
CANADIAN BROADCAST STANDARDS COUNCIL

ONTARIO REGIONAL PANEL

CFRB-AM re an episode of the *Michael Coren Show*

(CBSC Decision 06/07-1428)

Decided April 14, 2008

R. Stanbury (Chair), M. Ziniak (Vice-Chair), R. Cohen (*ad hoc*), K. King,

H. Pawley (*ad hoc*) and P. Wedge (*ad hoc*)

THE FACTS

The *Michael Coren Show* is an open-line talk show that airs on CFRB NewsTalk 1010 (Toronto) on Sunday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. The program is hosted by Michael Coren, who discusses current events and related topics with his callers. During the first hour of the episode that aired on August 12, 2007, Coren talked about the problems associated with pit-bulls. The discussion was inspired by an incident in Whitby, Ontario, where a retired couple had been badly bitten by a pit-bull and were likely to need rabies shots. Coren began the discussion by setting out his opinion on the subject of pit-bulls; he asserted that they were an extremely dangerous breed of dog and therefore should be eliminated entirely. He also made negative comments about pit-bull owners. Some examples of his remarks follow, but a complete transcript of the segment is available in Appendix A. Coren introduced the segment by recounting the story of the Whitby couple:

Uh, this is a couple in Whitby, couple in Whitby, Ontario with their dog. They're a retired couple, a nice couple, going out for a walk and, um, suddenly this pit-bull rushes out to their, the side of a, a park and the owner, the cretin owner, because everyone who owns a pit-bull is a cretin. Like a moron, slightly less intelligent, says "pick up your dog!" And they try and save their dog. Their dog does survive. The dog is badly bitten, um, but, uh, so are they. And then the cretin owner gives them a phone number, which turns out to

be a fake phone number, and leaves. Because people who own pit-bulls are not going to have any sympathy for someone who's hurt. They're just going to go out and, you know, get their cheap beer and play bingo, whatever they do. Now these, this couple, unless they're, unless they find the guy, they have to have a series of rabies shots, which are very, very painful. They really aren't very pleasant. I think you've got to take them for about a month. It's not just one shot in the arm; it goes on and on and on and it's actually rather sensitive parts of the body, the stomach and elsewhere. Very unpleasant. But I, I just, see, every time this happens, and I'd say twice a year we do this as a story, because every time another pit-bull attacks someone, you get the usual idiots who say "oh no, no, no, it's the owner's fault. The animals are fine." Well, people who own pit-bulls are moronic by nature. I've never in my life seen anyone with a pit-bull who, who was, uh, you know, worth a moment of my time. I saw a guy with three of them. I was driving here. And I drive through an area where there's quite a few pit-bull owners. And, and there were three of them dragging this guy along. And was he someone who seemed to be a really interesting fellow? You know what he was like. You know what he was like. I mean, Rottweilers: similar. Slightly less, uh, bizarre and perverse and obviously violent. But, but the same type. Of all the breeds of dog you can own, of all the breeds of dog you can own, if you buy a pit-bull, you're trying to make a statement. Which is normally quite obvious: "I'm some white trash, semi-criminal who wants you to be frightened of me." I mean, that's generally the statement that's being made. The government tried with pit-bulls. It has to go further. It just, I mean, get rid of them all now. Round them up, put 'em all to sleep. Make 'em watch *Little Mosque on the Prairie* or something. No, just round them up, get rid of them. There isn't, there's so much damage caused by them and there is no point in them being here. I don't think we have to be humane; they're not human, are they? They're animals and they do cause a great deal of damage and there is nothing positive about them. And the owners, you know, I've, at this point, anyone who tried to purchase one, I'd make that a, a criminal offence and punish them. [...] I, I work with a guy in TV and, who got an award in, uh, in Hamilton for saving a child. He's a big, strong guy. And he took on a pit-bull. And he said it was extraordinary because, as I think most of us would do, you know, you put your forearm around its throat. You think maybe that's the best way not to be bitten and, and, this, and he was hold-, he was trying to strangle it. And he couldn't. He said it was like just pure muscle, the neck. And it was coughing blood. It was coughing up blood, but still, it was going crazy. Every time it would relax, every time he – you know, 'cause it's tiring – every time he relaxed his grip at all, it went wild again. [...] And the owners, of course, they were the same. You know, the trash couple. Kids running around, dogs running around, whatever. "Not our fault." Other convictions, nothing really happened to them. And he saved a child. 416-872-1010. To expunge the, the, the breed from the face of the earth would be the best thing for everyone concerned. And I've never, ever even seen a pit-bull owner who was anything other than, than a moron. And I will get e-mails from people, Rottweiler owners in particular – less than pit-bull owners, 'cause I don't think they've mastered literacy yet – "These are wonderful dogs. They're just marvellous. We take them to hospitals." Do you? [laughs] Not when I'm there, you won't. Lines are open. Michael Coren, NewsTalk 1010, CFRB.

Following a commercial break, Coren elaborated:

We can have a public hunt, I suppose, of pit-bulls. We can charge. Re-, reduce the financial problems of the City of Toronto. 'Cause other people want to hunt. Charge 'em, say, twenty bucks. Lot of pit-bulls around; we can raise some money. See, you gotta think outside the box here. This is how we're gonna solve the issue. I understand there are people who are obsessed with, with animals and they think animals matter more than people. Um, animals can be lovely and, and do a great deal of good. There is nothing positive that pit-bulls do. Another attack has taken place in Whitby. Not such a bad one this time. It goes over and over and over and over again and if you can really present me

a picture of someone who wants a pit-bull, uh, because they're a model citizen, fine. Ask the cops. Uh, the pit-bull is the, uh, really the, the dog of choice, the weapon of choice, of the criminal class. Dobermans and Rottweilers, slightly less so. But they're in the same league as well.

While some of Coren's callers disagreed with him and offered their justifications for owning those types of dogs, others told their own stories of being attacked by pit-bulls and agreed with Coren's characterizations of the dogs and their owners. For example, caller Ryan offered the following thoughts

Ryan: I don't remember whether it was yourself or a caller who coined the excellent phrase "They are nothing more than accessories to thuggery." [...] "Accessories to thuggery". And when you speak of their owners, Michael, you're absolutely right. They're a bunch of tattooed, white trash losers who look like they're on their way to a Sex Pistols concert or maybe the Dead Kennedys.

Coren: No, hold on, that's unfair. That's unfair. I, I, I, I'm a great Johnny Rotten fan. They wouldn't, [Ryan laughs] they would never have the wit to go to a punk concert. That, that, I mean, there's something almost, uh, ironic about New Wave music. No, no. They wouldn't do that. I mean, I don't know what music they listen to, really. I'm not sure if they do listen to music.

Coren then suggested that harm should also be done to pit-bull owners:

Coren: Not only [...] should we take the pit-bulls away – and I'm not, I'm serious about this – and not hurt them, but kill them. I mean, that is hurting, I suppose, but don't inflict pain on them, but kill them. Uh, and the owners, kill them, but do inflict pain. No, obviously you can't do that. Bugger. Uh, but, uh, you should punish them by making them walk around with miniature poodles or something then. They'd eat them, I'm sure.

He repeated a similar sentiment later in the program:

Coren: And, you know, you, you'd like to get rid of the pit-bull and the owner, frankly; if you possibly could. Just whoop, disappear. Foom, foom, they're gone. They're not going to contribute anything to soc-, oh, "everyone's equal". No, they're not. No, they're not. Rubbish. These people aren't. They're buying these animals, they're not going to take care of these animals. They have them in their homes because it's an attitude, it's a schtick, it's what they do. Rottweilers, Dobermans less so, but there's, I mean, some of the people who have those dogs too are neurotic. And I always get e-mails from Rottweiler own-, owners associations and Doberman owners associations and associations of people who don't own, but do associate with them and it's always "You don't know! These are wonderful animals and wonderful creatures!" Oh no, they're not. And pit-bulls are even worse. Get rid of them all. Kill 'em.

Caller Christine recounted an incident she had had with a pit-bull that was running around loose outside a house in her small town. Coren suggested that she telephone the police to report it:

Coren: [...]. Um, you know, you should call the police. You really should. Because there's a very good ch-, it wouldn't surprise me at all if, uh, the people in this house were known to them.

Christine: I wouldn't doubt it by looking at them. I mean, that's really, really judgmental to say but.

Coren: No, hey, forget judgmental. You, you just, it's an informed opinion. It's, it's very likely they're known to the police and if this attack has taken place. Of course, there's the problem, I mean, are you worried about being identified, but there's no reason why that would happen.

[...]

Christine: And I just don't want to live somewhere where I can't even feel free to walk my dog where I want. It's just ...

Coren: Um, do you know anyone involved in organized crime in Toronto who could kill them for you?

Christine: [she & Coren laugh] I won't answer that. No.

Coren: No, you know, I would think about it. And you know what? I would, I would just speak to friends, pause a little, I would speak to the police, just for advice. Because in a small town, the cops are probably going to give you some time.

[...]

Christine: Thank you.

Coren: Thanks a lot. Bye-bye. It is disturbing because, and it's a fairly, relatively young woman, obviously, it's your home and it's your, the place where you go to be safe. And, um, you know, for most of us, of course, we'd be totally distraught if anything like this happened, any sort of confrontation to a normal person, whatever it happened, you know, it has an effect. These people don't care. Um, judgmental? They're probably going in, they're probably gonna get high on something or other. They probably couldn't care less. If it's not cheap beer, it's cannabis, it's cheap cannabis. And, and, uh, there's some, likely, some sort of criminal activity. Well, there is, because they have a pit-bull, not on a leash that's attacked someone. They couldn't care less. And what sort of person does that? Sorry to hear about that, really am. Uh, Lou on CFRB. Go ahead, Lou.

