
APPENDIX

CBSC Decision 06/07-0713 Global re 24 (“Season 6, Episode “1:00-2:00 pm”)

The Complaint

The CBSC received the following e-mail complaint, dated February 14, 2007, via the CRTC:

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing about a TV show I saw on Monday February 12th, 2007 on the Global network - although it may have shown on other networks as well. The show as called 24. It was a show I had seen only once before.

The time of the show was 8:00 pm. My concern about this program was with the violence depicted in it. It showed not only people being murdered gratuitously or in cold blood – something seen in other shows (although perhaps not at this time slot) – but a very disturbing scene of torture. The victim was a man being held in a hostage-type situation where he was being asked to help a group of terrorists make an exploding device. The man did not want to cooperate and in order to get him to do so the terrorist group used a drill to drill a hole in his back with the threat of doing this to his entire body until he "bled to death". It was horrific, graphic and unpleasant to watch.

I turned the show off. I do not recall any prior notice of violence that might have caused me to do this in advance. From a personal point of view, I am a social worker who hears people talk about real life violence and therefore do not find violence "entertaining". But apart from this, the scene was extremely disturbing. I believe that if this would have been in a movie it would have been rated to be seen by those over 18.

I have never seen or heard of the use of a drill to torture people with. I would not like to think of youngsters watching this and having to cope with this kind of an image in their consciousness as it is now in mine.

Such scenes, in my opinion, should not be on T.V. at all and certainly not at 8:00 p.m. and certainly not without warnings.

I would be interested to know if shows such as these are seen by anyone at the CRTC prior to airing.

Please be good enough to look into this.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Broadcaster's Response

The broadcaster responded on March 9 with the following:

This letter is in response to yours to the CRTC concerning the broadcast of *24* on Global Television on February 12, 2007 at 8 pm. 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 is neither Global's nor the producer's intention to do so.

Under the *Broadcasting Act*, broadcasters are required to provide a broad spectrum of entertainment and information programming for "men, women and children of all ages, interests and tastes." Television programming is required to be diverse and appealing to a wide range of audiences. As a result, what one viewer might consider an interesting or informative program might lead another to turn the channel.

Global Television adheres to the television rating system created by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) and the Action Group on Violence On Television (AGVOT). This public rating system is intended to advise viewers of a program's content in order to allow you the viewer to determine a program's suitability for your own viewing needs and desires. As required, an on-screen key airs for the first fifteen seconds of the program and the matching V-Chip data is encoded into our transmission for the entire duration of the program. This program is rated "PG" – "Parental Guidance" as per the CAB's AGVOT rating guidelines.

We have screened the particular episode and agree that it was more graphic than the regular weekly episodes. However, we believe that violent scenes were not gratuitous but integral to the plot.

In accordance with the *Code of Ethics*, we aired the following visual and verbal viewer advisory at the top of the show and coming out of every commercial break to assist our viewers in making informed decisions:

"The following program contains mature subject matter and scenes of violence. Viewer discretion is advised."

Please note that we requested simultaneous substitution for this program of the Global signal over FOX, as it was also broadcast on FOX during the same time period. As a result, the 9 pm watershed hour for programs containing scenes of violence does not apply, as Canadian broadcasters are granted an exception to the watershed rule when a program is simulcast over the U.S. service prior to the watershed hour. This simulcast provides our audience with the necessary and proper advisories further to Clause 10(c) of the *Code of Ethics* which states:

In order to provide viewers with the benefit of Canadian program classification and viewer advisories not available on foreign distant signals, broadcasters which have CRTC permitted substitution rights over programming which is imported into their markets before the late viewing period, may employ substitution.

That being said, we believe that we aired this program with the appropriate viewer advisories and AGVOT rating. Therefore, we do not feel the program contravened any Codes.

We hope we have addressed your concerns and thank you for your letter.

Additional Correspondence

The complainant submitted the following note to the CBSC on April 25:

I have received the letter attached (as have you, I believe) and am not satisfied with the response for various reasons that I will not go into now. However, please let me know what I can do to pursue my concerns further.