
CONSEIL CANADIEN DES NORMES DE LA RADIODIFFUSION

COMITÉ NATIONAL DES SERVICES SPÉCIALISÉS

Sun News Network concernant *Canada Live* (entrevue avec Margie Gillis)

(Décision du CCNR 10/11-1803+)

Rendue le 15 décembre 2011

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LES FAITS

L'émission d'affaires publiques *Canada Live* est diffusée par le réseau de nouvelles et d'information SUN News. Son animatrice, Krista Erickson, y présente des débats et des discussions sur diverses questions politiques et sur l'actualité. Pendant l'épisode du 1^{er} juin 2011, M^{me} Erickson a interviewé Margie Gillis, une artiste de la danse interprétative, au sujet du financement public des arts (la transcription de l'entrevue se trouve à l'annexe A, en anglais seulement). En guise d'introduction, M^{me} Erickson a dit [traduction] « Attachez vos ceintures mes amis, et préparez-vous pour une émission du tonnerre. » Elle a présenté M^{me} Gillis en mettant en lumière certaines des réalisations de cette danseuse qu'elle a qualifiée de [traductions] « trésor national » et « d'artiste emblématique de la danse interprétative ». On voyait ensuite à l'écran les montants d'argent qui avaient été remis, sous forme de subventions administrées par le gouvernement, à M^{me} Gillis et à sa fondation de danse depuis 1998. Mise au défi par M^{me} Erickson d'expliquer pourquoi les contribuables devraient aider à la financer ainsi que sa fondation, Margie Gillis a fait valoir qu'elle effectue, de concert avec sa fondation, des recherches sur des questions relatives à la créativité qui [traduction] « ont de la valeur pour l'âme » et la collectivité, et a ensuite mentionné certaines de ses réussites à l'échelle nationale et internationale. Elle a enchaîné en disant qu'il s'agissait peut-être de chiffres erronés et qu'en réalité les montants avaient été accordés sur une

période de temps plus longue. M^{me} Gillis a de plus fait remarquer que le domaine des arts a besoin de subventions gouvernementales parce qu'il serait très souvent déficitaire sans cet apport. Elle a également fait valoir que les artistes étaient doués pour maximiser les retombées de sommes même modestes. M^{me} Erickson a exprimé sa position contre le financement public des arts avec vigueur, et parfois les voix des deux femmes se chevauchaient lors de cet entretien. Imitant la gestuelle de la danseuse en agitant ses bras, elle a fait remarquer à M^{me} Gillis que le style d'art de cette dernière n'est pas vraiment à son goût. À un moment donné pendant l'entrevue, M^{me} Gillis a dit que les artistes font des sacrifices dans l'intérêt de leur art. L'animatrice a alors passé un clip dans lequel la danseuse disait qu'elle n'estimait plus vivre dans une société compatissante, sur quoi M^{me} Erickson lui a demandé si elle était d'avis que le Canada n'avait pas fait preuve de suffisamment de compassion en lui remettant d'importantes subventions gouvernementales et en déployant des troupes pour combattre, et même donner leur vie, en Afghanistan. M^{me} Gillis a affirmé que son commentaire ne se rapportait pas du tout à la compassion ou à l'ultime sacrifice des soldats canadiens.

Juste avant la pause publicitaire, M^{me} Erickson a demandé à M^{me} Gillis si elle voulait bien continuer la discussion en ondes, ce qu'elle a accepté de faire. À la reprise de l'émission, Margie Gillis a eu l'occasion de donner des précisions sur les recherches que sa fondation effectue sur la danse dans le domaine du règlement des conflits, cependant l'animatrice a continué à remettre en question les deniers publics dont bénéficie M^{me} Gillis. À la fin de cette entrevue d'un peu plus de 21 minutes, M^{me} Erickson a remercié M^{me} Gillis d'avoir pris le temps de participer à l'émission et lui a dit [traduction] « Nous vous en félicitons ».

Les 6 676 plaintes reçues par le CCNR au sujet de cette émission sont attribuables en grande partie à une campagne organisée sur le réseau social Facebook par des personnes qui étaient d'avis que la façon dont M^{me} Gillis et les arts avaient été traités était injuste. Certains plaignants ont également mentionné que les montants d'argent présentés par Sun News étaient peu fiables. Vu le grand nombre de plaintes, le CCNR n'a permis qu'à un nombre restreint de plaignants de présenter une Demande de décision et six d'entre eux s'en sont prévalus. (Toute la correspondance se rapportant à leurs dossiers se trouve à l'annexe B en anglais seulement).

Dans sa réponse aux plaignants, Sun News a souligné que son mandat consiste à [traduction] « explorer des questions et des enjeux avec audace, sans indulgence et d'une manière qui pousse à la réflexion. » En plus d'avancer qu'elle a le droit de susciter la controverse et d'aborder des sujets litigieux, la station a fait valoir que lors de cette entrevue assez longue Margie Gillis a eu l'occasion de défendre sa position en faveur du financement des arts, et qu'elle l'a fait [traduction] « avec force et clarté. »

LA DÉCISION

Le Comité national des services spécialisés a étudié les plaintes à la lumière des dispositions suivantes du *Code de déontologie* de l'Association canadienne des radiodiffuseurs (ACR) :

Article 6 -- Présentation complète, juste et appropriée

C'est un fait reconnu que la tâche première et fondamentale de chaque radiotélédiffuseur est de présenter des nouvelles, des points de vue, des commentaires ou des textes éditoriaux d'une manière complète, juste et appropriée. Ce principe s'applique à toute la programmation de la radio et de la télévision, qu'il s'agisse des nouvelles, des affaires publiques, d'un magazine, d'une émission-débat, d'une émission téléphonique, d'entrevues ou d'autres formules de radiotélévision dans lesquelles des nouvelles, des points de vue, des commentaires ou des éditoriaux peuvent être exprimés par les employés du radiotélédiffuseur, leurs invités ou leurs interlocuteurs.

Article 7 -- Controverses d'intérêt public

Reconnaissant qu'en démocratie il faut présenter tous les aspects d'un sujet d'intérêt public, il incombe aux radiotélédiffuseurs de traiter avec justesse tous les sujets de nature à susciter la controverse. Avant d'accorder du temps à de tels sujets, on devra tenir compte des autres facteurs qui assurent l'équilibre de la programmation ainsi que du degré d'intérêt que ces questions suscitent dans le public. Reconnaissant que la saine controverse est essentielle au maintien des institutions démocratiques, les radiotélédiffuseurs encourageront la présentation de nouvelles et d'opinions sur des sujets controversés qui comprennent une composante d'intérêt public.

