
APPENDIX
To
The Score re a segment of WWE Bottom Line (CBSC Decision 02/03-520,
January 30, 2004)

I. The Complaint

The following complaint dated January 12, 2003 was sent to the CRTC and forwarded to the CBSC in due course:

On Saturday, December 28, around 6:10 pm I switched on The Score to check on the winners of the football games which usually flash along the bottom of the screen. The wrestling programme that was on became, in my opinion, disgusting. When I saw what was on I switched off the sound but I could not avoid seeing the actions on the screen while I waited to see the scores.

The man with the microphone had two accomplices in the ring with him. He pointed towards a large man wearing a big cowboy hat sitting outside the ring. The two accomplices threw this large man into the ring. The man with the microphone dropped his pants and the other two forced the big man's face onto the other man's bum and ground it all around. It looked to me as though it was his bare skin. I did not wait to see the scores but switched off the channel.

If this is considered entertainment then we have hit new lows. I do not consider this to be appropriate behaviour for television at any time, much less when children can be influenced. I was offended by the gross, deliberate, and degrading nature of the actions on the screen. I was appalled by what I had seen. Whether this man was part of the action willingly or not, I do not believe this should be permitted on public television.

I would appreciate your viewing the films of this "show". If you feel that what was shown went beyond the limits of normal decency, would you take the necessary measures to ensure that people are not subjected to this type of on-screen abusive, violent behaviour again.

I phoned the station but the VP in charge was on holidays. I phoned Bell ExpressVu and they said they had no control over "live" entertainment. I believe both should be held equally responsible.

I would be happy to discuss this matter with you should you so desire. You may contact me at the above address, or phone/fax me at ~~###-###-####~~.

II. Broadcaster Response

The broadcaster responded to the complainant's letter on January 24 with the following:

Dear Mr. [M]:

We are writing in response to your letter to the CRTC dated January 12, 2003 in which you raised concerns about a programming segment, which was broadcast on one of our programs, WWE Smackdown on December 28, 2002 at 6:10 pm.

The Score takes its programming commitments very seriously and takes measures to ensure that all of its programming is in compliance with regulatory requirements and applicable codes. The Vice President of Programming and I personally reviewed the programming segment in question, and agree that the scene is in very poor taste. However, it is our opinion that this particular segment is in full compliance with both the regulatory requirements and, in particular, with the Canadian Association of Broadcasters *Voluntary Code Regarding Violence in Television Programming*, which all programming undertakings are subject to.

While WWE Smackdown may not appeal to every viewer's taste, The Score displays programming advisory's [*sic*] warning and describing the nature of the content within the program. It is our opinion that this represents an adequate warning of the nature of the programming content.

We appreciate you taking the opportunity to write to us and we trust this response addresses the concerns raised in your letter. We would be pleased to discuss this program segment with you at anytime in the future.

The complainant returned his signed Ruling Request form dated January 29.

III. ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

The Score also provided an explanation of their approach to WWE programming in an e-mail sent directly to the CBSC:

Details of Score WWE policy.

The Score conforms to the CAB policies with respect to violence. As per our WWE programming The Score goes to greater lengths to ensure that the programming adheres to the policies by pre-screening both the script and the tape of the show prior to airing, thus making appropriate editing decisions, this combined with on-screen advisories of the nature and content prominently displayed in and out of every break.