
APPENDIX

CBSC Decision 10/11-1169 CKQB-FM re the song “Crazy Bitch” by Buckcherry

The Complaint

The following complaint was submitted to the CBSC on March 1, 2010:

Hi,

The following e-mail was sent well over a month ago. I would like to know why I have yet to receive a response.

On the CBSC website it says to contact the broadcaster regarding a complaint. That seems pointless for my complaint.

How is the song “Crazy Bitch” acceptable? It is not only the title of a song by Buckcherry – it is also repeated about a dozen times throughout.

At work (in Ottawa) – in the morning, afternoon and evening – I have heard this song on the radio too many times to count (on 106.9 and 88.5 – though I am quite sure that most or all pop/rock stations air it). Introduced by its title (“Buckcherry’s Crazy Bitch ...”) ’til the end of the song it repeatedly demonstrates the appalling acceptability of condoning – to the point of glorifying – oppressive language; so mainstream that an eight-year-old can turn on the radio and sing along to “you’re a crazy bitch but you f**k so good, I’m on top of it.”

Leading up to Halloween, on 88.5’s morning show, I wondered how the announcers could get away with discussing “slutty costumes”. Then I recalled Buckcherry’s “Crazy Bitch” and the systemic pattern was glaringly obvious.

What is so frustrating and deplorable is that this pattern is not so obvious to most people; it is simply accepted language which is constantly reproduced by media. For the most part, sexism has become insidious; so entrenched that it is usually unnoticed while its systemic nature and patterns thrive. As a result, “Crazy Bitch” demonstrates how institutional sexism and misogyny is so deep and powerful that even blatant forms can go undetected.

That is no excuse to air it – particularly on mainstream radio.

Hateful language based on race or sexuality – virtually completely off-limits. Meanwhile, derogatory language towards females has only become more acceptable and widespread. Can someone at the CBSC explain to me why ‘nigger’ and ‘faggot’ are horrendous and hateful words (which they are) but ‘bitch’, ‘slut’ and ‘whore’ are not?

Buckcherry’s song precedes the term ‘bitch’ with ‘crazy’. That makes the title and lyrics

even more meaningful: 1) employing negative female stereotypes (emotional, irrational), which results in 2) contributing to the stigma of mental illness. Statistics show that women are more likely to have emotional disorders, such as depression. Mental health: currently a hot topic in North America and internationally. I am curious if the Mental Health Commission of Canada would consider the word 'crazy' to be derogatory in certain contexts.

Each time I hear this song it personally offends me. Have there been other complaints about this song? I would like to believe that there are other Canadian women who recognize the offensive nature of these terms and the consequences of reproducing them. However, given that girls and women are constantly exposed to the universalization of terms which subjugate and degrade them – simply by turning on the radio in the middle of the day – my hunch is that perhaps they do not recognize such terms as offensive. Female ignorance is not an acceptable explanation; rather, mainstream radio (among other sources) greatly contributes to formulating and maintaining this ignorance by means of promoting sexist discourse. "Crazy Bitch" is an overt example.

After receiving more information about the CBSC's complaint process, the complainant sent the following correspondence on March 13:

Thank you for your response.

While I understand that there is a 'formal' process when filing a complaint, I am perplexed by the information required. If the circumstances were different – say a broadcaster spoke offensively – the date and time requirement seems logical. However, while at work or in the car (the only two places I hear the radio) it never would have crossed my mind to note dates/times. Should I therefore sit by the radio until I hear the song – record the date and time – and then my complaint will suddenly become relevant? Surely you yourself did not create the complaint process – I do not wish to be abrupt with you. Nonetheless, if this complaint cannot be taken seriously due to the lack of dates/times – it is bureaucracy in its finest form. The song plays. I myself (plus most of Ottawa and likely the country) have heard this song on the radio. That is an absolute truth which can be proved without exact dates and times.

If there was an editorial in the newspaper regarding this matter and readers replied noting that they too had heard this song on Ottawa radio – would that be valid evidence? In the event that I hear the song again, I will be sure to forward you the date/time immediately.

In the meantime, I would like to know why bureaucracy trumps relevancy. Is this simply the methodology of the CBSC or is this somehow outlined in some form of Canadian (or provincial) law? If it's covered in some form of law, where can I find it?