Les membres du Comité décideur ont lu toute la correspondance afférente et ont visionné l'entrevue en cause. Le Comité conclut que l'émission n'a violé ni l'une ni l'autre des dispositions précitées.

Le caractère juste et équilibré de l'entrevue

En ce qui concerne la prétention de la majorité des plaignants que l'animatrice Krista Erickson a foncé sur Margie Gillis et s'est montrée injuste envers elle, le CCNR a expliqué dans des décisions antérieures qu'il est permis aux animateurs d'émissions de discussion d'exprimer leurs opinions, même si elles sont controversées, peu populaires et provocatrices.¹ De plus, les animateurs ont entièrement le droit d'orienter une entrevue à leur gré et de soulever des questions auxquelles la personne interviewée ne s'attend peut-être pas.²

Le Comité national des services spécialisés n'a aucun renseignement lui indiquant si M^{me} Gillis avait été avisée à l'avance que M^{me} Erickson comptait mettre en cause le financement accordé à sa fondation de danse. Quoique Margie Gillis ait semblé quelque peu prise au dépourvu quand l'animatrice a centré la discussion sur des

chiffres précis, elle a pu donner des réponses plus générales qui s'articulaient autour de son point de vue sur la valeur sociale des arts et de son type de danse. Le Comité considère également que l'animatrice se moquait de M^{me} Gillis dans une certaine mesure quand elle a imité le style de danse de cette dernière en agitant ses bras, mais il est d'avis que ces questions tiennent davantage à la courtoisie et à la politesse et n'enfreignent pas le Code. En fait, le CCNR a déjà jugé que les Codes permettent aux animateurs de montrer du parti pris et de l'agressivité quand ils présentent des points de vue et posent des questions aux gens qu'ils interviewent. Ce n'est que lorsque les animateurs ont lancé des insultes personnelles empreintes de méchanceté que le CCNR a conclu à une violation de l'article 6.³ Malgré le fait que M^{me} Erickson ait adopté une attitude mordante, elle n'a pas fait de commentaires personnels méchants à l'endroit de M^{me} Gillis et a même loué les réalisations de la danseuse et lui a dit combien elle appréciait l'occasion de l'interviewer.

Même s'il est vrai que les deux femmes ont parlé en même temps à certains moments, cela n'écarte pas le fait que l'animatrice a accordé suffisamment de temps et d'occasions à M^{me} Gillis pour faire valoir son point de vue pendant les 21 minutes de l'entrevue. Rappelons également que M^{me} Erickson a invité M^{me} Gillis à donner plus de précisions sur le travail de sa fondation dans la deuxième moitié de l'émission, et que cette dernière a clairement « tenu le coup » avec ses réponses habiles et précises aux questions qui lui ont été posées sur un ton agressif par M^{me} Erickson. En outre, Margie Gillis a décidé de continuer l'entrevue après que l'animatrice lui ait donné l'option de terminer l'entretien à la pause publicitaire. Il en résulte que l'équilibre a été assuré; tant le pour que le contre de la question du financement public des arts ont été clairement présentés. Il n'y a donc aucune violation de l'article 7.

Exactitude

Certains plaignants ont mis en doute l'exactitude des montants que M^{me} Erickson a présentés sur les subventions et autres formes de financement accordées à la Fondation de danse Margie Gillis. Si les animateurs d'émissions sont libres d'exprimer leurs opinions sur divers sujets, les faits à l'appui de ces opinions doivent, par contre, s'avérer exacts.⁴ Le Comité note qu'il est possible de trouver, sur le site Web du Conseil des Arts du Canada, le nom des récipiendaires de subventions, la justification de cette subvention, son montant et l'année dans laquelle elle a été accordée. Selon ce site les données présentées à l'écran dans l'émission *Canada Live* étaient exacts. Cependant, l'inclusion du Prix Walter-Carsen à la liste des subventions financées par les contribuables préoccupe quelque peu le Comité, étant donné qu'il s'agit en réalité d'un fonds de dotation mis sur pied par M. Carsen que le Conseil des Arts se charge simplement d'administrer. Malgré cette préoccupation quant à l'exactitude, le Comité

estime que cette erreur mineure n'a pas influé sur l'ensemble de la discussion entre M^{mes} Erickson et Gillis et qu'il n'y a donc aucune violation de l'article 6 à cet égard.

Réceptivité du télédiffuseur

Dans toutes les décisions rendues par le CCNR, ses comités évaluent la mesure dans laquelle le radiodiffuseur s'est montré réceptif envers le(s) plaignant(s). Bien que le radiodiffuseur ne soit certes pas obligé de partager l'opinion du plaignant, sa réponse doit être courtoise, bien réfléchie et complète. Dans la présente affaire, le réseau Sun News a donné une longue réponse très détaillée aux plaignants et leur a expliqué sa position quant à l'entrevue. De toute évidence, le réseau a respecté son obligation de se montrer réceptif. Par conséquent, rien de plus n'est exigé de sa part dans ce cas-ci.

La présente décision devient un document public dès sa publication par le Conseil canadien des normes de la radiotélévision. La station à l'égard de laquelle la plainte a été formulée est libre de la rapporter, de l'annoncer ou de la lire sur les ondes. Cependant, là où la décision est favorable à la station, comme c'est le cas dans la présente affaire, celle-ci n'est pas obligée d'annoncer le résultat.

