
**CANADIAN BROADCAST STANDARDS COUNCIL
ONTARIO REGIONAL COUNCIL**

DECISION CONCERNING
CTV'S BROADCAST OF "TO CATCH A KILLER ON JANUARY 5, 1992
91/92-0121B

October 22, 1992

FACTS OF THE CASE

On January 5, 1992, the CTV Network aired the mini-series, "To Catch a Killer". The CRTC received a complaint dated February 3, 1992, about the mini-series, and referred the complaint to the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC). According to the complainant, the broadcast contained racist remarks, as one of the characters in the story was called a "damned tough Polak". The complainant felt that such remarks constituted "racial slurs".

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

In its response to the complainant, CTV indicated that the character in question was "steadfast, courageous, law abiding and in every respect a credit to his profession and certainly to his Polish/American heritage." Thus, according to CTV, the mini-series was not prejudicial or stereotypical.

The complainant, unsatisfied with this response, wrote to the CBSC to have his complaint referred to a CBSC Regional Council. On September 30, 1992, the CBSC's Ontario Regional Council considered the complaint.

CODE AT ISSUE

The CBSC Secretariat determined that the complaint could be considered under the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' (CAB) Code of Ethics, clause 2 -- Human Rights, which reads:

"Recognizing that every person has a right to full and equal recognition and to enjoy certain fundamental rights and freedoms, broadcasters shall endeavour to ensure, to the best of their ability, that their programming contains no abusive or discriminatory material or comment which is based on

matters of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status or physical or mental handicap. "

CBSC DECISION

The Council analyzed the broadcast and the specific issues raised by the complainant as they might relate to this code. The Council decided that the newscast did not contain "abusive or discriminatory material based on matters of national or ethnic origin" and did not, therefore, constitute any contravention of the code.

Because the Ontario Regional Council found that the broadcaster had not contravened the Code of Ethics, the broadcaster has the option of airing the decision, which will also be released to the Ontario media.