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French woman broadcasts her suicide live via a smartphone

By Henry Samuel *in Paris*

A FRENCH woman broadcast her suicide live on Periscope via her smartphone, French judicial sources confirmed yesterday, in the latest controversy to hit the streaming web application.

Hundreds of horrified viewers of Periscope – which lets individuals broadcast live via mobile devices – could only look on while the unnamed 19-year-old died at Egly, a suburban train station south of Paris, on Tuesday afternoon.

She took her own life minutes after apparently naming an ex-boyfriend she said had raped her before publishing pictures of the act on Snapchat, the image-sharing application, France Info radio station reported.

“Analysis of the telephone and recovery of the video are underway,” said a judicial source, adding that the dead girl had “allegedly identified an assailant” during the video before committing suicide. However, the source said that the details of why she took her life were subject to confirmation.

“We were alerted at around 4.30pm by a Periscope user who was connected to the victim and who told us that she was not in a good way,” a police source told the news agency AFP.

Despite pinpointing her location via the application, gendarmes could not get to the station in time to save her life.

The woman, speaking under a pseudonym, stage-managed the run-up to her death by telling Periscope followers to tune in at 4pm to hear revelations. In one half-hour extract, still on YouTube, she says: “This isn’t about creating a buzz, it’s to get people to react, to open minds.”

She then warned: “If there are underage minors watching later on, don’t stay.”