¹ CTV concernant un épisode de *The Shirley Show* (Décision du CCNR 93/94-0261, rendue le 18 août 1995); CFUN-AM concernant le *Pia Shandel Show (Revendications territoriales des Amérindiens)* (Décision du CCNR 98/99-0147, rendue le 14 octobre 1999); CKTB-AM concernant le *John Michael Show (Commentaire sur le Moyen-Orient)* (Décision du CCNR 01/02-0651, rendue le 7 juin 2002); CKNW-AM concernant un épisode de *Reality Check par Bruce Allen* (Décision du CCNR 05/06-0651, rendue le 9 mai 2006)

² CJMF-FM concernant une entrevue dans le cadre de *Bouchard en parle* (Décision du CCNR 04/05-1852, rendue le 3 février 2006)

³ CHOI-FM concernant *Le monde parallèle de Jeff Fillion* (Décision du CCNR 02/03-0115, rendue le 17 juillet 2003); CJRC-AM concernant une entrevue par Daniel Séguin dans le cadre de *L'Outaouais ce matin* (Décision du CCNR 03/04-2082 et 04/05-0023, rendue le 4 avril 2005); CJMF-FM concernant une entrevue dans le cadre de *Bouchard en parle* (Décision du CCNR 04/05-1852, rendue le 3 février 2006); CHMP-FM concernant une séquence dans le cadre de *Le Journal du midi* (Décision du CCNR 07/08-0553, rendue le 7 avril 2008)

⁴ CKTB-AM concernant l'émission de *John Michael* (Décision du CCNR 92/93-0170, rendue le 15 février 1994); CILQ-FM concernant *John Derringer's « Tool of the Day »* (Décision du CCNR 02/03-1465, rendue le 10 février 2004); CFRA-AM concernant un épisode du *Lowell Green Show (le Coran)* (Décision du CCNR 05/06-1380, rendue le 18 mai 2006); CHRB-AM (AM 1140) concernant un épisode de *Freedom*

Radio Network (Décision du CCNR 05/06-1959, rendue le 9 janvier 2007); *CITS-TV concernant Word.ca et Word TV* (Décision du CCNR 08/09-2142 et 09/10-0383+, rendue le 22 juin 2010); *CHOI-FM concernant Dupont le midi (organismes communautaires)* (Décision du CCNR 08/09-1506, rendue le 23 septembre 2010); *CITS-TV concernant Word TV* (Décision du CCNR 10/11-0068, rendue le 5 avril 2011)

APPENDIX A

CBCS Decision 10/11-1803+ Sun News Network re *Canada Live* (Margie Gillis interview)

Canada Live is a public affairs program with political discussion/debate segments hosted by Krista Erickson. On the broadcast of June 1, 2011, Erickson interviewed Canadian interpretive dancer Margie Gillis. The following is a transcript and description of the interview.

Erickson: Friends, buckle up and get ready for some great TV. My next guest is the inspiration behind our examination of funding to the arts. She hails from la belle province and was only three years old when she discovered her passion for dance, a passion she would devote her life to. In 1979 she introduced modern dance to China after the Cultural Revolution. In 1988 she was the first modern dancer to be honoured with the prestigious Order of Canada and, of course, as we all know, she was named a 2011 Laureate of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards for Lifetime Artistic Achievement. She has earned rave reviews in Asia, Europe and the Middle East. She's worked with the greatest dancers and artists of her time. She is, according to her contemporaries in the arts community, a national treasure, friends. Ladies and gentlemen, the iconic interpretive dancer, Margie Gillis joins us from Montreal. Very nice to see you, Ms. Gillis. And let me offer my congratulations to you on being the recipient of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards. Uh, I did have the privilege of attending. I'm not sure I will ever be invited back, but I know, I know it's a big deal. It's a very prestigious, uh, recognition in the arts community. And we offer you our congratulations to you for receiving it. As well, I would like to say, uh, that we have made several requests for interviews with a number of different people in the arts community, for instance, the National Film Board, uh, FACTOR out in Vancouver, which recently doled out a controversial grant. A lot of people declined to appear on the program. You have not. I want to thank you for that and I salute you for that.

Gillis: Well, I'm happy to speak about the arts at any time. I love my work and I love my community and I think it's an, er, extremely important part of our society, of course I do.

Erickson: All right. We'll talk about that. I know you love what you do. I sense your passion when I see it in the video. Uh, it might be a little early to throw up the video just yet. But the first question I want to ask you is, um, what is the sum total of grants and public money that you have received throughout the course of your career, either you personally or the Margie Gillis Dance, uh, Foundation? Uh, what is the sum total of public money that you've received?

Gillis: I don't know. Um, all our money is, is totally open for disclosure and you can find that on the web. It's, uh, we're audited every year. Um, I don't know. I think it's, uh, I've been very lucky with my funding from both Quebec and from Canada and I'm very grateful for it.

Erickson: I'm sure you are. "Lucky" is certainly a, an interesting word to use. Uh, we actually have had an opportunity to add up some of those grants. Before we put them on the screen, uh, I do want to, if I could, explain to our friends at home what the Foundation is all about. Uh, correct me if I'm wrong here, but I did pull this off of your website. It appears to be a mission statement. If we could pull up that graphic [words appear on screen as

Erickson reads]. Uh, the Margie Gillis Dance Foundation, uh, is committed to “research, reflection and the study of the human adventure through artistic expression – through teaching and through creating –” uh, which “are essential endeavours for the sane evolution of our society and our collective well-being.” Okay, so that’s what the Margie Gillis Dance Foundation is all about. Now, let’s get to the amount the Margie Gillis Dance Foundation has received in money from taxpayers over the years. Friends, it goes back to 1980, er, 1998. Uh, the grants are for a variety of things, such as creation and production in dance. Uh, there’re touring grants. There are operating grants. There are travel grants. Uh, we’ve got them scrolling on a screen. I can’t go through them individually because, quite frankly, it is too long of a list. Um, and the total amount of grants that I can discern, that you have received either personally or your dance, uh, group is one million two, uh, it’s essentially one point two million dollars. Okay?

[Table of numbers scrolling on screen:

Fiscal Year	Grant	Why
2009	\$105,000	Creation/Production in dance
2008	\$105,000	Creation/Production in dance
2008	\$20,000	Dance touring grants
2007	\$90,000	Creation/Production in dance
2007	\$1,145	Market development travel
2007	\$20,000	Dance touring grants
2007	\$13,200	Supplementary operating funds
2006	\$1,000	International marketing
2006	\$90,000	Creation/Production in dance
2006	\$9,900	Flying dance squad
2006	\$8,800	Supplementary operating funds
2005	\$90,000	Creation/Production in dance
2004	\$90,000	Creation/Production in dance
2004	\$6,400	Flying dance squad
2004	\$500	Travel grants
2004	\$2,200	New audience and market development
2003	\$85,000	Creation/Production in dance
2002	\$85,000	Creation/Production in dance
2001	\$85,000	Creation/Production in dance
2000	\$77,000	Creation/Production in dance
1999	\$77,000	Creation/Production in dance
1999	\$500	Travel grants
1998	\$77,000	Creation/Production in dance
1998	\$285	Travel assistance

Sub Total: \$1,139,930.00

Additional Grants:

Fiscal Year	Grant	Why
2001	\$60,000	Career grant from Quebec government
2008	\$50,000	Walter Carsen prize for excellence in performing arts

Sub Total: \$110,000

Grand Total: \$1,249,930]

Erickson: So why is the price tag for research, reflection and the study of human adventure, uh, through interpretive dance costing taxpayers 1.2 million dollars a year, Ms. Gillis?