[...]

Lou: Hi, um, pit-bulls, if you look at the breed itself, the breed was built, uh, was made specifically to fight.

Coren: Yeah.

Lou: So anybody who would want this dog, it doesn't make any rational sense to have a pet like that. I witnessed a dog fight about four years ago, uh, with my kids in a park. And a pit-bull, uh, off the leash did a, owned by a, you know, owned by a teenager, did a beeline right for a, a Doberman who was being walked by his, his master. Uh, fortunately the Doberman took him down.

Coren: Mm.

Lou: It was, it was trained to, um, you know, hand-command trained, it knew what it was doing. But, you know, you don't need dogs like that. You don't need dogs like, um, Pit-bull, to me, is a useless breed. Uh, it's a breed that's made, uh, for criminal activity.

Coren: Yeah, no, that's exactly what it is.

[...]

Coren: Ooh, what was that? Last, last call I just spent on, uh, killing pit-bulls. Wouldn't it be fun?

After caller Nick described a pit-bull attack he had witnessed, Coren stated:

Coren: Nick, I'm sorry you had to see that. And, uh, thank you for the call. Yeah, but, of course, there, it's not the dogs, it's the owners. Said this many times. The owners generally are of a sort, but even if you think you're a responsible person, once you buy a dog like this – and it's not just pit-bulls, other animals too – uh, then you're no longer a responsible person. And I realize that Dobermans and, uh, Rottweilers are not quite as severe, but they have a similar purpose. They have more of a history and more of a tradition, but their purpose is still to, to kill. And if you really do need protection, I mean, if, if you happen to, you know, live in a, in a small house surrounded by neo-Nazis, uh, Klansmen, uh, and black Muslim separatists and, and general thugs, okay, maybe there's a, but do you really need a dog like that? No, generally people do not need such an animal. Do they? And they have it because of their own insecurity or lack of self-esteem or probably 'cause mommy, I don't know, didn't hug them enough.

Just before a commercial break towards the end of the hour-long segment, Coren said “Uh, would it be more fun to shoot pit-bulls or their owners? No, I'm only joking.” Then, coming out of that commercial break towards the end of the segment, Coren suggested the topic of the day was “Pit-bulls, would it be fun to kill 'em?” before taking more calls. He also reiterated some of his views of the pit-bull owners:

Coren: And I've never in my life seen one and “Oh look, um, there's the Reverend Carruthers, you know, the man who works at the food bank. There he is with a pit-bull. Oh, who would have thought it? Oh, it's Jenny Wilkins, the social worker who's always trying to help people. She's got a pit-bull. Oh, I didn't know that. Isn't that marvellous? It's, it's Doctor Jenkins. He delivered our child. Here he is with a pit-bull!” No, no. It's, it's Tommy Trash. It's Tommy Trash and his tattoos. And his ugly fat wife. No. But you know the sort of people who they are. I mean, why do we pretend? They have them because they want to make a statement to you. They want to say “get out of my way, I'm intimidating.”

Caller Robin continued along a similar line and played along with Coren's sarcastic responses:

Robin: Um, I am surprised that you would actually think that a pit-bull owner would call you up because they're probably right now sitting outside, um, in their lawn chairs, opening up bottles of beer with, uh, bottle openers that are attached to their key-chain [Coren laughs] because they haven't figured out how to twist the cap yet.

Coren: Oh, that's so judgmental, Robin.

Robin: Oh, I'm sorry.

Coren: They, they're people too.

Robin: [laughs] I am sorry.

Coren: I mean, not real people, obviously, but.

Robin: [laughs] I'm sorry.

Coren: Also, they would have to dial, uh, several digits in order. Which is –

Robin: [laughs] Yes, exactly. Maybe more than three.

Coren: [...] [laughs] Shouldn't be judgmental. Oh, come on. It's wonderful being judgmental. It's such fun. No, it's not being judgmental. I mean, being judgmental is being hypocritical. That's what the term really means, isn't it? It's, you know, if I was a pit-bull owner judging other pit-bull owners. You get that a lot into it really [*sic*]. It's very judgmental. No, it's, you've just called me judgmental, well, obviously then you're being judgmental. Judgmental is, is different from judging. [...] To have an informed opinion about something is not judgmental; it's an informed opinion to say that, because every pit-bull owner I've ever seen has been trashy, that the vast majority of pit-bull.... And the guy the other week in, um, in Parkdale who locked the dog in the car, it was a couple of weeks ago and everyone went crazy about it. And I said, I, I, I bet you he's a real trashy guy and people said "How could you be so judgmental?" And then they saw him on TV [laughs]. I didn't get any calls after that.

The CBSC received a complaint about the broadcast, dated August 14. The listener was concerned about Coren's suggestion that all pit-bulls and their owners be killed. He expressed his complaint in the following terms (the full text of all correspondence can be found in Appendix B):

On Sunday August 12, 2007, on CFRB, I heard Michael Coren, on his evening show, advocate to his listeners the killing of all pit-bull dogs, and the killing of their owners. Proposing that people be shot is totally unacceptable. The station and the announcer need to be disciplined. These comments were at 15 minutes to the hour, and continued for at least 15 minutes. I believe the time was 7:45 pm, but I may be one hour off [...].

CFRB's Operations Manager sent a letter of response to the complainant on August 26:

I listened to the entire hour of the show between 7:00 pm and 8:00 pm to get the entire context of the broadcast. To hear what Michael Coren was saying about pit-bulls and their owners.

The topic began with a description of what happened to the Whitby couple. A pit-bull attacked them and their dog resulting in serious injury to the dog and the couple being bitten. The owner called off his pit-bull and gave them a phone number to contact him -- the phone number turned out to be false. Authorities are trying to track down the owner and the dog to determine if it has rabbi [*sic*]. If they can't find the owner or the dog the Whitby couple will have to undergo painful rabbi [*sic*] shots.

Michael referred to pit-bull owners like this as morons:

[...]

"Ask the cops ... the pit-bull is really the dog of choice ... the weapon of choice of the criminal class ... not only should we take the pit-bulls away ... I'm serious about this ... not

hurt them but kill them ... don't inflict pain on them ... and the owners ... kill them ... but inflict pain ... no, no, no obviously you can't do do that ..."

It is obvious with his last statement quoted above that he was being sarcastic ... making a point he immediately says would be wrong. This is a comment that when taken in the context of what was being discussed ... a reasonably intelligent person would know right away that Michael wasn't serious about killing owners of pit-bulls.

This was further emphasized when Michael added: " ... but punish them by forcing them to walk around with mini poodles or something ..."

Later around 7:49 pm which is probably around the time you heard the show ... Michael said just before going to a commercial: "would it be more fun to shoot pit-bulls or their owners ... no ... I'm only joking ..."

[...]

We don't believe anyone listening to the entire show would come away with the conclusion that Michael Coren was serious about the urging of pit-bull owners to be shot. For those who tuned in like you did at 7:49 he made it very clear that he was just joking.

If Michael had made those comments and not added that he was joking or earlier telling listeners "obviously you can't do that" ... then I believe the complaint would be justified. But this isn't the case ... the host is exaggerating a point to make a stand and generate phone calls, but at the same time he is informing listeners that it was a joke or that they shouldn't act on his suggestion. [...].

That said, we will raise your complaint with Michael Coren so that he understands that even comments labelled as a joke could be misinterpreted by the listener.

The complainant was dissatisfied with that response and filed his Ruling Request on August 27. He elaborated on his concerns:

I am not satisfied with the response, and shall address some of the points below. Where I have quotation marks around text, I will be quoting from the body of the letter from [the Operations Manager].

[...]

Mr. Coren went way beyond limiting his comments to only pit-bulls who have attacked, and the owners of those dogs. My complaint addresses the owners of pit-bulls who have dogs who are not trained to be aggressive, but are indeed good, safe family pets.

[...]

Had Mr. Coren said, "Kill all the Jews. No wait I'm joking", his words would not be negated. [...] He has tarred all owners of all pit-bulls.

I have a dear friend who owns 3 lovely dogs, eleven, nine and two years old. They were purchased from responsible breeders, and have never in their lives harmed a human or another dog. They are as loving as any pet dogs could be. And they are pit-bulls.

Michael Coren would have these dogs shot for bounty and proposes shooting the owner too, on his CFRB radio show of August 12, 2007. I see these remarks as a hate crime.

The man has suggested killing all the owners of pit-bulls, regardless of their pet's behaviour. This is an identifiable group of people. It is irresponsible of CFRB to have allowed this to take place. The station and its announcer should be sanctioned.

A public apology should be made. Mr. Coren should educate himself on the facts.

It is not the breed that is a problem; it is some of the owners. [...]

These are the folks that need to be punished. And any dogs trained to do harm should be properly dealt with regardless of breed.

[...]

I propose that Mr. Coren be told to devote an hour of radio time to discussion of pit-bulls who are not a problem.

Let him interview my friend, and meet her dogs, and then dare to say that she is a moron, and should be beaten or killed, and that her dogs should be hunted for bounty. Let him speak to an expert on dogs [...].

I request that the CBSC conduct a proper inquiry into this event.

