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**CANADIAN BROADCAST STANDARDS COUNCIL  
ONTARIO REGIONAL PANEL**

CITY-TV re *CityPulse at Six* News Report

(CBSC Decision 04/05-0933)

Decided April 19, 2005

R. Stanbury (Chair), M. Ziniak (Vice-Chair), M. Harris (*ad hoc*),  
H. Hassan, M. Hogarth (*ad hoc*), M. Oldfield

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**THE FACTS**

On January 25, 2005, CITY-TV (Toronto), during its *CityPulse at Six* news broadcast, aired a report about a man charged with sexual assault against children and production and possession of child pornography. The report was the lead story, beginning at 6:00 pm. News anchor Mark Dailey introduced the report with the statement

We're live now to Beatrice Politi who is outside the home base of this man in the north end of the city. Beatrice.

The *CityPulse* reporter was seen standing outside of an apartment building. A caption at the bottom of the screen indicated the street name. The journalist began her report:

Thank you, Mark. The suspect we know is a pianist who has worked a number of different, uh, events across the city. Those who heard of the allegations today were shocked.

There was a shot of a sign for a local dance school, followed by an interview with the owner of the dance school who stated that the accused had been a pianist at the school a couple of years ago and had accompanied ballet classes. The dance school owner assured the reporter that she was confident that nothing inappropriate had happened at the school since the accused had never been left alone with any students.

A photograph of a man's face then appeared on screen with a caption providing the man's name. The reporter informed viewers that the man "also played music at bar mitzvahs and other social gatherings in the Toronto area."

The reporter then interviewed an employee of a Russian-Canadian newspaper who showed the reporter a "Help Wanted" classified advertisement which the accused had placed, apparently in an effort to find young adolescent helpers for his work at private parties.

This was followed by a scene of the outside of an apartment building with the street number clearly visible. The reporter stated, "He lived in this North York highrise with his wife and son." There was then a segment in which the reporter was seen standing in the apartment hallway speaking to a person standing in a doorway. The person was digitally blurred, but sounded like a young boy. The reporter showed the young person a piece of paper with the accused's photo on it and the following exchange took place:

Reporter: Do you know this guy?  
Boy: Yeah.  
Reporter: You do? Who is he?  
Boy: He is, was my dad.  
Reporter: He was your dad?  
Boy: Yeah.  
Reporter: Do you know where your dad went?  
Boy: Yeah.  
Reporter: Where did he go?  
Boy: Um, he went to jail.

The report again showed the outside of the apartment building and zoomed in on a sign that provided the street name and number, as well as the telephone number for the apartment's rental office. The reporter was then shown again in the apartment hallway speaking to a man standing in his doorway, who was identified as a neighbour. The neighbour stated that he was concerned about the situation because he had two children. That exchange was followed by an interview in what appeared to be the lobby of the apartment building with a woman who said that she always kept her children close to her when she went out. The report concluded with a shot of the reporter standing outside the apartment building, again with the street name identified; the reporter said:

The investigation is far from over and the sex crime squad wants to speak to anyone who knew the man and could have any good information for them. Live

in North York, I'm Beatrice Politi. Now back to Mark Dailey at police headquarters.

A viewer was concerned about the interview with the accused's son and sent a letter of complaint, dated February 4, to the CRTC which was forwarded to the CBSC in due course. The pertinent portion of that letter is as follows (the full text of all correspondence can be found in the Appendix):

This complaint is about *CityPulse* evening news in Toronto.

Last week there was coverage about a man (I can't recall his name) in Toronto who was arrested for his involvement in an international child pornography ring including trafficking of children for the sex industry.

I'm still bothered by what one of the reports did – a woman besides who'd I hope would have more sensitivity towards children. The big push that evening was about one of their reporters having an "exclusive" interview. It turned out it was with the convicted man's young son, a boy! How desperate can a local news channel be to reduce itself to such cheap promotion?

[...]

First off, I'm not sure if it's illegal but I know for sure it's unethical to interview a child without parental permissions let alone televise it. To exploit a child who is already at risk and extremely vulnerable to me seems cruel and twisted. What was CityTV thinking?

I'm sure there are a thousand angles they could have taken on such an awful story besides the further humiliation of this innocent child and the lowest common denominator of sensational reporting coverage.

That child would have already seen his father be hunted by police, perhaps his home was raided. Who knows the state of mind of himself [*sic*] or his mother/caregiver during that kind of crisis situation. This boy could very well be one of his father's victims for all we know. Chances are he was.