Gillis: Oh no, it's not costing 1.2 million dollars a year!

Erickson: Oh, excuse me, not a year.

Gillis: Excuse me. I –

Erickson: 1.2 million dollars over the course of the last 13 years. For you.

Gillis: No, no, no. I think it's, I think it's a little, uh, little longer than that. I've been performing solo dance for, uh, gosh, well, uh, 39 years now. And I've danced all over the world. I've acted as an ambassador. I've done, um, my very best for Canada, for my country, uh, for my community internationally and locally, as well as for, for the community at large. And, yes, I think these are important things to research. I think they are important things to understand and to touch people lives and to change minds. Um, I think that the amount is a little askew. It doesn't all go to me. It certainly goes to, uh, people that work in the field, other artists whom I've collaborated with. Um, there's a number of, of different areas. You'll find that the arts, uh, are very good at actually using small amounts of money and making it go a very, very long distance.

Erickson: Okay. But –

Gillis: I'd also, would just like to point out that, um, in, in dance, internationally, a solo dancer usually has a career of five years. I've been able to sustain that for, uh, for 39 years.

Erickson: Okay.

Gillis: That's, that's, uh, a pretty remarkable accomplishment.

Erickson: It's, it's a wonderful accomplishment –

Gillis: And I don't think the, I –

Erickson: But I still don't get why the one point two, tell me something.

Gillis: Sure.

Erickson: Okay. And, you know, I'll be frank with you, this is not my cup of tea. And I don't think it's the cup of tea of, uh, for a lot of people. But this whole thing, [moves her hands around in waves to imitate Gillis' style of dance] why does that cost 1.2 million dollars over 13 years?

Gillis: I don't think that that would be over 13 years. I think that you've, I –

Erickson: Why does it cost 1.2 million dollars over whatever the term is?

Gillis: [giggles nervously] I think it would be over something closer to 35 years, 30 years and that has to do with a lot of salaries for a lot of different artists, not just for myself. For the lighting designer, for the company, touring, performing, teaching –

Erickson: Okay.

- Gillis: Often the, often –
- Erickson: I'm going to challenge you on the grants because these, these numbers are available online, as you've pointed out.
- Gillis: Yes, they are. Yes, they are.
- Erickson: They're available.
- Gillis: Yes.
- Erickson: And it's the Canada Arts Council that has been providing these grants to you.
- Gillis: And, and Quebec.
- Erickson: Since 199-
- Gillis: And the Province of Quebec –
- Erickson: One –
- Gillis: And the City of Montreal.
- Erickson: – one 60 thousand dollar grant from the Province of Quebec. But these other grants that I have enumerated today, uh, started out, you started to receive them in 1998. Or your dance foundation did.
- Gillis: Yes.
- Erickson: Uh, and that's where the math comes from and we stand behind it. The point that I want to make –
- Gillis: Ninety-eight. No, no, no.
- Erickson: – is that this not –
- Gillis: It should've been earlier than that –
- Erickson: Well –
- Gillis: – that I've been receiving funding from earlier than that.
- Erickson: Well, then you need to take that up with the Canada Arts Council because they're disseminating inaccurate information about the way tax dollars are being spent.
- Gillis: Oh, I do not think that the Canada Council –
- Erickson: Well, I do want to make this point –
- Gillis: – would disseminate inaccurate information.
- Erickson: We're not talking about, Ms., Ms. Gillis –
- Gillis: These are people –

- Erickson: – if I may? Ms. Gillis, if I may?
- Gillis: – that care deeply, deeply about the arts –
- Erickson: We're not talking, Ms. Gillis, this is not serving anyone's purpose.
- Gillis: Deeply about society.
- Erickson: Okay? No one can hear what you're saying and they're not hearing what I can say –
- Gillis: Well –
- Erickson: We've got to go at this one at a time. I've given you your due.
- Gillis: Well, then, so, I'm your guest. Perhaps you might let me speak?
- Erickson: You are, but I've given you your due [Gillis giggles nervously] and I need to ask the questions. Now, this is not a one-off grant.
- Gillis: D-, artists and dancers care deeply about society and sacrifice –
- Erickson: Ms. Gillis, this isn't productive.
- Gillis: – entirely and give themselves to the arts.
- Erickson: Ms. Gillis.
- Gillis: – so I would think that you would want to treat us with a little bit of respect and understand the sacrifice –
- Erickson: We, we –
- Gillis: – that many artists make. Uh, the amount of money –
- Erickson: What sort of sacrifices?
- Gillis: – that the arts community, the amount of money that the arts community makes is very, very little. If you look at my salary over the course of this time in comparison, as the top dancer or one of the top dancers in Canada, if you look at that in comparison to the salary of anybody who is at the top their field in other endeavors-, yours, I think you would find that, uh, that the numbers don't exactly –
- Erickson: What endeavours do you think are comparable?
- Gillis: – uh, uh, don't exactly, uh, mix up. I think you're askewing [sic] your numbers and I think that you're, um, –
- Erickson: Well, if I'm looking at salaries –
- Gillis: – not looking at, not looking at the people that are –
- Erickson: – those people are not being subsidized by the taxpayers, okay! So if they have higher salaries, they have –

- Gillis: And do you know what?
- Erickson: – they have higher salaries –
- Gillis: But I, do you want to know what is done –
- Erickson: – because private industry is paying them higher salaries!
- Gillis: Do you want to know what is done that money? The subsidizing of that money? Tours and performances around the world were accomplished.
- Erickson: Oh yes, we've heard all about the creative economy. And I do want to ask you –
- Gillis: Yes, the creative –
- Erickson: – about your contribution to the creative economy.
- Gillis: Well, I've done my –
- Erickson: Well, the Conference Board of Canada has talked about the creative economy being worth –
- Gillis: Oh my gosh.
- Erickson: – something like 40 billion dollars to the economy.
- Gillis: [putting hands to her face in shock] I, I find this astonishing. I find this absolutely astonishing.
- Erickson: Not nearly as astonishing as we do, I assure you.
- Gillis: That you would belittle, that you would belittle a sector, a sector of our community that sacrifices for the good of the collective. I really find this quite astonishing.
- Erickson: Well –
- Gillis: I'm really, truly, um, shocked.
- Erickson: I, I'm happy to talk about sacrifices actually.
- Gillis: Yeah.
- Erickson: Because I think it ties in with a comment that you made that some of us here find particularly objectionable. There was a comment that you made at the performing arts gala. Uh, control room, could we put that up please and roll that clip?
- [clip of Margie Gillis performing. She is sitting with her eyes closed and moving her hands in a fluid motion. Voice-over narration of Gillis: We were, I thought, a compassionate society. I don't think that way anymore. Now we're good at masking things. We're good at not taking responsibility now. This is deeply sad to me.]
- Erickson: All right. We're not a compassionate society anymore.

