
Appendix
to CBSC Decision 99/00-0772
Showcase re the movie Rats

I. The Complaint

The following complaint dated August 9, 2000 was sent to the CRTC and forwarded to the CBSC in due course:

I am writing to lodge a complaint.

About 7:05 p.m. in the evening of Saturday, July 29, 2000, I turned on Showcase's TV Channel 39 to behold a man and woman in bed, woman on top and pumping to [the] beat [of] the band. The movie containing the scene was Rats.

I don't see the need for this kind of demonstration in any movie at any time, but particularly at 7 o'clock in the evening when my children are up and about.

II. Broadcaster Response

The broadcaster responded to the complainant's letter on September 11, 2000 with the following:

We are in receipt of your letter to the CRTC, which was forwarded to us by the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council. We regret that you were offended by the film *Rats*. Given your concerns, I would like to take this opportunity to explain a little bit about Showcase's programming policy.

The decision to air *Rats* is consistent with Showcase's mandate to provide an alternative to other broadcasters' offerings. One way that we have achieved this distinction is to broadcast high-quality international drama series and world-class films in our movie slot called The *Showcase Revue*. *Rats* is a Canadian film, directed [by] Jacques Holender. The movie tells the story of a middle-aged filmmaker who becomes obsessed with making a documentary about the rats that have infested his home.

While Showcase is proud to broadcast a wide range of films, it is our policy to carefully consider each film that is aired on the network. Before we decide to broadcast a film, our Programming Department screens it to ensure that it is suitable for broadcast. The determination of suitability includes ensuring that the broadcast would not contravene the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' "Sex-Role Portrayal Code for Television and Radio Programming", the "Broadcast Code for Advertising Children" or the "Voluntary Code Regarding Violence in Television Programming."

In order to assist our viewers in making their viewing choices, we run a viewer advisory before such programs indicating whether they contain scenes of violence, nudity and/or coarse language. If

appropriate, a "viewer discretion is advised" advisory is shown not only before the broadcast begins, but also after commercial breaks. The following is the viewer advisory that ran at the beginning of and throughout the broadcast of Rats. "The following program contains scenes with nudity and coarse language. Viewer discretion is advised."

Thank you for taking the time to voice your opinion about the scheduling of this film. We appreciate feedback from our viewers and hope that this letter has addressed some of your concerns.

III. Additional Correspondence

The complainant was unsatisfied with the broadcaster's response and sent the following letter dated September 27:

Thank you for your letter regarding my complaint about the scheduling of the film Rats.

Unfortunately, instead of responding clearly and directly to my concerns, your letter engages in what appear to be standard, legal-style statements. The question remains, why are any movies containing scenes like that in Rats being run at 7:00 p.m. in the evening when children, who cannot be supervised every minute by parents, are up and about and at the TV? Viewer discretion advisories are hardly an appropriate warning tool for children and do not justify thoughtless and irresponsible programming. Surely, there are non-offensive movies/programs that could be scheduled into the early evening time slots.