted in yellow) for students to consider while working through this case study.**

**[STARTS]**

**Reporter: G'day boys. How are you going? You've had a bit of a shock today, haven't you? I’m from WXN News. I was just wondering whether I could ask you a few questions about what happened today?**

[Children are vulnerable interviewees, even when they don't appear to be. What issues does this raise for the journalist, both in general, and in this specific instance?]

**Mrs Polas:** You’re not going to put them on television, are you?

**Reporter: I just want to ask them a couple of questions, that’s all.**

**Mrs Polas:** I dunno, I suppose that’s all right. This is Stan, Stan Polas, I’m his mother, and this is Max, a friend of his.

[Does this constitute informed consent? Can the journalist use information from both boys if only one parent consented?]

**Reporter: So you guys found the body? When was that?**

**Stan:** About 7:30, quarter to eight. We were walking to school.We were walking through the park like always, and we saw something in the tree over there…

**Max:** It was awful. He was just hanging there…sort of…crooked. And his face was a really off colour.

[How much of this information should the journalist use?]

**Reporter: So you got a good look then?**

[Is this question appropriate? Why or why not?]

**Stan:** You couldn’t miss it, it was right near the track. It's a short cut from the oval. It wasn’t very private at all.

[What considerations are there in identifying the specific location of a suicide in a news report?]

**Reporter: So what did you do then?**

**Max:** Well, we knew he was dead…

**Stan:** He looked dead, really dead…

**Max:** So we called triple zero. Then Stan called his Mum, and we just stayed to watch…

**Stan:** …to see if we could help.

**Reporter: Did you know him?**

**Stan and Max:** Yeah.

**Stan:** He was one of the seniors at our school, about two classes ahead.

**Reporter: What was he like?**

[Interviewees sometimes like to think they know more than they do so that they can be helpful to journalists.
What is the reporter’s aim in asking this question? Is it appropriate?]

**Stan:** I dunno really, he didn’t hang around with anyone in particular. He didn’t have many friends.

**Max:** He was a bit of a nerd. Nobody liked him much.

**Reporter: Why not?**

**Stan:** Oh, I don't know. My dad reckons the whole family's a bit weird, and mum thinks they never got over his other brother, Frank. He killed himself too.

**Mrs Polas:** Don’t say that, Stan, it could have just been a car accident. I can't believe they've lost another son. They were just trying to get over Frank's death. I thought Carl was OK.

[The quotes above are all forms of speculation about why the youth would take his own life. Can the journalist use this information?]

**Reporter: You never can tell, can you? Was there anything particular you noticed, anything that really took your attention?**

**Max:** No, he was just dead, I guess.

**Stan:** He’d taken off his coat and shoes, folded his coat and put it on his school bag, like it was all neat. That’s pretty weird. I can’t believe he had the guts to do it.

[What might be the effect of quoting this information? Will it sensationalise or romanticise the incident? If so, what harm could be caused by this?]

**[ENDS]**