
APPENDIX

CBSC Decision 05/06-1525

Global Television re a segment on an episode of *Entertainment Tonight*

The Complaint

The CBSC received the following complaint dated May 7, 2006 via the CRTC:

Friday, April 21st (evening) on the television show *Entertainment Tonight* (numerous channels on our ExpressVu satellite). This was on at 7:00 or 7:30, when many young children would still be watching tv.

On this episode of *Entertainment Tonight*, they previewed an upcoming television show hosted by Diane Sawyer that she described as “Extreme Family Makeover” where they profiled and tried to help extremely dysfunctional families (particularly with step-parents). The show included home video of physical assaults by the parents on their children and extreme verbal harassment and intimidation of children by adults.

The complainant sent a small piece of additional information on May 9:

The exact time of the *Entertainment Tonight* broadcast was 7:30 pm (Friday, April 21st) and it was viewed on Global Television (Toronto). See complaint reference 299494 for my original complaint regarding this episode.

Broadcaster’s Response

Global’s Coordinator of Compliance Standards responded on June 8:

We are in receipt of your correspondence regarding *Entertainment Tonight* which aired on April 21st at 7:30 pm on Global Television. In your letter, you have expressed concern about the violence portrayed in this episode regarding a preview of an upcoming program hosted by Diane Sawyer about dysfunctional families with step parents and step children.

As responsible broadcasters, we try to be sensitive to the members of our viewing audience and we apologize if this program has offended you. I assure you that it was neither Global’s nor the producer’s intention to do so.

Entertainment Tonight is a news magazine program that covers the entertainment industry and current events and, like our newscasts, is not intended for children. Upon review of the episode in question, we believe that the segment exposed violence and verbal assaults, which was the focus of the upcoming program – dysfunctional step families. Diane Sawyer made a point of saying that the program was about trying to help these families and was in no way glorifying or condoning this behaviour. While we do agree that this segment was disturbing, it represents the harsh realities that some families face and is an issue that is considered important enough to be highlighted on *Entertainment Tonight*.

We appreciate open dialogue with our audience and thank you for your letter.

Additional Correspondence

The complainant wrote back to the CRTC on July 3:

I am writing to the CRTC because I had filed a complaint in early May regarding a program seen on Global Television in the early evening (CRTC Ref # 299494). It was forwarded to the CBSC and Global. I was not satisfied with Global's response and therefore responded to the CBSC with my concerns. I wrote:

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with the response (attached) I received from Canwest. In particular I believe they have violated sections 3.1.1, 3.1.5. and 6.3 of the *CAB Violence Code*. With respect to section 6.3, I believe the average person would agree that physical assault of a child by an adult (especially of the intensity shown in the program) amounts to "extra-ordinary violence".

The CBSC has NOT responded (the above email text was sent June 10th). Therefore I am seeking the aid of the CRTC in resolving this complaint, as the CBSC obviously has no interest in my complaint, nor the courtesy to even respond.

The CBSC discovered that the e-mail of June 10 referred to above had been filtered as spam by its e-mail program. It explained this to the complainant in a letter of July 19.