Can someone please explain to me what they were trying to do with such a report with an at-risk child and who's [*sic*] idea it was to televise it?

I believe these reporters need to be sensitized about the issue of child sex abuse, the station fined and whatever else it takes to prevent such twisted spectacles from happening in the future.

The complainant's initial letter did not provide the date and time of broadcast, information which the CBSC requires in order to request tapes from the broadcaster and proceed with the complaint. The complainant was informed of this policy and wrote back on February 14 to explain that she was unable to identify the exact date and time, but that she had also written to CITY-TV directly. She added:

This is the first time I've had any problems with that TV station. It was the issue and ethics around the child or children that bothered me.

I am mostly concerned that they take responsibility for what has unfolded and that they are more conscientious and compassionate to vulnerable children in the future.

The complainant wrote again to the CBSC on February 17, indicating that she had received correspondence from a CITY-TV Producer who had been able to locate the date of the report in question:

[W]e do know that the time was the six o'clock news hour.

The Producer of CityTV did follow up with me. He replied that it was he who made the decision to air the interview and does regret the broadcast and have [s/c] taken steps to ensure the reporter involved does not violate a child like this in the future.

So that you may view the broadcast in question, isn't it possible now to obtain the correct date from the producer as he fully knows which broadcast I'm referring to, so you can view the tape for yourself?

The reason I'm asking is that perhaps a formal complaint is still the most appropriate process to undertake as two major issues remain. One is, what will be the retribution to the boy and his caregiver who've been shamed by CityTV's broadcast? The other is the question that is still unanswered and that is whether or not permission was sought from a parent or guardian to interview the boy with the consent to air the broadcast? I asked the Producer this question and he has not provided an answer to that question in our email correspondences. The refusal to not answer [s/c] the question makes me suspect that perhaps proper precautions were not taken.

Due to the fact that this incident involves an underage, at-risk child, are you or anyone at your organization at all curious as to whether proper broadcasting/journalistic protocols were taken?

CITY-TV forwarded to the CBSC a copy of the response the *CityPulse* Producer had sent the complainant:

We made a mistake by broadcasting the interview of the little boy. Even though we hid his identity, it didn't advance the story and was gratuitous. It was a case of something happening very late in the day, with a relatively inexperienced reporter, and a bad decision being made, by me, to run it. We should've given it more consideration. I apologize for any distress it caused you. I can assure you that that kind of journalism is NOT what we are about and if we could go back in time and take it out, we surely would.

With 100 items of news in a typical newscast, we will make a mistake once in a blue moon, since we are human, but I don't want to make excuses, I just want to apologize.

In light of the information from the complainant that a CITY-TV producer had been able to locate the date of the news report and respond to her, the CBSC further corresponded with CITY-TV to determine that the broadcast in question had aired on January 25 during the 6:00 pm newscast. Consequently, with the co-operation of CITY-TV, the CBSC was able to pursue the complaint and the

Council provided CITY-TV with a second opportunity to respond. The Vice-President of News provided a second response on March 17:

I am writing to address your concerns about one of our news stories as outlined in a complaint made to the CBSC, a copy of which we received on March 7, 2005. As the Vice President of News Programming for CityTV Toronto, I will speak to your concerns and provide more information about the news report in question.

Before I address the specific issues you raise, I want to assure you we take our responsibilities as news people and broadcasters seriously and manage our newsroom in a principled way, with a conviction to protect and not exploit the innocent. We are guided by all Canadian Association of Broadcasters Programming Codes, including the Radio Television News Directors Association *Code of Ethics*.

I regret the way this story was covered. It was not in keeping with our own policy and practices, and was a result of management's failure to appropriately communicate our fundamental values, policies and practices to the story's producer, who is new to our newsroom. As he indicated to you in an earlier letter, the producer on this piece made an error in judgment by including in the news story a segment in which the alleged abuser's son was interviewed.

In answer to your question, our reporter did not seek permission from a parent or guardian to interview the child. It should be noted, however, that we are not required by law to seek parental or guardian approval. However, within the context of this story, I believe we should not have interviewed the boy – either with or without parental/guardian approval. That said, I do want to point out that while our reporter should not have interviewed the boy, she did treat him with gentleness, concern and respect. It should also be noted that the boy's face and body were digitally obscured in our news story, so that his identity was not revealed. I want to be clear that it is our standard practice to treat subjects and sources with decency and respect, protecting their dignity and privacy.