THE DECISION

The Ontario Regional Panel examined the complaint under the following provisions of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' (CAB) *Code of Ethics*:

Clause 6 – Full, Fair and Proper Presentation

It is recognized that the full, fair and proper presentation of news, opinion, comment and editorial is the prime and fundamental responsibility of each broadcaster. This principle shall apply to all radio and television programming, whether it relates to news, public affairs, magazine, talk, call-in, interview or other broadcasting formats in which news, opinion, comment or editorial may be expressed by broadcaster employees, their invited guests or callers.

Clause 9 – Radio Broadcasting

Recognizing that radio is a local medium and, consequently, reflective of local community standards, programming broadcast on a local radio station shall take into consideration the generally recognized access to programming content available in the market, the demographic composition of the station's audience, and the station's format. Within this context, particular care shall be taken by radio broadcasters to ensure that programming on their stations does not contain:

- (a) Gratuitous violence in any form, or otherwise sanction, promote or glamorize violence;

The Panel Adjudicators read all of the correspondence and reviewed a recording of the broadcast. The Panel concludes that the station did not violate either Clause.

What Was the Host Saying?

The Panel does agree with the complainant that “Proposing that people be shot is totally unacceptable.” (The Panel does not consider that the advocacy of euthanizing pit-bulls falls into the same category as killing human beings. Accordingly, it will deal with this subject in the following section.) Other CBSC Panels have twice made the point about encouraging the killing of people. [See *CKTB-AM re the John Michael Show (Middle East Commentary)* (CBSC Decision 01/02-0651, June 7, 2002) and *CJKR-FM re the song “Kill All the White Man” by NOFX* (CBSC Decision 04/05-0612, June 2, 2005).] It is, however, essential, in order to reach the conclusion that the proposal to kill an individual or group of persons was the seriously intended point, to determine whether that was an accurate assessment of what was said. Indeed, in the bulk of cases the CBSC has been called upon to assess, the adjudicating Panels have concluded that the message of murder or even lesser violence was humorous or sarcastic. [See, for example, *CIWW-AM re The Geoff Franklin Show* (CBSC Decision 92/93-0181, October 26, 1993), *CIQC-AM re Galganov in the Morning* (CBSC Decision 97/98-0473, August 14, 1998), *CKAC re an episode of the Gilles Proulx Show* (CBSC Decision 98/99-1108, February 21, 2000), *Comedy Network re Open Mike with Mike Bullard (Leah Pinsent Film)* (CBSC Decision 99/00-0482, January 31, 2001).]

While the Panel agrees with the complainant’s underlying proposition, namely, the inappropriateness of the advocacy of violence toward individuals, in the matter at hand, it does not agree with the complainant’s assertion that the host was *in fact* “advocat[ing] to his listeners [...] the killing of their owners [i.e. the owners of pit bulls].” To understand the host’s position, it should be noted that, contextually speaking, he referred to the owners of pit-bulls uniformly as “cretins” or by the application of other equally derogatory designations. And it is fair to add that he used words that, in isolation, or on their face, might have left an individual with a sense that he was advocating death to them, as well as their pets. On the first occasion, for example, after recommending that the dogs be put to death, but not in such a way as to cause them pain, he added, “Uh, and the owners, kill them, but do inflict pain.” He followed that “suggestion” with the words, “No, obviously you can’t do that. Bugger.” On the second occasion when a similar opportunity for an owner-focussed comment arose, Coren said, “Uh, would it be more fun to shoot pit-bulls or their owners?” And he followed that with a similar concluding comment, “No, I’m only joking.” The Panel understands clearly the disrespect manifested by the host for pit-bull owners, but nothing in what it has reviewed leads them to believe in the slightest that he had any intention of advocating violence of any kind toward the owners of pit-bulls. It finds no breach of Clause 9(a) of the *CAB Code of Ethics*.

Improper Comments

There are two issues the Panel wishes to deal with in terms of “improper” comment under Clause 6 of the *CAB Code of Ethics*: first, the advocacy of euthanizing pit-bulls; and second, the uniformly degrading characterization of pit-bull owners.

In the first case, the Panel has no doubt regarding the host’s perception of the proper fate of the pit-bull “breed” of dogs. Coren made it unequivocally clear that he favoured the disappearance of pit-bulls. He considered them extremely dangerous and, in his words, “they do cause a great deal of damage and there is nothing positive about them.” His recommendation was that they be “expunge[d] [...] from the face of the earth.” It should, however, be noted that he was very careful about causing them pain. He was clearly against that prospect. He favoured their being put to sleep, a euphemism he used once, or, stated straightforwardly, being *killed*. In the view of the Panel, that was an opinion that Coren was entitled to air. Nor was there any requirement that his view be balanced by a contrary perspective in that Sunday night discussion. Although some callers did express the contrary point-of-view, the hour was dominated by Coren’s position. It was not a malevolent perspective. It was not a sadistic perspective. It reflected no desire to inflict pain on any animal. It reflected only the host’s belief that the breed was harmful and dangerous to humans, a view not inconsistent with that of the Ontario Legislature, although the solutions proposed by the legislators and Coren are leagues apart.

In the second case, there can be no doubt about Coren’s view of pit-bull owners. He referred to them variously as cretins, morons, consumers of cheap beer, cheap cannabis and bingo, not “worth a moment of my time”, “white trash, semi-criminal”, insecure, “Tommy Trash”, and the like. Undeniably negative comments. The Panel cannot disagree with the complainant’s assertion that the host “tarred all owners of pit-bulls.” The issue, though, is not whether Coren made such comments, but whether he was *entitled* to be as critical as he was.

In *CJMF-FM re the program “L’heure de vérité avec André Arthur”* (CBSC Decision 99/00-0240, August 29, 2000), host Arthur criticized welfare recipients for being lazy and putting themselves in debt. Notwithstanding that, the Quebec Regional Panel concluded that the “aggressive, mocking, arrogant style of the host does no justice to the medium of radio,” but that “there is no violation and [...] freedom of speech must prevail.” In *CKNW-AM re an episode of Adler on Line* (CBSC Decision 05/06-0539, May 9, 2006), the B.C. Regional Panel dealt with a complaint about an open-line talk show during which the host took an aggressive position with callers who were sympathetic to the teachers strike then on in British Columbia. He called two of them “stupid” and told another to “get a life”. The Panel questioned the choice of language but found no breach of Clause 6 of the Code.

The Panel is [...] at a loss to understand why he descended to the level of *personal* insult, using words like “stupid” to characterize Brent and Braeden. [...] Adler could have characterized *ideas* as stupid but *people*? No need. Not right. It was, in the Panel’s view, unnecessary to pander to the bleachers. It is fine to disagree with the callers and to argue with them but to be rude and insulting to them to that extent was unnecessary. The deft gave way to the blunt. On balance, the Panel concludes that the broadcast came close to the edge but did not, on this occasion, go over it. While the Panel does not find that those insults constituted a breach of Clause 6 of the Code, it does regret that they were used.

In *CKNW-AM re an episode of Bruce Allen’s Reality Check* (CBSC Decision 05/06-0651, May 9, 2006), the British Columbia Regional Panel was again called upon to assess a Bruce Allen editorial that criticized a government-funded program set up to help drug addicts. In that case, the Panel observed:

His view is that the addicts do not contribute to society; they are net takers. If their illegal habit results in their death, he considers that no societal loss. “Too bad,” he concludes. “Kind of like driving around a car at a hundred kilometres an hour when the sign says fifty. You take your chances, you reap the consequences.” It is true that he is also critical of the addicts themselves, referring to them as “human vermin [...] who have nothing to do but eat up public money and turn our city into a pig sty.” His view: much cost, no reward.

The Panel finds the opinion piece tough but entirely fair. Were the addicts and their guardian angels a fair target? Yes. Were they a proper target? Yes. Was the criticism over the top? Perhaps, but only on the level of taste. It may be that Bruce Allen used a medieval mace when stepping on the bug would have sufficed; however, the criticism of the program of benevolence did not constitute a breach of Clause 6 of the *CAB Code of Ethics*.

In the matter at hand, the Panel concludes similarly. Bad taste perhaps, but fundamentally reflective of an opinion that goes to the dog owners’ lifestyle choice, not to an innate human characteristic, such as gender, the colour of one’s skin or the like. In the view of the Panel, the characterization was harsh but defensible (in terms of the Code). Neither the comments about the dogs nor those about their owners were improper under Clause 6 of the *CAB Code of Ethics*.

Broadcaster Responsiveness

In all CBSC decisions, the Council’s Panels assess the broadcaster’s responsiveness to the complainant. In the present instance, the Panel finds that the reply from the Operations Manager was lengthy and detailed. It reflected the issues raised by the complainant and referred to specific sections of the transcript in order to illustrate the broadcaster’s response on the issues. While it did not constitute a satisfactory reply from the complainant’s perspective, the Panel must underscore that the broadcaster is never under any obligation to *agree* with the complainant. It is the commitment to dialogue with a complainant who has made the effort to register a concern that is the

issue. Not only is there no fault in the difference of perspectives, it is the case that every matter that goes to a Panel for adjudication begins with just such a disagreement between the complainant and the broadcaster. The Panel considers that CFRB has fully met its CBSC membership responsiveness responsibilities in this instance.

This decision is a public document upon its release by the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council. It may be reported, announced or read by the station against which the complaint had originally been made; however, in the case of a favourable decision, the station is under no obligation to announce the result.

APPENDIX A

CBSC Decision 06/07-1428 CFRB-AM re an episode of the *Michael Coren Show*

The Michael Coren Show airs on CFRB NewsTalk 1010 (Toronto) Sunday evenings from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. The following is a transcript of the first hour of the August 12, 2007 episode, during which the topic was pit-bulls.