The complainant submitted the following additional information on March 15:

Hi again,

You need at least one example – date, time and station.

"Crazy Bitch" by Buckcherry. March 14, 2011. 5:06 am. The Bear 106.9

Broadcaster Response

The station responded on March 24:

By an e-mail dated March 18, 2011 [sic], the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council ("CBSC") has asked us to respond to your complaint with respect to the song "Crazy Bitch" by Buckcherry (the "Song") broadcast on the airwaves of CKQB-FM The Bear 106.9 (the "Station") at approximately 5:06 am on March 14, 2011.

Please be assured that we take complaints from our listeners very seriously. We have therefore carefully reviewed the broadcast tape of the Song in question in an effort to properly respond to your complaint. After listening to the broadcast tape, we have determined, with all due respect for your opinion, that the Song does not breach any broadcasting codes administered by the CBSC.

Though you may be of the opinion that the subject matter of the Song is distasteful and not suitable for a younger audience, children are not the target audience of our Station. We acknowledge that younger people may occasionally hear our Station, but we believe it is the role of parents and guardians to help children make appropriate entertainment choices. Social values with respect to sensitive subjects vary immensely from one individual to the next and, as such, it not realistic [sic] to expect radio content to correspond to everyone's values, nor is it the role of radio broadcasters to practice moral censorship. Furthermore, we believe that it is important not to restrict artistic expression and that it would be discriminatory to refuse to air a song simply because it deals with subject matter that is considered by some to be distasteful.

That being said, we sincerely regret that you found the Song to be offensive or inappropriate, and hope that it will not color your opinion of our Station as a whole.

We take our responsibilities as a broadcaster very seriously and continually strive to ensure that all our programming complies with the standards expected of us as a member of the CBSC. To that end, we will continue to exercise great diligence with respect to what is broadcast on our Station in order to demonstrate sensitivity to our listeners.

Thank you for taking the time and effort to bring your concerns to our attention.

Additional Correspondence

After confirming her next step in the process, the complainant filed her Ruling Request on April 7:

I presume that you have access to my original complaint. Nevertheless, I am adding it to this comment box because it is my direct concern, plus I feel that it demonstrates why the broadcaster's response is insufficient.

[The complainant pasted her original complaint in this section of her Ruling Request]

The broadcaster replied to my complaint. It is laughable and offensive.

"With all due respect for your opinion"? I defy anyone to demonstrate how my concern is

more an opinion as opposed to fact. "Though you may be of the opinion that the subject matter ... is distasteful and not suitable for a younger audience, children are not the target audience." a) Again, it is not an OPINION that 'you're a crazy bitch but you f*ck so good I'm on top of it' is distasteful. It IS distasteful, and more importantly it is demeaning & hateful. b) Children's accessibility to the station is far from my primary concern. I do not have children nor do I want any.

"Social values with respect to sensitive subjects vary immensely from one individual to the next ... it is not realistic to expect radio content to correspond to everyone's values, nor is it the role of broadcasters to practice moral censorship." It is not a matter of my values or of moral censorship. It is explicitly derogatory. Period.

"We sincerely regret that you found the song offensive or inappropriate." Again – it is not an opinion. How can it be argued that it is NOT offensive/inappropriate?: a crazy bitch remains useful as long as she is good in bed. You're a psycho woman but since I can objectify you, you're still useful.

And lastly, my favourite insulting sentence of the letter: "It is important not to restrict artistic expression and it would be discriminatory to refuse to air the song simply because it deals with subject matter that is considered by some to be distasteful." I'm being discriminatory??? That is infuriating. I am not a strong advocate for censorship, and as a women's studies and human rights university student I know what discrimination is; I am against it, and I am NOT being discriminatory by suggesting that 'crazy bitch' on the radio is the equivalent of 'stupid nigger' or 'dumb faggot'. The latter terms are understood as unacceptable, but 'crazy bitch' is not hateful? It's not discriminatory?

May I make a suggestion? An experiment to test this apparent 'theory' of mine. Have [The Bear's Brand Director] approach a woman on the street. Have him tell her: "you're a crazy bitch but if you're a good f*ck you still have some value". Then ask that woman if she feels offended and discriminated against.