We have consulted with a professional child psychologist regarding your suggestion that we apologize to the child for our error. It is the psychologist's assessment that an apology would be of no benefit to the child, and may even be harmful. You may be assured that the newsroom individuals involved clearly understand the transgression in interviewing the boy at all. You may also be assured that every point you have brought forward has been thoroughly discussed with staff.

The complainant wrote back to the CBSC on March 31:

[The Vice President of News'] response seems to me sincere and concerned, which in my opinion is half the battle when dealing with the protection of children. I am pleased that a child psychologist was consulted in regard to the issue of retribution to the child involved.

What I do not agree with after seeing the footage is that the reporter treated the child with gentleness, concern and respect. I'm not even convinced that common sense was applied by the reporter in question. By simply covering a child's identity while pushing that child to speak negatively towards their own parent on public broadcast is not gentle, concerned or respectful. Also, [the Vice President of News] says that this was not in following with their policy – wouldn't the

producer know this policy? An advertisement promoted the interview specifically for at least one hour before the broadcast in question. Viewers were being asked to stick around to hear the “exclusive” interview. This is a lot of time for management to make a judgment call, wouldn't you agree? Isn't that part of the job of the producer? If in fact, CHUM's policy is to maintain people's dignity, I can assure you, this child in this instant was not left with dignity. This is why I feel it is important for CBSC to view this clip.

Finally, I think another significant issue here is the fact that it is not law or policy to obtain parental permission before interviewing a child for a broadcast. I believe the CBSC should examine this clip and make comment related to standard journalism and broadcast practice along with recommendations as to how to protect the rights of children within the media. We must do what we can to ensure this “mistake” does not happen again in the future in this city or across the country.

Therefore, though I do appreciate all the efforts made by the Producer at CityTV and [the Vice President of News], I feel it is necessary to proceed with the complaint in hopes that the CBSC can enlighten us all about what might have prevented this from happening and how to ensure it never has to happen again to any child but particularly vulnerable and at risk children.

## **THE DECISION**

The Ontario Regional Panel examined the complaint under the following provisions of the Radio Television News Directors Association's (RTNDA) *Code of (Journalistic) Ethics*:

### *RTNDA Code of (Journalistic) Ethics, Article 4 (Privacy)*

Broadcast journalists will respect the dignity, privacy and well-being of everyone with whom they deal, and will make every effort to ensure that news gathering and reporting does not unreasonably infringe privacy except when necessary in the public interest. Hidden audio and video recording devices should only be used when it is necessary to the credibility or accuracy of a story in the public interest.

### *RTNDA Code of (Journalistic) Ethics, Article 8 (Decency and Conduct)*

Broadcast journalists will treat people who are subjects and sources with decency. They will use special sensitivity when dealing with children. They will strive to conduct themselves in a courteous and considerate manner, keeping broadcast equipment as unobtrusive as possible. They will strive to prevent their presence from distorting the character or importance of events.

The Panel concludes that the news report in question was in breach of aspects of both of the foregoing Code provisions.

## The Issue of Privacy

Frequently, those who are in the news wish to be there. Needless to say, this is not always the case. The difficult question for the CBSC to answer is how to measure the relative entitlements; namely, the desire of those who do not wish to be there, on the one hand, and the wish of those who report the news to place them in the public eye, on the other. In fact, it is not *those* interests which are at the root of the evaluation. It is the *public* interest. The fundamental applicable principle is that privacy is to be respected “except when necessary in the public interest.”

In *CTV re Canada AM (Airborne Hazing)*, (CBSC Decision 94/95-0159, March 12, 1996), for example, a viewer expressed a concern regarding the invasion of privacy of the persons shown on the home video of the hazing rituals taken by a member (or members) of the Airborne Regiment and broadcast by CTV. She was concerned that no attempt had been made to conceal the identities of the “victims of this debasement.” The Panel did not consider that the coverage of the incident violated anyone’s right to privacy. As this Panel said,

In general, it is also true to observe that the private lives of individuals are of little or no interest to the public. There must, however, be exceptions to this principle or we would never, as a society, be entitled to see news stories on television on the grounds that they may contain footage of an unwilling participant in the event. It would not be realistic, for example, for television station news teams to seek permission from everyone who might be seen on camera at a crime scene, an accident, the picketing of a shop or a legislature, the arrival of a public figure or other events too numerous to describe here.