Coren: First of all, well it happens again. Uh, this is a couple in Whitby, couple in Whitby, Ontario with their dog. They're a retired couple, a nice couple, going out for a walk and, um, suddenly this pit-bull rushes out to their, the side of a, a park and the owner, the cretin owner, because everyone who owns a pit-bull is a cretin. Like a moron, slightly less intelligent, says "pick up your dog!" And they try and save their dog. Their dog does survive. The dog is badly bitten, um, but, uh, so are they. And then the cretin owner gives them a phone number, which turns out to be a fake phone number, and leaves. Because people who own pit-bulls are not going to have any sympathy for someone who's hurt. They're just going to go out and, you know, get their cheap beer and play bingo, whatever they do. Now these, this couple, unless they're, unless they find the guy, they have to have a series of rabies shots, which are very, very painful. They really aren't very pleasant. I think you've got to take them for about a month. It's not just one shot in the arm; it goes on and on and on and it's actually rather sensitive parts of the body, the stomach and elsewhere. Very unpleasant. But I, I just, see, every time this happens, and I'd say twice a year we do this as a story, because every time another pit-bull attacks someone, you get the usual idiots who say "oh no, no, no, it's the owner's fault. The animals are fine." Well, people who own pit-bulls are moronic by nature. I've never in my life seen anyone with a pit-bull who, who was, uh, you know, worth a moment of my time. I saw a guy with three of them. I was driving here. And I drive through an area where there's quite a few pit-bull owners. And, and there were three of them dragging this guy along. And was he someone who seemed to be a really interesting fellow? You know what he was like. You know what he was like. I mean, Rottweilers: similar. Slightly less, uh, bizarre and perverse and obviously violent. But, but the same type. Of all the breeds of dog you can own, of all the breeds of dog you can own, if you buy a pit-bull, you're trying to make a statement. Which is normally quite obvious: "I'm some white trash, semi-criminal who wants you to be frightened of me." I mean, that's generally the statement that's being made. The government tried with pit-bulls. It has to go further. It just, I mean, get rid of them all now. Round them up, put 'em all to sleep. Make 'em watch *Little Mosque on the Prairie* or something. No, just round them up, get rid of them. There isn't, there's so much damage caused by them and there is no point in them being here. I don't think we have to be humane; they're not human, are they? They're animals and they do cause a great deal of damage and there is nothing positive about them. And the owners, you know, I've, at this point, anyone who tried to purchase one, I'd make that a, a criminal offence and punish them. 416-872-1010, 1-800-561-CFRB, star TALK, 8255. This is not reactive. I've felt this for, for the longest time, for years. I've done so many interviews over the years with people who've been attacked by these bloody things. And, and the arguments generally are very, very, uh, flaccid. The idea, "Well, do you know more Golden retrievers, um, there are more bites from Golden retrievers than any other, any other breed?" Yeah, of course I know that. There are also more Golden retrievers; there are loads of them, loads of them. And if a Golden retriever attacks you, wouldn't be that pleasant, but generally you're gonna be okay. Have you ever tried to tackle a pit-bull? I, I work with a guy in TV and, who got an award in, uh, in Hamilton for saving a child. He's a big, strong guy.

And he took on a pit-bull. And he said it was extraordinary because, as I think most of us would do, you know, you put your forearm around its throat. You think maybe that's the best way not to be bitten and, and, this, and he was hold-, he was trying to strangle it. And he couldn't. He said it was like just pure muscle, the neck. And it was coughing blood. It was coughing up blood, but still, it was going crazy. Every time it would relax, every time he – you know, 'cause it's tiring – every time he relaxed his grip at all, it went wild again. And the police came and he said they were completely incompetent. It was a police woman and she didn't know what to do. And he said "Well, you've got the gun. I mean, I can't hold this dog for much longer. And if I let it go, it's going to go after me and everyone here." And the owners, of course, they were the same. You know, the trash couple. Kids running around, dogs running around, whatever. "Not our fault." Other convictions, nothing really happened to them. And he saved a child. 416-872-1010. To expunge the, the, the breed from the face of the earth would be the best thing for everyone concerned. And I've never, ever even seen a pit-bull owner who was anything other than, than a moron. And I will get e-mails from people, Rottweiler owners in particular – less than pit-bull owners, 'cause I don't think they've mastered literacy yet – "These are wonderful dogs. They're just marvellous. We take them to hospitals." Do you? [laughs] Not when I'm there, you won't. Lines are open. Michael Coren, NewsTalk 1010, CFRB.

- traffic & commercial break

Coren: We can have a public hunt, I suppose, of pit-bulls. We can charge. Re-, reduce the financial problems of the City of Toronto. 'Cause other people want to hunt. Charge 'em, say, twenty bucks. Lot of pit-bulls around; we can raise some money. See, you gotta think outside the box here. This is how we're gonna solve the issue. I understand there are people who are obsessed with, with animals and they think animals matter more than people. Um, animals can be lovely and, and do a great deal of good. There is nothing positive that pit-bulls do. Another attack has taken place in Whitby. Not such a bad one this time. It goes over and over and over and over again and if you can really present me a picture of someone who wants a pit-bull, uh, because they're a model citizen, fine. Ask the cops. Uh, the pit-bull is the, uh, really the, the dog of choice, the weapon of choice, of the criminal class. Dobermans and Rottweilers, slightly less so. But they're in the same league as well. Let's get a few calls here. Ryan's on CFRB. Hello, Ryan.

Ryan: Michael, it is an absolute pleasure to hear you on Sunday night. Now, I know you only do fill-in work, so you must be covering for Marc Saltzman or George Stroumboulopoulos. Wh-, What's going on today? Who are you filling in for right now?

Coren: [laughs] And it's *George Stroumboulopoulos*, who I don't think is here tonight. Uh, no, seven 'til nine has been my Sunday show for about two years, I think.

Ryan: You're back?!

Coren: I know.

Ryan: Michael, it must be the responsible of the gov-, the responsibility of the government for not having told me. Uh, [Coren laughs] which level, I'm not exactly sure.

Coren: All.

Ryan: Now I'm pleased to report that I'm actually friend number thirteen on Facebook.

Coren: Good man.

Ryan: Hopefully this isn't a bad omen. And I'm pleased to report that I became your friend before it was trendy to do so.

Coren: Well, exactly.

Ryan: Or Mr. Ahmadinejad might have to come over and babysit your daughter. [Coren laughs] Having said that, I remember you, uh, discussing this topic not long after the Liberals banned pit-bulls before you were fired, of course. And at the time, I remember –

Coren: Shh, shh, shh.

Ryan: Shh, shh. I, I, I'm sorry.

Coren: That didn't happen. It's like Trotsky. It never happened.

Ryan: It, it, no, of course not. I'm sorry, what, what am I doing here? Uh, yeah, are they, are, are they pets, are they companions? I don't remember whether it was yourself or a caller who coined the excellent phrase "They are nothing more than accessories to thuggery."

Coren: Well put.

Ryan: "Accessories to thuggery". And when you speak of their owners, Michael, you're absolutely right. They're a bunch of tattooed, white trash losers who look like they're on their way to a Sex Pistols concert or maybe the Dead Kennedys.

Coren: No, hold on, that's unfair. That's unfair. I, I, I, I'm a great Johnny Rotten fan. They wouldn't, [Ryan laughs] they would never have the wit to go to a punk concert. That, that, I mean, there's something almost, uh, ironic about New Wave music. No, no. They wouldn't do that. I mean, I don't know what music they listen to, really. I'm not sure if they do listen to music.

Ryan: Well, perhaps, wh-, wh-, what was that, uh, other thing your daughter wanted to get there? It wasn't a rabbit, it was a, uh?

Coren: Oh, a chinchilla?

Ryan: Yeah! May-, may-, maybe if those tattooed guys are walking around the streets with chinchillas you'd think they'd, uh, still, uh, permit the, uh, sense of intimidation and such that they do with their, uh, pit-bull terriers?

Coren: Not only – and thank you for the call, my friend – not only should we take the pit-bulls away – and I'm not, I'm serious about this – and not hurt them, but kill them. I mean, that is hurting, I suppose, but don't inflict pain on them, but kill them. Uh, and the owners, kill them, but do inflict pain. No, obviously you can't do that. Bugger. Uh, but, uh, you should punish them by making them walk around with miniature poodles or something then. They'd eat them, I'm sure. Lynne on CFRB. Hello, Lynne.

Lynne: Oh, hello, Michael.

Coren: Hello.

Lynne: Um, I think that pit-bulls are, are still being bred, at least being brought into the country, but they're being called by different names.

Coren: Mm.

Lynne: Um, for example, I, last night I was walking my very sweet collie and we encountered, um, a girl with a, an eleven-month-old dog that looks like a pit.

Coren: Yeah?

Lynne: She said, no, it's an Italian something-or-something [Coren snorts]. It came from Italy. And it had one of those very cruel chain-link collars on. I don't know if you know what I mean, but –

Coren: Of course, yeah.

Lynne: – if she yanks on it, it embeds, uh, metal pieces into the neck.

Coren: Yeah.

Lynne: Not, not breaking the skin, but certainly to control the dog she –

Coren: Sure.

Lynne: So, I'm thinking, well, it sure looks like a pit to me. And it was not friendly to my collie who ran up to him thinking oh, someone to play with.

Coren: Mm.

Lynne: So, I think that, I think that –

Coren: How old was this girl?

Lynne: -- we've still got them here, but we just –

Coren: Yeah. Lynne, how old was the girl, was the girl?

Lynne: Beg your pardon?

Coren: How old was this girl?