Gillis: Um, I find that, I find that –

Erickson: Were we not compassionate in, were we not compassionate –

Gillis: Would you like to know why I'm –

Erickson: – in 2008, uh, when we gave you 50 thousand dollars, uh, a personal grant that you received, the Walter Carsen prize. And were we not compassionate, let's just say, in the fiscal year of 2009, uh, when taxpayers gave you and your Foundation a grant for 105,000 dollars and, again, that only represents a small portion of the money that you have received from taxpayers –

Gillis: I'm not speaking selfishly here.

Erickson: – over the course of your career.

Gillis: I'm not speaking selfishly here.

Erickson: So what is it about Canadians that they're lacking compassion, exactly? One point two million dollars isn't enough compassion for you?!

Gillis: No, it's not about me. It's about our society as a whole and what we give our attention to. And, indeed, what you're doing is you're belittling my community. You're belittling a community that, myself and a community that sacrifice a great deal and give a great deal for the common good. And I think that is an example of how our society has become less compassionate. I, I would not, we need people in a lot of, uh, different areas, reflecting and looking at the possibilities that, for the human spirit, what we can do, what we can accomplish. Creative thought, ways of, of reducing conflict around the world. Humanitarian, what I'm speaking about in those terms is basically more in the, the humanitarian, um, activities.

Erickson: Well, let's talk about some of those –

Gillis: How we view ourselves as a –

Erickson: – humanitarian activities.

Gillis: How we view ourselves as a –

Erickson: And some of those sacrifices.

Gillis: – as a country or a population that –

Erickson: I have raised this on this program before. I personally take exception, and I know some of my colleagues do as well, to your assertion that we are lacking in compassion when we have lost more than one hundred and fifty soldiers who have served in Afghanistan. Who have put their lives on the line. And, and, you know, which is, frankly, quite a serious business –

Gillis: But I'm not sp-, that is part of the compassion I am saying –

Erickson: Okay? Compared with people who are dancing on a stage. I mean, I just don't get where you get off suggesting that we are lacking in compassion. And you just said you were talking about humanitarian activity.

Gillis: I am not belittling the sacrifice of other people. But nor do I think you should belittle the sacrifice of my community. I, I would not belittle the sacrifice, someone gives their life for, for, for their country. Their lives for a cause. I would never, ever –

Erickson: Okay, if you think that we're belittling your community, then tell me this: uh, why can't you do this without a leg up from taxpayers?

Gillis: Uh, because the arts aren't, uh, it's just not profitable. It's, it's, it's –

Erickson: Well, then, –

Gillis: It's something that's done –

Erickson: Why should taxpayers be in the business of subsidizing something that's not profitable?

Gillis: Precisely.

Erickson: Shouldn't, shouldn't there be market forces here at play?

Gillis: It's because it has value for the soul. It has value for the soul. And it has long-term ramifications. My community takes a small amount of money and makes it work for a lot, a lot of, um, there's a lot ripple effect. If you look at how we've dealt with things and how we've dealt with the reductions that we've had, you'll see that it's a community that really cares deeply, that gives itself and sacrifices a lot to uphold ideas of creation, possibility, health. We, uh, research endeavours of all different types that are, that are tied in. And, um, I, I think it's very sad that you would belittle us. And certainly that you would compare us to soldiers who have given their lives is not even, this isn't, these are –

Erickson: Well, why not?

Gillis: That is not even questionable. Those people are way –

Erickson: You're the one that raised sacrifices. That's the ultimate sacrifice.

Gillis: Those are, those are the people, that is the ultimate sacrifice.

Erickson: And, I'm sorry, given that those people have made those sacrifices –

Gillis: Yes!

Erickson: I don't think that you can say that we are –

Gillis: I'm talking about, I didn't say –

Erickson: – in our society, lacking in compassion.

Gillis: No, I did not say that we are, that *they* are lacking in compassion. I think that our society has changed and ceases to put forward, um, as much of a moral, uh, caring, functioning, uh, concern about the well-being of its weak, the well-being of, uh, the spirit, the well-being of the intellect. Um, there are aspects that are just not being tended to as a society. And we talk a lot about our economy and how much money we are making rather than how much we are giving, how much we are putting forward. And certainly I am not saying that those people who sacrifice their lives for our country are anything less than absolute heroes. And I am utterly and completely grateful for their sacrifice. I'm also grateful

for the sacrifice of other people. And I also think we have a responsibility to be kind and just and think compassionately about those who have less than we do.

Erickson: Okay, uh, Ms. Gillis, are you prepared to stick around because we do want to, of course, uh, give you your moment in the sun. [Gillis chuckles] You've certainly earned it. Um, will you stick around?

Gillis: Well, of course I will.

Erickson: Thank you, Ms. Gillis. She is graceful on stage and on TV, friends. Much more with Margie Gillis, the iconic interpretive dancer when we come back.

[commercial break]

Erickson: Welcome back, friends, and we are back with Margie Gillis. She is the iconic interpretive dancer, uh, who hails from Quebec who has been somewhat of an inspiration to, uh, to some of us here at the Sun News Network, uh, when we attended the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards, uh, and decided that we wanted to embark on a journey ourselves of exploration of, uh, funding to the arts. She's been a wonderful sport to join us, uh, and we've had a combative interview, but we appreciate her passion, both in the interview, uh, and on the stage. Uh, Ms. Gillis, before we give you your moment in the sun, I do want to, uh, chat with you about an interview that we recently conducted with the Minister of Heritage, James Moore. An equally combative interview. Uh, and we were straight with him. We put on the video, uh, that was shown, uh, at the Performing Arts Gala. I don't know if we have that video available of Ms. Gillis performing, if we can put it up now. And we said to the Minister, uh, look, some of us here are having trouble relating to this art form. [video of Gillis performing, eyes closed, moving hands and feet in fluid motions] Uh, and we don't understand why Canadians are paying for it. And his response to me was, "look, it might not be my cup of tea, it might not be your cup of tea, uh, but I better not get into the business of deciding what is art and what isn't because that is tantamount, uh, to censorship." And my point is, well, isn't the government already engaging in censorship and indeed deciding what art is, uh, by funding organizations like yours and providing, uh, as yours had received, more than a million dollars in grants. Uh, is the government not already engaged in censorship here when it makes these kinds of funding calls?

