
CANADIAN BROADCAST STANDARDS COUNCIL
WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL

DECISION CONCERNING CTV'S BROADCAST OF "WHEN HARRY MET
SALLY" ON OCTOBER 1, 1991

March 27, 1992

FACTS OF THE CASE

On October 1, 1991, the CTV network broadcast the film, "When Harry Met Sally", across Canada. The film was seen in Manitoba at 8 p.m. Central Standard time.

The CRTC received a complaint dated October 7, 1991, regarding the above film, and referred it to the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council for resolution. In his letter, the complainant indicated that language used in the film should have been censored, particularly "at these times when children have access to t.v."

The CBSC Secretariat forwarded the complaint to the broadcaster for reply.

In its response to the complainant, CTV insisted that it had submitted the film for careful consideration. While some of the language might have been unacceptable to certain viewers, according to CTV, the language was used "in a non-aggressive context in a matter-of-fact fashion which in our view placed the scenes within the bounds of acceptability." Further, CTV indicated that the film had been "positioned after 9:00 p.m. with an appropriate discretion advisory."

On December 5, 1991, the CBSC received the complainant's request that the matter be referred to the Western Regional Council for resolution, as he was not satisfied with the broadcaster's reply. The Western Regional Council met on March 9, 1992, to consider the complaint.

CODE AT ISSUE

The CBSC Secretariat determined that the complaint could be considered under the CAB Sex-Role Portrayal Code for Television and Radio Programming, clause 4 -- Exploitation, which reads:

-Television and radio Programming shall refrain from the exploitation of women, men and children. Negative or degrading comments on the role and nature of women, men or children shall be avoided. Modes of dress, camera focus on areas of the body and similar modes of portrayal should not be degrading to either sex. The sexualization of children through dress or behaviour is not acceptable."

CBSC DECISION

The Council analyzed the content of the programming and the specific issues raised by the complainant as they might relate to this code. The Council determined that the language used in the film did not constitute "negative or degrading comments on the role and nature of women, men or children." Thus, it was the Council's conclusion that this code was not contravened.

As the Western Regional Council found that the broadcaster had not contravened the Sex-Role Portrayal Code for Radio and Television, the broadcaster has the option of broadcasting the decision. The decision will be released to the Western media.