
APPENDIX
To
CIGL-FM re announcer comment
(CBSC Decision 02/03-0514, February 10, 2004)

I. The Complaint

The following complaint dated January 13, 2003 was sent to the CRTC and forwarded to the CBSC in due course:

On 10 January at approximately 3:56 pm a disc jockey on a Belleville radio station, Mix 97 (FM), made offensive comments regarding a particular race of people. In commenting on the "amusing" news that "pygmies" were being killed and eaten by rebels in a particular African country, he suggested that, like lobsters, it must be the case that the smaller the person, the sweeter, and presumable more tasty, the meat.

Does this not contribute to a desensitization of the general populace towards a very real problem?

Does the CRTC allow such commentary, which some would not hesitate to identify as being racist?

II. Broadcaster Response

The broadcaster responded to the complainant's letter on January 23 with the following:

Dear Mr. P,

Yesterday I received a call from the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council regarding correspondence they received from you concerning comments made by Mr. Joey Martin on MIX 97 on January 10, 2003. As suggested by the CBSC, they consider direct dialogue between a complainant and a broadcaster as the best means of resolving a concern.

I have listened to the comments which you made reference to and in turn have spoken to Mr. Martin regarding those comments. Mr. Martin told me that he was reading a story supplied by our International news service and was simply attempting to put a humorous twist on what was a disturbing story. Although we received the story from a credible source it is still not known whether the story is factual. Mr. Martin was quite adamant that he in no way meant to desensitize the general populace towards a very real problem and apologized for any offence taken by his comments.

Mr. Martin's job is to inform and to entertain his listeners and this task becomes more difficult each day with the present state of 'Political Correctness'. Having said that, Mr. Martin promises to think before he speaks which hopefully will lead to more appropriate subject matter during his future shows.

I apologize for the comments which you found offensive and my hope is that we can put this unfortunate incident behind us. If, however, you are not satisfied with my reply to your concern, then I have retained a copy of the show for future use by the CBSC.

Yours truly,
via e-mail

III. Additional Correspondence

The complainant was unsatisfied with the broadcaster's response and sent the following e-mail dated February 17 along with his Ruling Request form:

No doubt you have received a copy of the note sent to me by the radio station, in which Mr. M. seems to indicate that the station's on air people have a hard time doing their jobs with "politically correct" folk like me complaining. There is no attempt on his part to address the issue raised, and his perfunctory attempt at an apology was insulting.

It seems to me that it is important that we keep the public airwaves public, and that we keep them free of remarks which demean others and ourselves.

If there are not sanctions against broadcasters who play to our basest instincts, it seems to me that we are simply turning the airwaves over to a system which will become increasingly debased.

Who takes responsibility for this situation? (This is a real question.)

Have you listened to the clip in question? The possibility of "pygmies" being eaten by anti-government soldiers is presented as being humorous.

So my question is: Does the CRTC have the ability to address issues such as this or not?

Thank you for your patience,
via e-mail