Lynne: Well, she was, I think, in her twenties.

Coren: And what sort of girl was she?

Lynne: Um.

Coren: Don't be kind.

Lynne: Well, she was outside smoking, outside of the house. That's all I know about her.

Coren: Well, you see, smoking outside the house, pfft.

Lynne: Yeah. With the dog. I, I, that's all I know. I don't know anything else about her.

Coren: Sounds like, sounds like Poor-Mart [laughs].

Lynne: Uh.

Coren: But you, you know, there are, and I'm not an expert in, in, in breeds of dog, but you see these, I mean, they are allowed, but they're meant to be muzzled. You frequently see them not muzzled. Sometimes they are, but often not.

Lynne: Mm hm, that's right.

Coren: Uh, but it is, I know it's going to be the slow approach and people say, well – and thank you for the call – you know, but which breeds, some will be, but, you know, the other day we were in the car and there was a bull dog and, sorry, no, a boxer, a boxer. And one of the kids said "Is that a pit-bull?" It must've been one of the little kids. And I said no. I said, look it has a certain look about it, but they're lovely dogs. They're very gentle. I mean, they're just, they're just dogs. But they're a totally different build. Completely. Even a German shepherd, which, which were the dogs that were thought to be, when I was a kid, you know, – we called them "Alsations" in Britain, not "German Shepherds" – but, but the power of that animal, if you look at a pit-bull, and Dobermans and Rottweillers are similar, they're a more established breed, but, and there are people who buy them who will e-mail me, and probably are right now, saying they're responsible owners. I think the very, the very fact that you have purchased them, that you have them means you're irresponsible. Mike's on CFRB. Hello, Mike.

Mike: Good evening, sir.

Coren: Hello.

Mike: Uh, I have a Rottweiler. And I'm not going to –

Coren: Why?

Mike: Why? Just a minute. I'm not going to slam you because I think you got a lot of valid points.

Coren: Thank you.

Mike: I work nights and my wife's at home alone. We have no kids, no near neighbours and I basically bought it for protection. I live out in the country. I would not bring my dog into the city. To me and my wife, it's the biggest loving animal, but in the same breath, I got respect for people and people's opinion and I would not bring my dog into the city or walk him in town without a leash or with a leash. Um, I, I think, uh, people's conceptions of Rottweilers, sometimes they're founded, sometimes they're not. But in the same breath, uh, I wouldn't think of a better animal to have protecting my wife when I'm in Toronto.

Coren: Why do you have to have your wife protected?

Mike: Uh, because, basically, we know there's a whole bunch of wackos out there.

Coren: Where? Where do you live?

Mike: Well, I, I live in the country, okay?

Coren: You live in Orange-, you live in Orangeville?

Mike: No, no. I actually am half an hour northwest of Orangeville. My closest neighbour on –

Coren: Yeah?

Mike: -- the west side of me is probably about ten miles and the other neighbour –

Coren: What, what, have you ever been attacked?

Mike: Have I?

Coren: Yeah.

Mike: Uh, do you put an alarm system on your home before you get broken into?

Coren: Personally I don't.

Mike: Well, you know what? Sometimes it's best to be, uh, side on the, uh, side of caution. But in the same breath, you know, I still have respect for people and I wouldn't bring my dog into town, so I, I think I do my part and, uh, in, in being a responsible pet owner.

Coren: Well, I, I, there is, there is an argument, I suppose, if – and I thank you for the call – if you live out in the country and you do, I mean, your concern might be, um, uh, extreme, but it's probably very noble as well. Um, and as you say, uh, better safe than sorry, so, in the country, and dogs are really supposed to be in the country. I understand they're in towns and cities, but that's, they really are animals, aren't they? They're wild animals really. Uh, but you have a dog there simply for protection 'cause you're away and, uh, your wife is there on her own and it would take the police a while to get there probably. So I understand that. I mean that's the most plausible argument for an animal of that kind. It's the only one I could really, I could really, and it's not a pit-bull and they're very unpredictable. Um, so I understand that. There's something there, yeah. I can see that. Um, should you be concerned? Well, I don't know. I don't know. I, I've heard other people, see, your argument is, is, uh, a compelling one. I've heard, I've heard, one guy called in once 'cause he had children and he was scared of pedophiles, so he had a Rottweiler or something. Well, and I remember that call quite, uh, quite distinctly. I thought he was completely insane. "I'm scared of pedophiles!" Gangs of pedophiles walking ...? There's far more chance of the Rottweiler hurting your child than, God forbid, your child being abducted by a pedophile. Lots more calls on this. We'll take it a bit further. Michael Coren, woof, woof. NewsTalk 1010, CFRB.

- commercial break

[...]

Coren: We're talking about, uh, pit-bulls, not the fact that oregano seems to permeate my home. And, uh, just take a couple more calls on this 'cause You know, the worst thing about the world really is other people, isn't it? And that's been, I mean, we, if it were just a few of us together, eh, wouldn't it? Yeah. Just a few us, it'd be fine. But it's always *other* people who are annoying and, you know, so, yeah, they *have* to walk along, being dragged along by a pit-bull. And, you know, you, you'd like to get rid of the pit-bull and the owner, frankly; if you possibly could. Just whoop, disappear. Foom, foom, they're gone. They're not going to contribute anything to soc-, oh, "everyone's equal". No, they're not. No, they're not. Rubbish. These people aren't. They're buying these animals, they're not going to take care of these animals. They have them in their homes because it's an attitude, it's a schtick,

it's what they do. Rottweilers, Dobermans less so, but there's, I mean, some of the people who have those dogs too are neurotic. And I always get e-mails from Rottweiler own-, owners associations and Doberman owners associations and associations of people who don't own, but do associate with them and it's always "You don't know! These are wonderful animals and wonderful creatures!" Oh no, they're not. And pit-bulls are even worse. Get rid of them all. Kill 'em. And, uh, hunters, huntsmen, I suppose they should be known as, charge them fifty bucks a pop -- it was twenty, it's gone up now -- fifty dollars, uh, and the money goes directly to the City of Toronto. I'm covering every base here. Christine on, uh, CFRB. Go ahead, Christine.

Christine: Hi.

Coren: Hello.

Christine: Um, a couple of weeks ago I would've been disagreeing with you. But not now.

Coren: Oh, did something happen?

Christine: I have a nice little scar on my arm.

Coren: Oh.

Christine: And my dog is terrified now. And I'm selling my house because of it.

Coren: Oh no.

Christine: And the owner, he, we're all, well, here's the story, really quick.

Coren: Yeah, go on.

Christine: We, I was walking my dog down the street. We live in a tiny little small town. Nice, I mean, a nice town, churches, schools, the whole bit.

Coren: Yeah?

Christine: And there's one road where the houses aren't so nice.

Coren: Yeah.

Christine: So I was walking down there and the owners were in the house. The pit-bull was outside by itself, not on a leash. And all of a sudden it just came charging at us, went after my dog, so, just, I don't know, instinct, I kind of stepped in the front and the dog got my arm. And it, I mean, you try to shake and that dog will not come off.

Coren: Oh, I know, I know.

Christine: And the owner came out. I guess 'cause I was yelling and I guess the owner heard me. All she did, open her back door and say "Come on, get in here". The dog went running and she shut the door.

Coren: You called the cops?

Christine: No, I called the, uh, what do you call them? Uh, the Humane Society.

Coren: Yeah.

Christine: But –

Coren: Well, they're, they're often useless. I mean, they'll care more about the animal than you sometimes.

Christine: Yeah. The dog is still there, so.

Coren: You, you, uh, call the cops. I mean, you really, which town, can you say the town you live in?

Christine: Jarvis. Little tiny small town.

Coren: Yeah, I know. Um, you know, you should call the police. You really should. Because there's a very good ch-, it wouldn't surprise me at all if, uh, the people in this house were known to them.

Christine: I wouldn't doubt it by looking at them. I mean, that's really, really judgmental to say but.

Coren: No, hey, forget judgmental. You, you just, it's an informed opinion. It's, it's very likely they're known to the police and if this attack has taken place. Of course, there's the problem, I mean, are you worried about being identified, but there's no reason why that would happen.

Christine: Yeah.

Coren: But to sell your house seems a little bit extreme.

Christine: Well, they just, they live so close. And, I mean, I like walking my dog down that way.

Coren: Yeah.

Christine: And I just don't want to live somewhere where I can't even feel free to walk my dog where I want. It's just ...

Coren: Um, do you know anyone involved in organized crime in Toronto who could kill them for you?

Christine: [she & Coren laugh] I won't answer that. No.

Coren: No, you know, I would think about it. And you know what? I would, I would just speak to friends, pause a little, I would speak to the police, just for advice. Because in a small town, the cops are probably going to give you some time.

Christine: Yeah.

Coren: And tell them what happened. And they may well say to you, um, that these people have been here a couple of months, they'll be gone in a week. Um, I wouldn't do this yet. Really what, I'd go to the cops and generally they're very, they're very good. And they will be on your side. And the fact that you've been attacked –

Christine: Yeah.

Coren: Again, I mean, did you have to go to the hospital?

Christine: Yeah, they gave me a tetanus –

Coren: Yeah.

Christine: -- and they took down the address and then the public safety people called me and all that kind of stuff.

Coren: Well, I would, I would go and, I mean, you may get a cop who's one of these sort of, you know, traffic ticket, uh, idiots, but gen-, some of them are. They're just, they're nerdy. They, they're not real cops really. But you get a good cop, a good g-, who wants the place to be, for people to have a decent time and to keep the bad guys at bay. And he or she might say to you, "Look, you know, this is the situation, don't sell your house. It's going to be okay." But I really would do that.