Gillis: Uh, no, because they actually don't make those funding decisions. The Canada Council received money from the government to support, um, the arts, which are the soul of a community, and that money, um, is then decided upon by a peer group. So it's not decided politically. There's no political agenda here. It's decided, uh, by a peer group. It's separate –

Erickson: By a peer group of cultural elites, right?

Gillis: Uh, no, not cultural elites. It's, uh, a peer group. It's, it's, the attempt is to make it, uh, democratic. I'd also like to point out that the average, uh, the average income for a dancer is closer to 12 thousand dollars a year. And I really think that these people are researching and understanding what is possible for the human body, the health of the human body. And, while sport is involved in how big, how high, how fast, dance and, uh, other artistic adve-, uh, adventures are discovering nuances, quality of life, ideas, how we transform, how we shift from A to B to C. And, yes, there is a certain amount of elitism, but if you look at, at, uh, say, doctors. We all care about health. I'm a health nut myself. But we need people who are advancing and looking further than I would under-, I would understand myself if a physician or a surgeon started talking about things they're researching, I don't always understand it. But I do understand that those people are researching things for my betterment and for the betterment of society. And I think that there are many areas of

expertise that we are funding as a collective, as a society so that they can bring to, to our community and to the international community ideas that are going to improve the quality of our lives. Dance, the body, health, the creative mind, these are all issues that are dealt with, with, uh, by dancers. And I think these are of great, great value for our, our community.

Erickson: All –

Gillis: Otherwise I would not sacrifice my life to such a thing.

Erickson: All right. It is time for your moment in the sun, Ms. Gillis. Um, so you facilitate workshops on something called “conflict transformation”.

Gillis: Yes.

Erickson: Uh, this concept is as foreign to me, I confess, as your particular art form. So please, uh, enlighten me, will you, because, you know, I’m just a cultural philistine here. Uh, so what, what is this all about?

Gillis: Um, I actually, uh, I have a love and a passion, uh, for looking at conflict and trying to tease it out and change it. [photograph on screen of group of men and women, including Gillis, sitting in grassy meadow with mountains in background] Um, I’m interested in things, like, very simply, world peace. And, um, recently I was, uh, in Switzerland and working with people who were, who do conflict resolution from all over the world [photograph of Gillis and others in a dance studio, lying on floor stretching, etc.] So, diplomats, people who are engaged in trying to, um, uh, get people who are in conflict to resolve or to transform the conflict and come to a better place. Often when we think of a problem, we can’t make it happen. We know what the solution should be, but we can’t make the transformation. If we can make the transformation with a global intelligence, in other words, intelli-, intelligence is also physical, spiritual, uh, certainly intellectual, but a, a, an experiential, uh, transformation, then we’re able to, uh, change the plasticity in the mind. And the mind can then hunter-gatherer, if you will, for solution. So, I’ve been working with, uh, some very elite people who work in conflict transformation, such as the, the, uh, Irish, Irish, uh, uh, conflict, the religious conflicts. Uh, people who work in family conflict, people who work, um, in different, various forms of conflict around the world. Some in, uh, the escalation of conflict, some in conflict in crisis and some in reconciliation. And we’re looking at ways to, um, tease out these problems experientially so that the, the mind will then, um, grow new plasticities, new ways for people to then create solutions to their own problems. So it’s very exciting. I mean, if you feel that you can make a difference in the world, how exciting and wonderful is that? So, it’s, it’s a real passion of mine.

Erickson: Ms. Gillis, uh, as, as you well know, uh, after our chat this afternoon, I don’t quite get the interpretive dance thing. I don’t understand high-falutin concepts like plasticity and the hunterer[sic]-gatherer, uh, mind exploration thing. Uh, but, as I say, um, and I also don’t understand why taxpayers are paying for that. But I do very much appreciate –

Gillis: Um –

Erickson: – you taking time out of your schedule, uh, to appear on the program and to defend your values and to defend the work that you do.

Gillis: I hones –

Erickson: And we salute you for that.

Gillis: Thank you. I honestly think that if you could come up with the solution for world peace or something that would help, you would want that, whether you understand my languaging or lot, or not.

Erickson: Okay.

Gillis: I think you would want that, as would I.

Erickson: We're working on it, but we're not going to take money from the taxpayers to come up with it. Thank you, Ms. Gillis, and we wish you all the best.

Gillis: Oh, how strange.

Erickson: She is Margie Gillis, an interpretive and iconic dancer.

APPENDIX B

CBSC Decision 10/11-1803+ Sun News Network re *Canada Live* (Margie Gillis interview)

The Complaints

The CBSC received a total of 6,676 complaints about this broadcast in both English and French from across the country. Some of the initial complainants were provided with an opportunity to request a CBSC ruling, but then due to the large number of complaints, the CBSC stopped providing that opportunity and simply agree to adjudicate the matter. Of the people who were provided with the opportunity to request a ruling, 6 individuals did so. The correspondence related to those files is reproduced below.

File 10/11-1803

The CBSC received the following complaint on June 8:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to complain about the treatment dancer and choreographer Margie Gillis received on the *Canada Live* show aired on June 1st, 2011. Krista Erickson, anchorwoman for the Sun News Network, set about not only to publicly insult and humiliate one of Canada's most respected and admired artists on that occasion, but to make a political statement through her attack. Surely regulations must exist to prevent the media from taking such an aggressive and politically biased stance on prime-time TV?

Thank you for your attention.

The CBSC wrote back to the complainant, explaining that it needed the time of broadcast in order to pursue the complaint. The complainant wrote back with that information on June 9:

Many thanks for your reply. I saw the interview as part of *Canada Live* with Krista Erickson on June 1st, 2011 between 3pm and 5pm ET.