The Panel added:

Circumstances do, moreover, arise from time to time in which the public interest in an event may override the otherwise legitimate interest of individuals to keep their identity and activities free from filmed scrutiny. Even a situation such as the hazing ritual in which a *home video camera* rather than a broadcaster’s equipment was present would give rise to this principle. The public had such an abiding interest in learning about the unorthodox and apparently discriminatory practices of the Regiment, whose members had killed Somalis in questionable circumstances thereby affecting the reputation of the *country* in its international peace-keeping role, that the private interest of any individuals seen in the film in question would have been overridden by the public’s need to know.

This Panel also turned its attention in the *Airborne Hazing* decision to a matter which was not as central in terms of the reporting there as it is in the broadcast being dealt with in the present decision. The Panel’s exposition of the issue of *identification* was as follows:

The point is that the issue is not so much the recording and broadcasting of the *image* of the individual as it is the *identification* of the person. Where the broadcaster provides no information which permits the public at large to identify the individual, such as in this case, the broadcaster has not interfered with that

person's right to privacy. The fact that the individual filmed and those close to him may know who he is does not interfere with his right to be free from identification by the public at large.

In the matter at hand, by a jigsaw effect, the broadcaster provided all essential information that would have enabled any viewer to put together the identity and address of the son of the subject of the news segment. The broadcaster provided the name of the accused both orally and using a picture of him with his name supered on-screen. It referred to the dance school at which he had worked, other kinds of work he performed, and classified advertising he had placed for assignments. It also focussed on the fact that he lived in North York and showed pictures of the building in which he lived and zoomed in on its civic address. In sum, it did, to all intents and purposes, identify where the young interviewee could be found and what his last name was. The only bits of information missing were his image and first name.

In the view of the Panel, this constituted an unjustified invasion of privacy, in violation of the requirements of Article 4 of the *RTNDA Code of (Journalistic) Ethics*. What is more, it actually added no piece of information that was in the public interest. The only fact it added was that the accused actually had a son, hardly a justification for the inclusion of that bit of information.

### **Privacy and the Special Case of Young Children**

If anything, the rules ought to be more vigilantly observed in the case of young children. They are vulnerable and, where, as in this case, they add no useful information to the story being reported, there is simply no reason for their inclusion in the piece. It was, if anything, particularly sad that the broadcaster aired the exchange in which he (the son) was asked whether he knew "this *guy*" (as though he was some petty criminal whom the child had seen committing an infraction in the neighbourhood) and the response elicited was "He is, was my dad." Viewers did not require that bit of additional identification. Those who were concerned about the accused's identity already knew his name, what he looked like, what he did for a living and where he lived. Nor was it more useful than it was wrenching to hear this young boy say that his dad "went to jail". The Panel finds that the broadcaster did not display the "special sensitivity" required by the Code "when dealing with children." The Panel considers that CITY-TV breached Article 8 of the Code in broadcasting this interview.

### **Broadcaster Responsiveness**

The Panel's assessment of the responsiveness of the broadcaster in dealing with the complainant is a component of every CBSC decision. While this flows from the fact that the obligation to respond thoughtfully is a CBSC membership requirement, responsiveness also respects the time that has been taken by an



individual to actually document and send an expression of his or her concern. There is, it goes without saying, no obligation on the part of a broadcaster to agree with the position taken by the complainant but it is both reassuring and satisfying when broadcasters do candidly acknowledge an error made by a member of their team. The degree of collaboration and candour by both the producer and the Vice-President of News at CITY-TV was exemplary. Even the complainant recognized and admitted that the broadcaster's attitude was "sincere and concerned", which is, she said, "half the battle when dealing with the protection of children." Although she still had a substantive issue to pursue regarding the broadcast itself, it is clear to the Panel that CITY-TV has amply fulfilled its obligation of responsiveness.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DECISION**

CITY-TV is required to: 1) announce the decision, in the following terms, once during prime time within three days following the release of this decision and once more within seven days following the release of this decision during the time period in which the *CityPulse at Six* news report was broadcast; 2) within the fourteen days following the broadcast of the announcements, to provide written confirmation of the airing of the statement to the complainant who filed the Ruling Request; and 3) at that time, to provide the CBSC with that written confirmation and with air check copies of the broadcasts of the two announcements which must be made by CITY-TV.

The Canadian Broadcast Standards Council has found that CITY-TV breached provisions of the Radio Television News Directors Association *Code of Ethics*. In a news report about a man accused of possession of child pornography, broadcast on *CityPulse at Six*, CITY-TV broadcast an interview with the young son of the accused in which the reporter asked him questions about his father. Although the image of the boy was blurred, the report provided sufficient information about his family name and address to enable viewers to identify him. The report violated the provisions of Articles 4 and 8 of the Code, which require broadcast journalists to respect the privacy, dignity and well-being of everyone with whom they deal and to use special sensitivity when dealing with children.