Christine: Okay.

Coren: You take, and good luck to you.

Christine: Thank you.

Coren: Thanks a lot. Bye-bye. It is disturbing because, and it's a fairly, relatively young woman, obviously, it's your home and it's your, the place where you go to be safe. And, um, you know, for most of us, of course, we'd be totally distraught if anything like this happened, any sort of confrontation to a normal person, whatever it happened, you know, it has an effect. These people don't care. Um, judgmental? They're probably going in, they're probably gonna get high on something or other. They probably couldn't care less. If it's not cheap beer, it's cannabis, it's cheap cannabis. And, and, uh, there's some, likely, some sort of criminal activity. Well, there is, because they have a pit-bull, not on a leash that's attacked someone. They couldn't care less. And what sort of person does that? Sorry to hear about that, really am. Uh, Lou on CFRB. Go ahead, Lou.

Lou: Hi, Michael.

Coren: Hello.

Lou: Hi, um, pit-bulls, if you look at the breed itself, the breed was built, uh, was made specifically to fight.

Coren: Yeah.

Lou: So anybody who would want this dog, it doesn't make any rational sense to have a pet like that. I witnessed a dog fight about four years ago, uh, with my kids in a park. And a pit-bull, uh, off the leash did a, owned by a, you know, owned by a teenager, did a beeline right for a, a Doberman who was being walked by his, his master. Uh, fortunately the Doberman took him down.

Coren: Mm.

Lou: It was, it was trained to, um, you know, hand-command trained, it knew what it was

doing. But, you know, you don't need dogs like that. You don't need dogs like, um. Pit-bull, to me, is a useless breed. Uh, it's a breed that's made, uh, for criminal activity.

Coren: Yeah, no, that's exactly what it is.

Lou: For fighting, that's what it's made for.

Coren: Yeah, I mean, thank you. Absolutely. Dobermans and Rottweilers, they have more of a tradition and a history; there's still a problem there, though. There is still a problem. Why do people have those dogs if, what is the purpose? There are so many breeds of dog you can have that don't have that reputation and that ability to inflict pain or death. So what's the reason, the reasoning behind your purchase? "Oh, they're lovely animals". Until they're not. You know, uh, poodles gone wild. Uh, you're gonna survive. Even Golden retrievers. Berserk! But chances are, you'll be okay. Very, very difficult to fight one of these extremely powerful dogs. And they, they have a, they're bred for a purpose. Earl on CFRB. Hello, Earl.

Earl: Good evening, Michael.

Coren: Hello.

Earl: There, there is a crime rate, rate out in the country. It's, it's not, it doesn't get the publicity that crimes in the city do, but –

Coren: Mm hm.

Earl: -- bad things do happen out here. And almost everybody on our road has a dog.

Coren: Where do you live, then?

Earl: Um, way, way north of Newmarket.

Coren: How, where exactly?

Earl: Uh, have you ever heard of Tosorontio?

Coren: Well I've seen it. I, I may have gone through it. I've seen it on the, uh, on the signpost.

Earl: Uh –

Coren: Because, I mean, you, you have, uh, New-, parts of Newmarket have very high crime rates.

Earl: Oh, well, um, um, I, I, I –

Coren: And there's a town not far from it that's notorious for having problems.

Earl: Yes. I, I, I, I told the man Newmarket because he, he, he would start asking me silly questions if I told him which township.

Coren: Well, I don't think he asks silly questions, actually. I think he asks intelligent questions.

Earl: But, but, anyway, um, yes, I have a dog big enough to eat, um, pit-bulls for breakfast.

Coren: What dog do you have?

Earl: Uh, I don't think you've heard of that either.

Coren: Okay. Earl, I'm, I'm bored of you. Good-bye. Uh, and, uh, the highly sophisticated young man screening and, uh, opping tonight – he's doing two jobs for the price of one – and he does not ask stupid questions. And I've heard of many things and I don't think there's so much crime in the country that everyone has to have a large and enormous dog to protect them. Always nice to hear from you, Earl. Michael Coren, NewsTalk 1010 CFRB.

- traffic and commercial break

Coren: Ooh, what was that? Last, last call I just spent on, uh, killing pit-bulls. Wouldn't it be fun? Nick, on CFRB. Hello, Nick?

Nick: Yeah, hi, Michael.

Coren: Hello.

Nick: How're you doin'? I'm going to have to agree with you on this topic.

Coren: Oh.

Nick: Because, um, I've experience first-hand, myself, uh. I was cutting hair in my salon one day, on one of my customers.

Coren: Mm hm?

Nick: And her husband had just bought her a little gift. They'd just gotten married two weeks ago and he bought her one of those little white Shih-tzus. I don't know what exactly they were, but those little tiny dogs. And he brought it into the hair salon and everybody loved it. It ran around and everything. The girl was ecstatic. I had to stop cutting her hair and everything. So a lady takes it out for a walk in the parking lot. As soon as she does that, a pit-bull runs up out of nowhere, grabs the dog in its mouth, shakes it to death and rips it open right in front of her.

Coren: Nice.

Nick: Right in front of everybody.

Coren: Was the pit-bull owner anywhere around?

Nick: The pit-bull apparently, we called the police, we called the animal rights and every-, I don't know, the animal group, whatever those people are that come and get 'em. And they said that they'd been looking for this dog in the area and he wasn't supposed to be in the area. But they cannot find the owner. They put signs up. They eventually, I don't know what happened with the dog, but they never ended up finding him that day. But right in front of everybody, watching through the window, this pit-bull just ripped to shreds this little dog.

Coren: Nick, I'm sorry you had to see that. And, uh, thank you for the call. Yeah, but, of course, there, it's not the dogs, it's the owners. Said this many times. The owners generally

are of a sort, but even if you think you're a responsible person, once you buy a dog like this – and it's not just pit-bulls, other animals too – uh, then you're no longer a responsible person.

And I realize that Dobermans and, uh, Rottweilers are not quite as severe, but they have a similar purpose. They have more of a history and more of a tradition, but their purpose is still to, to kill. And if you really do need protection, I mean, if, if you happen to, you know, live in a, in a small house surrounded by neo-Nazis, uh, Klansmen, uh, and black Muslim separatists and, and general thugs, okay, maybe there's a, but do you really need a dog like that? No, generally people do not need such an animal. Do they? And they have it because of their own insecurity or lack of self-esteem or probably 'cause mommy, I don't know, didn't hug them enough. Carol on CFRB. Hello, Carol.

Carol: Oh, hello, Michael. I'm so pleased to talk with you. I got through so quickly. Um, you know, my comment is that I really agree with you about these vicious, vicious dogs. And something must be done about them. But then, on the other hand, they are not the only ones. My husband and my miniature schnauzer were attacked by a Golden retriever that just exited from its backyard. And my little, little one, sixteen thousand dollars later and who is now in the animal, the, uh, Guelph University --

Coren: That, that's how much it cost to repair your husband?

Carol: No. My dog! [laughs]

Coren: Oh!

Carol: But, on the other hand, we cannot be too sure. I always feel that a large dog should be muzzled at all times. And that's my comment.

Coren: I think that's a bit harsh.

Carol: You do?

Coren: I do, because, uh, I mean, Golden retrievers, they, they, they do bite sometimes, but, I mean, a gold-, a golden, I, even a Golden retriever that's gone absolutely crazy, uh, it doesn't have the, the jaw and neck strength to inflict –

Carol: I couldn't agree with you more. But my point is that most people have always, um, accepted the fact and they all agree "a Golden retriever did this?" And nobody, I just don't think that any dog can be trusted. At any time.

Coren: You're sure it wasn't a pit-bull disguised as a Golden retriever?

Carol: [laughs] No, I don't think so. I don't think so.

Coren: Well, if you speak to vets, I mean, they may well tell you, 'cause I've heard this. I don't think it's urban myth -- and thanks for the call, Carol – that Golden retrievers, um, they, they deal with more bites from Golden retrievers than any other animal. Of course, we have to remember there are a huge number of Golden retrievers out there. And the bites are usually, um, they can be fairly severe, but it's, it's a dog that's reacted to someone in a house. It doesn't do anything like the damage that a, a pit-bull would do or a Rottweiler or a Doberman. Those dogs in particular. You know, we used to think that, uh, a bull dog, you know, would never let go. It would attack and never let go. This is nothing, this is nothing compared to a, to a pit-bull. Joel, on CFRB. Hello, Joel.

Joel: Hey there. Um, you ever seen the English bull terrier?

Coren: Yes, of course. I'm from England.

Joel: Yeah, um, well, do you think they have just as much jaw pressure?

Coren: No, no, I don't. They're much smaller. They're nothing like the size of a pit-bull.

Joel: Oh really?

Coren: And they're not, they're not bred to be, um, as strong, but if they were, they should be done away with too.

Joel: Well, I'd say that too. But why do police use German shepherds then?

Coren: Well, they don't always use German shepherds, but when they do, they're used for lots of reasons. They, they're generally used for –

Joel: What, 'cause they bite hard when the guy's [???] –

Coren: No, no, no. You, I don't think you understand why the police use dogs. Most of what they do, actually, is to track people down. And they, and intimidate. Uh, but they can be controlled. I mean, it's a very good question, even though it might not have been posed in that way.

Joel: Well, they're still animals.

Coren: Because, because they, they can be controlled whereas pit-bulls and Dobermans probably can't be.

Joel: Yeah. Well, I –

Coren: Okay?