File 10/11-1805

The CBSC received the following complaint on June 8:

Dear Complaints Committee,

I am writing to complain about the methods used by Sun News to get an internationally renowned Canadian artist, and the most medaled artist in Canada, to interview. It is nothing short of entrapment and shows the very lack of compassion that Ms. Gillis referred to in her Governor General Award-filmed interview. Sun News Network is not news at all. It preys on unfamiliar and unsuspecting person of interests and uses the most crass and disrespectful

form of sensational journalism that reflects the least compassionate sector of our society. Sun News Network does is not worthy of a licence if its purpose is to carry out its business in this way. It is unacceptable treatment of anyone including an artist of this calibre. It was a public smear plot which reflected the personal opinion of this interviewer as well as her employer, Sun News Network. It was a disservice to our society and a horrendous attack on a graceful, unassuming artist who has indeed sacrificed throughout her life to hold and share a place for beauty in this world. The sacrifice begins by realizing that to create such beauty and inspiration in the world one will live at the economic margins of society for most of their lives. Krista Erickson failed to do any advance math which would point to how meager the grant values she brought up amount to and Ms. Gillis was not given a moment to grasp what was actually happening and then reply. Erickson's interview was a full-on and relentless attack. It was humiliating for me to witness and particularly because I am a tax-paying Canadian whose taxes support corporate tax cuts as well as arts funding. I am also an artist.

Everyone is entitled to their [*sic*] opinion, however, a minimum standard of ethics should prevail at all times in order for a tv station to deserve its licence. No station should enjoy a licence to misrepresent their intentions to their guests and publicly harass them with the clear intention of public embarrassment and humiliation.

I ask you to remove Sun TV from basic cable programming until it can demonstrate respect to its guests and its audience.

I look forward to your treating this matter with the seriousness it deserves.

Thank you.

The CBSC wrote back to the complainant, explaining that it needed the date and time of broadcast in order to pursue the complaint. The complainant wrote back with that information on June 9:

Thank you, [CBSC], for your email and your actions on this matter. I saw this interview on June 1 at 11:38 pm on the Sun News Network website. The live interview *Canada Live with Krista Erickson* aired on Sun News on June 1, 2011, at 4:15 pm Eastern Time and is shown in Nanaimo on channel 177 (Shaw TV).

I would like to add to my initial complaint the outrageous leap in logic with a tendentious comparison between Margie's expression of a general lack of compassion in society with the death of a soldier in Afghanistan.

Given that Sun TV (in Nanaimo at least) is a pick-and-pay channel, yet still has the capacity to make their programming available on their public website, my request, to be more specific for CBSC, would be that the Sun News licence be revoked.

Please let me know if there is any other information required or any concerns otherwise.

I look forward to hearing the results of the CBSC inquiry into this matter.

Thank you, again.

File 10/11-1900

The CBSC received the following complaint on June 8:

To Whom It May Concern:

I wish to register a complaint concerning a segment aired on Sun TV's *Canada Live* program (June 1, 2011) titled "A Lack of Compassion?". In this segment, host Krista Erickson interviews dancer and Governor General laureate Margie Gillis. What ensues during this interview is in direct violation of the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council's *Code of Ethics*, but especially Clauses 5 (News) and 6 (Full, Fair and Proper Presentation). Miss Erickson can hardly be said to interview Margie Gillis, as she basically uses the segment to air a virulently anti-arts tirade in which figures are skewed, facts distorted, and an emotional, almost-irrational bias against any form of publicly-funded culture forwarded. She barely lets her guest respond to any of the questions she poses, which are not actually questions but points in a narrow, ideologically driven agenda.

Sun TV is a member of CBSC and has agreed to adhere to a *Code of Ethics* in which "news shall not be selected for the purpose of furthering or hindering either side of any controversial public issue, nor shall it be formulated on the basis of the beliefs, opinions or desires of management, the editor or others engaged in its preparation or delivery," and in which "the full, fair and proper presentation of news, opinion, comment and editorial is the prime and fundamental responsibility of each broadcaster." I urge you to take action against Sun TV for breaching this Code in the most flagrant way possible.

Thank you.

File 10/11-1911

The CBSC received the following complaint on June 8 via its webform:

station:	Sun News Media
program:	Krista Erickson (Prime time: " A lack of compassion?" interview)
date:	June 1 st , 2011
time:	17:30
concern:	The use of extreme political propaganda and misrepresentation in the media.

File 10/11-1921

The CBSC received the following complaint on June 8:

I was outraged to see Krista Erickson's disrespectful attack on Governor General-award recipient Margie Gillis. This wasn't an interview, this was a combative attack led by a biased ideology.

According to the CBSC's code clause 6 "The fundamental purpose of news dissemination in a democracy is to enable people to know what is happening, and to understand events so that they may form their own conclusions." At one point Ms. Gillis wasn't even able to talk because of Ms. Erickson's yelling over her guest. As Ms. Gillis pointed out, she was being interviewed as Ms. Erickson's guest and she should be allowed to talk.

I believe that Krista Erickson's "interview" was in violation of the *CAB Code of Ethics*.

The CBSC wrote back to the complainant, explaining that it needed the date and time of broadcast in order to pursue the complaint. The complainant wrote back with that information on June 15:

Thank you for your reply.

The interview I am referring to was entitled "A Lack of Compassion?" which aired June 1, 2011 at 5:30.

File 10/11-1965

The CBSC received the following complaint on June 8:

I wish to register a complaint about the piece by Krista Erickson, anchorwoman for the Sun News Network, which aired on June 1, 2011 on the network's *Canada Live* show. Ms. Erickson interviewed the distinguished dancer-choreographer, Margie Gillis, in an inappropriate and highly unethical manner. Ms. Gillis had just received a Governor General's Performing Arts Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement. For more than three decades, she has served not only as an artist but a cultural ambassador for Canada.

The clip that accompanied the interview trivialized and misrepresented Ms. Gillis' work in several ways. It was extremely brief; it was presented out of context; it was manipulated and distorted -- altered by slow-motion and extreme closeup, and set up by Ms. Erickson's hand-waving mockery. Given the way it was presented, I have to wonder whether Ms. Erickson's rude remarks were based on this single, distorted fragment, or on actual viewing of the entire piece. And since her commentary denigrated not just this one piece, but virtually all of Margie Gillis' works, and all of contemporary dance, I wonder precisely how many contemporary danceworks Ms. Erickson has seen, before passing such damaging and gratuitous judgment.