*This decision is a public document upon its release by the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council.*

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## APPENDIX

### CBSC Decision 04/05-0933 CITY-TV re *CityPulse* at Six News Report

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#### The Correspondence

The following complaint dated February 4, 2005 was sent to the CRTC and forwarded to the CBSC in due course:

This complaint is about *CityPulse* evening news in Toronto.

Last week there was coverage about a man (I can't recall his name) in Toronto who was arrested for his involvement in an international child pornography ring including trafficking of children for the sex industry.

I'm still bothered by what one of the reports did – a woman besides who'd I hope would have more sensitivity towards children. The big push that evening was about one of their reporters having an "exclusive" interview. It turned out it was with the convicted man's young son, a boy! How desperate can a local news channel be to reduce itself to such cheap promotion? I can't get this off my mind, so decided to write them and complain to the Commission.

I was looking to message the editor also of *CityPulse*. The person who decides what goes on air and what gets cut.

First off, I'm not sure if it's illegal but I know for sure it's unethical to interview a child without parental permissions let alone televise it. To exploit a child who is already at risk and extremely vulnerable to me seems cruel and twisted. What was CityTV thinking?

I'm sure there are a thousand angles they could have taken on such an awful story besides the further humiliation of this innocent child and the lowest common denominator of sensational reporting coverage.

That child would have already seen his father be hunted by police, perhaps his home was raided. Who knows the state of mind of himself [*sic*] or his mother/caregiver during that kind of crisis situation. This boy could very well be one of his father's victims for all we know. Chances are he was.

Can someone please explain to me what they were trying to do with such a report with an at-risk child and who's [*sic*] idea it was to televise it?

I believe these reporters need to be sensitized about the issue of child sex abuse, the station fined and whatever else it takes to prevent such twisted spectacles from happening in the future.

Since the complainant did not provide a specific date and time for the broadcast, the CBSC replied with its standard letter informing her that it would require that information in order to pursue the complaint. The complainant wrote back on February 14:

Thank you so much for getting back to me. It's unfortunate that I couldn't find the details about the broadcast from my limited online research. I also sent a letter to *CityPulse* but have had no response. Online, I couldn't find a name association with any of its departments so ended up having to send the message via general delivery. This is the first time I've had any problems with that TV station. It was the issue and ethics around the child or children that bothered me.

I am mostly concerned that they take responsibility for what has unfolded and that they are more conscientious and compassionate to vulnerable children in the future. Do you think your correspondence to them will do this, without a formal complaint process? If not, I will try and get the details you require so that a formal complaint process can continue to be pursued so that we can know what their intentions were and what their follow-up will be. Your advice is appreciated on this matter.

Thank you for your time and effort.

The complainant wrote again on February 17:

Thank you for responding to me. I understand your organization's issues about date and time. I've received similar correspondence from [the CBSC Correspondence Officer]. However, we do know that the time was the six o'clock news hour.

The Producer of CityTV did follow up with me. He replied that it was he who made the decision to air the interview and does regret the broadcast and have [*sic*] taken steps to ensure the reporter involved does not violate a child like this in the future.

So that you may view the broadcast in question, isn't it possible now to obtain the correct date from the producer as he fully knows which broadcast I'm referring to, so you can view the tape for yourself? Surely your organization has the clout to at least uncover the correct date of a well-known broadcast?

The reason I'm asking is that perhaps a formal complaint is still the most appropriate process to undertake as two major issues remain. One is, what will be the retribution to the boy and his caregiver who've been shamed by CityTV's broadcast? The other is the question that is still unanswered and that is whether or not permission was sought from a parent or guardian to interview the boy with the consent to air the broadcast? I asked the Producer this question and he has not provided an answer to that question in our email correspondences. The refusal to not answer [*sic*] the question makes me suspect that perhaps proper precautions were not taken.

Due to the fact that this incident involves an underage, at-risk child, are you or anyone at your organization at all curious as to whether proper broadcasting/journalistic protocols were taken?

CITY-TV forwarded to the CBSC a copy of the response the *CityPulse* Producer had sent the complainant. It read as follows:

In short, I agree with you.

We made a mistake by broadcasting the interview of the little boy. Even though we hid his identity, it didn't advance the story and was gratuitous. It was a case of something happening very late in the day, with a relatively inexperienced reporter, and a bad decision being made, by me, to run it. We should've given it more consideration. I apologize for any

distress it caused you. I can assure you that that kind of journalism is NOT what we are about and if we could go back in time and take it out, we surely would.