Joel: I think the whole thing, problem with the pit-bull and the breed –

Coren: Mm hm.

Joel: What happened to it, it, uh, like a pit-bull should look like a Lab.

Coren: Yeah, okay, thanks for the call, Joel. Uh, we're, there are lots of people calling in. I will take this a bit further. I'm not going to hang up on people who've been calling in. So, uh, we'll try and take this one to 8:00 pm. 416-872-1010, 1-800-561-CFRB, star TALK, star 8255. Uh, would it be more fun to shoot pit-bulls or their owners? No, I'm only joking. Michael Coren, NewsTalk 1010 CFRB.

- commercial break

[...]

Coren: Pit-bulls, would it be fun to kill 'em? Kevin on CFRB. Hello, Kevin.

Kevin: Hey, how are you doin'?

Coren: I'm well. Thank you.

Kevin: Just moved down to Toronto a few months ago from Northern Ontario.

Coren: Mm hm?

Kevin: And, uh, a couple of things I've noticed. Uh, you know, I thought there was a law saying that these things had to be muzzled and leashed in public?

Coren: There is.

Kevin: Ah, well, where the heck do I call to get them arrested when they're not?

Coren: Yeah. I know, I know exactly how you feel.

Kevin: You know, I live in the Don Valley 401 area and I go out walking. They're all over the place.

Coren: Yeah.

Kevin: Now, you know, I'm a Golden retriever owner. Or was until she passed away. But, you know, I know, like, you gotta be careful no matter what the dog is. The temperament of the actual dog makes a huge difference. Doesn't matter whether it's a poodle or a pit-bull. But I have to agree with you, man, the pit-bulls, they're not, they're not a good breed. You know, I might take issue with your Doberman comments, just because I had dobes, but, you know, everything else tells me there's definitely something wrong now. And what about licensing for these things?

Coren: Well, you know –

Kevin: Or any dog?

Coren: I, I know exactly how you feel, Kevin. But, well, I mean, the police, obviously, they've got to give tickets out to people, uh, who're just going to work and driving back from work. So, they can't, they can't enforce the law and make people safer. Thanks for the call. I mean, there are other things to do. But, yeah, you do, frequently, I mean, I do see them with muzzles, but I would say half the time I see them, they're not muzzled. And we call the cops? And are we really going to do that? And will the police really actually do anything? Um, "there is, uh, uh, a pit-bull without a muzzle." "Oh, okay." It's very irritating. And I've never in my life seen one and "Oh look, um, there's the Reverend Carruthers, you know, the man who works at the food bank. There he is with a pit-bull. Oh, who would have thought it? Oh, it's Jenny Wilkins, the social worker who's always trying to help people. She's got a pit-bull. Oh, I didn't know that. Isn't that marvellous? It's, it's Doctor Jenkins. He delivered our child. Here he is with a pit-bull!" No, no. It's, it's Tommy Trash. It's Tommy Trash and his tattoos. And his ugly fat wife. No. But you know the sort of people who they are. I mean, why do we pretend? They have them because they want to make a statement to you. They want to say "get out of my way, I'm intimidating." And when it's one of your kids, when it's your fourteen-year-old child taking the dog out for a walk, and you get a call that both of them are in hospital. Well, not the dog, the dog's dead. [sighs] There's no place for these things. And Michael Bryant, you know, that little guy who jumps up and down every time there's a camera around. "Look at me, look at me, look at me. I'm going to crush your cars and take away your pit-bulls." Well, he's done neither. I mean, he's completely ineffective. Appalling Attorney General. The cops put their lives on the line arresting a couple hundred people involved in, uh, gang activity. Loads of them. Well, been given two thousand dollars each because we had them in jail 'cause the Attorney General can't get them all before a

judge. But he'll make a lot of noise. He's done nothing about the pit-bull stuff. Should be much harder, much more draconian. I like that word, "draconian". I don't know what it means. Robin, CFRB. Go ahead, Robin.

Robin: Hi, Michael.

Coren: Hello.

Robin: I am laughing here. Um, I have two very vicious declawed black cats that protect me.

Coren: Ohh.

Robin: Um, I am surprised that you would actually think that a pit-bull owner would call you up because they're probably right now sitting outside, um, in their lawn chairs, opening up bottles of beer with, uh, bottle openers that are attached to their key-chain [Coren laughs] because they haven't figured out how to twist the cap yet.

Coren: Oh, that's so judgmental, Robin.

Robin: Oh, I'm sorry.

Coren: They, they're people too.

Robin: [laughs] I am sorry.

Coren: I mean, not real people, obviously, but.

Robin: [laughs] I'm sorry.

Coren: Also, they would have to dial, uh, several digits in order. Which is –

Robin: [laughs] Yes, exactly. Maybe more than three.

Coren: [laughs] Robin, thanks for the call. I don't want you to sic your cats on me at, uh, at any time. But, yeah. [laughs] Shouldn't be judgmental. Oh, come on. It's wonderful being judgmental. It's such fun. No, it's not being judgmental. I mean, being judgmental is being hypocritical. That's what the term really means, isn't it? It's, you know, if I was a pit-bull owner judging other pit-bull owners. You get lot into it really. It's very judgmental. No, it's, you've just called me judgmental, well, obviously then you're being judgmental. Judgmental is, is different from judging. A judge who says you will now go to prison. Is he being judgmental or is he doing his job as a judge? To have an informed opinion about something is not judgmental; it's an informed opinion to say that, because every pit-bull owner I've ever seen has been trashy, that the vast majority of pit-bull.... And the guy the other week in, um, in Parkdale who locked the dog in the car, it was a couple of weeks ago and everyone went crazy about it. And I said, I, I, I bet you he's a real trashy guy and people said "How could you be so judgmental?" And then they saw him on TV [laughs]. I didn't get any calls after that. Uh, Charles on CFRB. Hello, Charles.

Charles: Hi, Michael, how are you?

Coren: I'm well, thank you.

Charles: Michael, I'm calling you because, uh, your show and the way you look at

things is, uh, I love the way you do things.

Coren: Well, thank you.

Charles: And I'm calling just to help you on the way you look at things about Dobermans.

Coren: Ah.

Charles: Dobermans, if you talk to anyone that knows anything about the breed, will tell you it's one of the most docile –

Coren: Yeah, yeah.

Charles: -- breeds you can purchase.

Coren: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Why do you purchase it then?

Charles: Bought it specifically because I live in an area where there has been all kinds of break-ins.

Coren: So Charles, you didn't buy the Doberman because it was docile, did you?

Charles: N-, well, I bought it because it was perceived, its perception is, uh, --

Coren: Yeah.

Charles: -- is why I bought it, Michael.

Coren: It's also capable, isn't it?

Charles: It can be taught to be capable –

Coren: Exactly.

Charles: There's no question about it.

Coren: And, and there are –

Charles: But that's, that's a different issue, is it not?

Coren: Well, I don't know. I mean, see, I hear this from other people. They're actually very docile. So you bought it because of its docility? "No. I, I bought it because it's capable of doing, uh, uh, a great deal of harm."

Charles: It's perception.

Coren: Well, it's not just perception.

Charles: Well, Joe, Joe Doe that walks down the street that is looking at homes to break in; I want him to know that there is a Doberman in my home.

Coren: And what –

Charles: And may he think twice about breaking into my place.

Coren: So, do you, do you –

Charles: Does, does that shine on me because of –

Coren: Do, do you have –

Charles: – my love for the dog?

Coren: Do you have a little sign on the front that says, um, “Do not break in. Doberman”?
In parentheses –

Charles: [??] people spend some time –

Coren: -- “Docile, but looks awful.”

Charles: Michael, people spend time looking at homes to break into and they will know whether there’s a Doberman in that home.

Coren: Yeah, they might.

Charles: And they will choose somewhere else.

Coren: Maybe. I mean, okay. Thank you. I mean, it’s possible. Uh, but I don’t buy it, the docile thing. Uh, it can be trained to be deadly. Or you can train it to be really friendly. Uh, well, then we’re putting too much in the hands, too much faith in the hands of the owner. And, and if, and if it has the ability to be so deadly, and if crime is so bad, if we really are living in fear to such an extent, then we’re all finished anyway. Bobby on CFRB. Hello, Bobby.

Bobby: How you doin’, mate?

Coren: I’m well, thank you.

Bobby: I’m, uh, a pit-bull owner. And, uh, --

Coren: You’re not?!

Bobby: Yeah, I [??].

Coren: Oh, come on!

Bobby: Yeah, it’s a funny stor-, it’s a funny story how I, I got the pit-bull. Um, --

Coren: From Gerry Adams, no doubt. [laughs]

Bobby: No. [????] No. Uh, I adopted it fifteen years ago from the Humane Society. I didn’t know what sort of dog it was. Um, he’s, it’s fifteen now, the dog is quite old. And, uh, he’s been quite good for the kids and whatnot there. But I would, uh, I would tell people not to get a pit-bull. Uh, just the reputation and the breed should be eventually phased out, you know?

Coren: Well, the, that you would say that, it says quite, but, I mean, you have, you have, is it one or two children, Bobby?

Bobby: Two, two kids.

Coren: Are you not concerned when the pit-bull's around them?

Bobby: No, no, no. The dog is old and all. It just lies out and sleeps, you know and, uh, --

Coren: Okay.

Bobby: And it's actually a cross-breed between, uh, something else and a, and a pit-bull.

Coren: Right.

Bobby: It, it wasn't until about a couple years later when I took her to the vet that they, they had told me what sort of dog it was.

Coren: Okay.

Bobby: Again, I would tell people not to get a pit-bull.

