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**CANADIAN BROADCAST STANDARDS COUNCIL  
QUEBEC REGIONAL COUNCIL**

DECISION CONCERNING  
THE CKAC-AM (MONTREAL) PROGRAM "CONTACT" OF MARCH 25, 1992  
91/92-0148

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*January 15, 1993*

**FACTS OF THE CASE**

The program "Contact", aired by CKAC-AM on March 25, 1992, concerned religious cults. During the program, a listener called in to discuss her experience as a cult member.

The Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC) received a complaint dated April 14, 1992, regarding the program. In his letter, the complainant indicated that the content of the program was "neither verified nor objective". According to the complainant, a listener called in to talk about her experiences as a cult member and about the leader of the cult. The complainant felt it was "inadmissible that the station allow a person's reputation to be soiled without that person being able to intervene and give her/his point of view."

The CBSC sent the complaint to the broadcaster for reply.

CKAC responded, indicating that it had "undertaken the necessary checks" and that "the listener who was heard had discussed what she claimed was her personal experience."

On May 11, 1992 the complainant, unsatisfied with the broadcaster's response, wrote to the CBSC to have his complaint considered by the CBSC Quebec Regional Council. The Council considered the complaint on December 15, 1992.

**CODE AT ISSUE**

The CBSC Secretariat determined that the complaint could be considered under the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' (CAB) Code of Ethics, clause 7 -- Controversial Public Issues, which reads:

*Recognizing in a democracy the necessity of presenting all sides of a public issue, it shall be the responsibility of member stations to treat fairly all*

*subjects of a controversial nature. Time shall be allotted with due regard to all the other elements of balanced program schedules, and to the degree of public interest in the questions presented. Recognizing that healthy controversy is essential to the maintenance of democratic institutions, the broadcast publisher will endeavour to encourage presentation of news and opinion on any controversy which contains an element of the public interest.*

## CBSC DECISION

The council analyzed the content of the program and the conversation between the program host and the listener, in light of the code, and in terms of the specific issues raised by the complainant. The council decided that the program treated fairly a subject of a controversial nature. As a result, the council decided that the program did not constitute any contravention of the code.

Because it was decided that the broadcaster had not contravened the Code of Ethics, the broadcaster has the option of airing the decision. The decision will also be released to the Quebec media.