With 100 items of news in a typical newscast, we will make a mistake once in a blue moon, since we are human, but I don't want to make excuses, I just want to apologize.

In light of the information from the complainant that a CITY-TV producer had been able to locate the news report and respond to her, the CBSC further corresponded with CITY-TV to determine that the broadcast in question had aired on January 25 during the 6:00 pm newscast. With the co-operation of CITY-TV, the CBSC was able to pursue the complaint and provided CITY-TV with a second opportunity to respond. It did so on March 17:

I am writing to address your concerns about one of our news stories as outlined in a complaint made to the CBSC, a copy of which we received on March 7, 2005. As the Vice President of News Programming for CityTV Toronto, I will speak to your concerns and provide more information about the news report in question.

Before I address the specific issues you raise, I want to assure you we take our responsibilities as news people and broadcasters seriously and manage our newsroom in a principled way, with a conviction to protect and not exploit the innocent. We are guided by all Canadian Association of Broadcasters Programming Codes, including the Radio Television News Directors Association *Code of Ethics*.

I regret the way this story was covered. It was not in keeping with our own policy and practices, and was a result of management's failure to appropriately communicate our fundamental values, policies and practices to the story's producer, who is new to our newsroom. As he indicated to you in an earlier letter, the producer on this piece made an error in judgment by including in the news story a segment in which the alleged abuser's son was interviewed.

In answer to your question, our reporter did not seek permission from a parent or guardian to interview the child. It should be noted, however, that we are not required by law to seek parental or guardian approval. However, within the context of this story, I believe we should not have interviewed the boy – either with or without parental/guardian approval. That said, I do want to point out that while our reporter should not have interviewed the boy, she did treat him with gentleness, concern and respect. It should also be noted that the boy's face and body were digitally obscured in our news story, so that his identity was not revealed. I want to be clear that it is our standard practice to treat subjects and sources with decency and respect, protecting their dignity and privacy.

We have consulted with a professional child psychologist regarding your suggestion that we apologize to the child for our error. It is the psychologist's assessment that an apology would be of no benefit to the child, and may even be harmful. You may be assured that the newsroom individuals involved clearly understand the transgression in interviewing the boy at all. You may also be assured that every point you have brought forward has been thoroughly discussed with staff.

Ms. [M], should you wish to speak to me directly about this, please contact me at ###-###-####. Again, I apologize for a rare lapse in judgment by the first-rate professionals in our newsroom. We will take every measure possible to ensure this is the first and last such incident.

The complainant wrote back to the CBSC on March 31:

I have read CHUM Limited's response sent to me March 18th via email from [the Administrator of Business & Regulatory Affairs] on [the Vice President of News'] behalf. His response seems to me sincere and concerned, which in my opinion is half the battle when dealing with the protection of children. I am pleased that a child psychologist was consulted in regard to the issue of retribution to the child involved.

What I do not agree with after seeing the footage is that the reporter treated the child with gentleness, concern and respect. I'm not even convinced that common sense was applied by the reporter in question. By simply covering a child's identity while pushing that child to speak negatively towards their own parent on public broadcast is not gentle, concerned or respectful. Also, [the Vice President of News] says that this was not in following with their policy – wouldn't the producer know this policy? An advertisement promoted the interview specifically for at least one hour before the broadcast in question. Viewers were being asked to stick around to hear the “exclusive” interview. This is a lot of time for management to make a judgment call, wouldn't you agree? Isn't that part of the job of the producer? If in fact, CHUM's policy is to maintain people's dignity, I can assure you, this child in this instant was not left with dignity. This is why I feel it is important for CBSC to view this clip.

Finally, I think another significant issue here is the fact that it is not law or policy to obtain parental permission before interviewing a child for a broadcast. I believe the CBSC should examine this clip and make comment related to standard journalism and broadcast practice along with recommendations as to how to protect the rights of children within the media. We must do what we can to ensure this “mistake” does not happen again in the future in this city or across the country.

Therefore, though I do appreciate all the efforts made by the Producer at CityTV and [the Vice President of News], I feel it is necessary to proceed with the complaint in hopes that the CBSC can enlighten us all about what might have prevented this from happening and how to ensure it never has to happen again to any child but particularly vulnerable and at risk children.

If you would like to speak with me please call (###) ###-#### or work (###) ###-####.

Thank you for your time.