Coren: Well, good for, thank you. I mean, it's very honest of you that you have one. Last call, very quickly, is Mark on CFRB. Hello, Mark.

Mark: Uh, yeah, hi. I just wanted to say, all those people that, that talk about the pit-bulls and whatnot, that say they're, they're, they're great dogs. Well, every dog has the capability of being a great dog, but, uh, they're also, they have potential to be dangerous. And people don't realize that twenty per cent of what is, of what a dog learns is, eighty per cent is instinctual.

Coren: Mm, good point there.

Mark: So when they're put to the point of, um, you know, having to act on their instincts, --

Coren: Yeah.

Mark: -- they'll resort to what they're trained for. And dogs are bred, there's different breeds of dogs. If you watch dog shows, there's the working class dog and there's all these things. Well, pit-bulls were specifically bred to fight.

Coren: Yeah. Mark, thank you. I didn't, I didn't realize about those percentages, but thank you for that call. I appreciate it. Change of subject when we come back. Michael Coren, NewsTalk 1010, pit-bull free CFRB.

APPENDIX B

CBSC Decision 06/07-1428 CFRB-AM re an episode of the *Michael Coren Show*

The Complaint

The CBSC received the following complaint dated August 14, 2007 via the CRTC:

On Sunday August 12, 2007, on CFRB, I heard Michael Coren, on his evening show, advocate to his listeners the killing of all pit-bull dogs, and the killing of their owners. Proposing that people be shot is totally unacceptable. The station and the announcer need to be disciplined. These comments were at 15 minutes to the hour, and continued for at least 15 minutes. I believe the time was 7:45 pm, but I may be one hour off, as I was on the highway, and at the end of a lengthy drive.

Broadcaster's Response

The broadcaster responded to the complainant on August 26:

[L.] ... the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council has forwarded me your complaint about the August 12th *Michael Coren Show* (CBSC File #C06/07-1428) about his discussion of pit-bulls and their owners who take no responsibilities for the actions of their dogs when they attack people or other dogs.

The topic for the hour was prompted by the pitball attack of a Whitby couple out walking their dog.

I listened to the entire hour of the show between 7:00 pm and 8:00 pm to get the entire context of the broadcast. To hear what Michael Coren was saying about pit-bulls and their owners.

The topic began with a description of what happened to the Whitby couple. A pit-bull attacked them and their dog resulting in serious injury to the dog and the couple being bitten.

The owner called off his pit-bull and gave them a phone number to contact him -- the phone number turned out to be false. Authorities are trying to track down the owner and the dog to determine if it has rabbis [sic]. If they can't find the owner or the dog the Whitby couple will have to undergo painful rabbi [sic] shots.

Michael referred to pit-bull owners like this as morons:

"Everytime this happens you get the usual idiots who say 'oh no, no, no ... it's the owner's fault ... the animals are fine' ... well people who own pit-bulls are moronic by nature. I've never in my life seen anyone with a pit-bull who was ... worth a moment of my time... of all the breed of dogs you can own ... if you buy a pit-bull you're trying to make a statement ... 'I'm some white trash semi criminal who wants you to be frightened of me' that's generally the statement being made.

"The government tried to deal with pit-bulls ... it has to go further ... get rid of them all now. Round them up ...put them to sleep ... just round them up and get rid of them ... so much damage caused by them and there is no point in them being here.

"I don't think you have to be humane ... they're not human are they? They're animals and they do cause a great deal of damage and there is nothing positive about them and the owners. At this point anyone who tries to purchase one I'd make it a criminal offence and punish them.

"I've done so many interviews with people attacked by these bloody things ... to expunge the breed from the face of the earth would be the best thing..."

Coming back from traffic Michael, with tongue in cheek, says "we could have a public hunt of pit-bulls ... charge people ... it could reduce financial problems of the City of Toronto. Charge them 20 bucks ... a lot of pit-bulls around ... we could raise a lot of money ... you gotta think outside the box here ... this is how we're going to solve the issue

"Ask the cops ... the pit-bull is really the dog of choice ... the weapon of choice of the criminal class ... not only should we take the pit-bulls away ... I'm serious about this ... not hurt them but kill them ... don't inflict pain on them ... and the owners ... kill them ... but inflict pain ... no, no, no obviously you can't do do that ..."

It is obvious with his last statement quoted above that he was being sarcastic ... making a point he immediately says would be wrong. This is a comment that when taken in the context of what was being discussed ... a reasonably intelligent person would know right away that Michael wasn't serious about killing owners of pit-bulls.

This was further emphasized when Michael added: "... but punish them by forcing them to walk around with mini poodles or something ..."

Later around 7:49 pm which is probably around the time you heard the show ... Michael said just before going to a commercial: "would it be more fun to shoot pit-bulls or their owners ... no ... I'm only joking ..."

Michael then criticized the government and the attorney general in particular about their lack of enforcement of the anti pit-bull legislation:

"The Attorney General has done nothing about the pit-bulls. He should be much harder ... much more draconian ..."

We don't believe anyone listening to the entire show would come away with the conclusion that Michael Coren was serious about the urging of pit-bull owners to be shot. For those who tuned in like you did at 7:49 he made it very clear that he was just joking.

If Michael had made those comments and not added that he was joking or earlier telling listeners "obviously you can't do that" ... then I believe the complaint would be justified. But this isn't the case ... the host is exaggerating a point to make a stand and generate phone calls, but at the same time he is informing listeners that it was a joke or that they shouldn't act on his suggestion. This is similar to television issuing viewer discretion warnings for shows depicting mature themes or graphic violence.

That said, we will raise your complaint with Michael Coren so that he understands that even comments labelled as a joke could be misinterpreted by the listener.

Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention. At CFRB we take complaints seriously.

Additional Correspondence

The complainant filed his Ruling Request on August 27:

I have received a response from [S. K.], Operations Manager of CFRB, sent August 26, 2007, and pasted it at the end of this e-mail for reference.

I am not satisfied with the response, and shall address some of the points below. Where I have quotation marks around text, I will be quoting from the body of the letter from [the Operations Manager].

I trust that the CBSC is being supplied with a complete and full transcript of the full show, and thank [the Operations Manager] for supplying some excerpts for me to address. Perhaps I could also be supplied the full transcript.

"about his discussion of pit-bulls and their owners who take no responsibilities for the actions of their dogs when they attack people or other dogs."

Mr. Coren went way beyond limiting his comments to only pit-bulls who have attacked, and the owners of those dogs. My complaint addresses the owners of pit-bulls who have dogs who are not trained to be aggressive, but are indeed good, safe family pets.

"well people who own pit-bulls are moronic by nature. I've never in my life seen anyone with a pit-bull who was ... worth a moment of my time..."

"They're animals and they do cause a great deal of damage and there is nothing positive about them and the owners. At this point anyone who tries to purchase one I'd make it a criminal offense and punish them."

"and the owners ... kill them ... but inflict pain ... no, no, no obviously you can't do do that ... "

"would it be more fun to shoot pit-bulls or their owners ... no ... I'm only joking ..."

"If Michael had made those comments and not added that he was joking or earlier telling listeners 'obviously you can't do that' ... then I believe the complaint would be justified. But this isn't the case ... the host is exaggerating a point to make a stand and generate phone calls but at the same time he is informing listeners that it was a joke or that they shouldn't act on his suggestion. This is similar to television issuing viewer discretion warnings for shows depicting mature themes or graphic violence."

Had Mr. Coren said, "Kill all the Jews. No wait I'm joking", his words would not be negated. This is not at all similar to warnings on TV programs. There is no parallel at all. He has tarred all owners of all pit-bulls.

I have a dear friend who owns 3 lovely dogs, eleven, nine and two years old. They were purchased from responsible breeders, and have never in their lives harmed a human or another dog. They are as loving as any pet dogs could be. And they are pit-bulls.

Michael Coren would have these dogs shot for bounty and proposes shooting the owner too, on his CFRB radio show of August 12, 2007. I see these remarks as a hate crime.

The man has suggested killing the all owners of pit-bulls, regardless of their pet's behaviour. This is an identifiable group of people. It is irresponsible of CFRB to have allowed this to take place. The station and its announcer should be sanctioned.

A public apology should be made. Mr. Coren should educate himself on the facts.

It is not the breed that is a problem; it is some of the owners. I suggest he read the BBC article, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/6960788.stm>.

These are the folks that need to be punished. And any dogs trained to do harm should be properly dealt with regardless of breed.

Is Mr. Coren aware that in Canada, Michael Vick would be subject to only 6 months maximum for his deeds? Perhaps he should rail against these paltry penalties?

I propose that Mr. Coren be told to devote an hour of radio time to discussion of pit-bulls who are not a problem.

Let him interview my friend, and meet her dogs, and then dare to say that she is a moron, and should be beaten or killed, and that her dogs should be hunted for bounty. Let him speak to an expert on dogs such as Stanley Coren.

"It is obvious with his last statement quoted above that he was being sarcastic ... making a point he immediately says would be wrong. This is a comment that when taken in the context of what was being discussed ... a reasonably intelligent (my italics) person would know right away that Michael wasn't serious about killing owners of pit-bulls."

Perhaps. But we are talking about the listeners of the Michael Coren show, not "reasonably intelligent" people.

To end on a lighter note:

"Authorities are trying to track down the owner and the dog to determine if it has rabbi. If they can't find the owner or the dog the Whitby couple will have to undergo painful rabbi shots."

I don't see how the dog's religion enters into this, but thanks for the laugh.

I request that the CBSC conduct a proper inquiry into this event.