As I wrote in my book, *Media Ethics and Social Change* (Edinburgh University Press and Routledge, NY, 2004, nominated for the Clifford Christians Ethics Award), it is not required that a journalist like or even appreciate an artist or her/his work. What is required is the basic respect for the people s/he interviews and depicts. "Journalism is ethical to the extent that it tells as much truth as possible ... and includes a range of observation that provides a context for the 'factual' information reported about people and events." I quoted an account by the singer Frances Somerville of a review published in a major magazine that praised her CBC Radio performance of a Bach aria. The only problem -- she was ill and had to cancel the broadcast. She said the music critic's praise of her performance 'would have thrilled me if I had sung the recital'.

I wrote, "I think we can agree that here is a moral absolute. No one should review a performance he or she has not attended!"

In 2004, I thought such things were relics of the journalistic past. But Krista Erickson has done essentially the same thing -- she evaluated a body of work that she could not possibly have seen. Even if she did see all of this particular Margie Gillis work, she most surely has not seen all of the works she derided in the broadcast.

The broadcast was unethical and insulting to the interviewee; the Governor General's Award nominators, judges and presenters; Canada's arts community; and the viewing public. I ask that you formally censure Krista Erickson, those with editorial responsibility for *Canada Live*, and Sun News Network.

Broadcaster Response

The CBSC did not oblige Sun News Network to respond to all complainants, only those who had filed their complaints before the CBSC posted its website message on June 24. To those complainants, Sun News sent the following letter on August 12:

I am writing in response to your complaint concerning Krista Erickson's interview with Margie Gillis, which was broadcast on Sun News on June 1, 2011.

Given the large number of complaints, we have chosen to provide a common response that addresses the main points made by those who took issue with the interview.

It is part of the mandate of Sun News to explore topics and issues that have not been fully explored in other media, including other broadcasters. It is also part of the mandate of Sun News to explore such topics and issues in a thought-provoking, fearless and hard-hitting way. We pride ourselves on this mandate.

One such issue is government funding for artists and for the arts in general. Sun News understands there are many people in Canada who strongly believe that government should fund the arts. There are many others who believe just as strongly that it should not, or who question what the justification might be for doing so. The very fact that there are strong differences of opinion underscores the importance of exploring the issue in a sustained and critical way.

Krista Erickson's interview with Ms. Gillis was part of Sun News's efforts to do so. Ms. Gillis is a member of the Canadian arts community. She is also a long-time recipient of government assistance to artists. In addition, at the time of her interview on Sun News, she had recently made a controversial, political statement on the need for further funding at the Governor General's Arts Awards. That made her an ideal interviewee for a segment on arts funding. Sun News thanks Ms. Gillis for agreeing to appear on the network to address this issue. It is important that different opinions be heard on Sun News.

The interview with Ms. Gillis ran for approximately 21 minutes. It was far from a "drive-by" that dealt with the issue in a brief and unsatisfactory fashion. Sun News suggests that the time devoted to a one-on-one discussion of this topic is a rarity in Canadian television journalism.

The interview gave Ms. Erickson the opportunity to question Ms. Gillis in great detail on her views on arts funding and push her aggressively to respond to the arguments made by those who do not support arts funding, nor see a justification for the substantial amount of funding Ms. Gillis herself has received. Ms. Erickson's interview gave Ms. Gillis a lengthy and equal opportunity to set out her views on the subject. And Ms. Gillis did so, forcefully and articulately.

Numerous complaints to the CBSC accused Ms. Erickson of in some way attacking Ms. Gillis. These statements do not do justice to Ms. Gillis. They minimize and downplay the tenacity with which she presented the other side of the debate.

The interview was more than just a polite and mild-mannered interview of the sort that is unfortunately all too common in Canadian broadcasting. It was a debate. Ms. Erickson did not simply accept Ms. Gillis's answers and move on to the next question. She took issue with Ms. Gillis's answers. She probed further. She raised analogous or related issues. This is

what viewers of Sun News expect. And Ms. Gillis held up her side of the debate ably and forcefully.

Sun News proudly stands by Ms. Erickson, who effectively carried out what Sun News considers to be the responsibility of an interviewer addressing a controversial topic. Sun News believes that the measure of good journalism includes challenging the point of view of the interviewee -- but also giving the interviewee the opportunity to respond and, in turn, to challenge the point of view being presented by the interviewer. Again, Sun News stresses that Ms. Gillis took up that challenge very effectively.

That is what the news media look like in a free and democratic society.

A large number of complaints suggest the proper remedy to the Krista Erickson interview with Margie Gillis is to have Sun News removed from the air. This reveals an intolerance for debate and a diversity of views that is not, and will never be, shared by the Sun News Network. Moreover, it runs counter to the fundamental principles, laws and constitutional rights afforded to a free media and on which a free society is based.

Sun News makes no apologies for being controversial, and will continue to take on contentious subjects.

Sun News, like all private media, is accountable to its audience and to the courts. Those who are offended by content have many remedies at their disposal, including changing the channel. One remedy that should never be on the table is to censor or ban voices one disagrees with or is offended by. Such a step would be inimical to the fundamental principles of freedom of speech.

In closing, Sun News and its parent company Quebecor Media respect, and always have respected, the rule of law under the Canadian constitution -- both the obligations that come with it, but also the freedoms it affords. No campaign, organization or complaint will change this fact.

Sun News submits that its interview with Ms. Gillis did not violate any CBSC broadcast guidelines or codes.

Additional Correspondence

File 10/11-1803

The complainant wrote back to the broadcaster on August 23:

Thank you very much for your reply to my complaint concerning Krista Erickson's interview with Margie Gillis, which was broadcast on Sun News on June 1, 2011.

I certainly appreciate that it is part of the mandate of Sun News to explore topics and issues that have not been fully explored in other media, and to explore them in what you describe as a hard-hitting way. Erickson's overtly aggressive attitude to Gillis, however, made it look much more like a criminal in the dock than a respected contemporary artist being put on the spot.

I do not agree that your interview was aimed at exploring the (apparently) contentious issue of state arts funding in a sustained and critical way. There was basically one argument that Erickson forcibly put forward: look how much you have received in arts funding, how can you

justify it when neither I nor anyone else in the country understand or appreciate it? If a journalist interviews a world leader, for example, they [sic] would be laughed off the screen if they hadn't done their homework regarding the relevant issues of the day. The same should apply here. Erickson made no attempt to understand Gillis's replies and showed herself to be wholly ignorant of both contemporary dance and the arts in general.

Anyone watching that interview was indeed left with the impression that Ms. Erickson verbally attacked Ms. Gillis and I have great difficulty in understanding how you can defend this as good journalism. Indeed playing the "free and democratic society" card as a justification for giving free rein to biased and profoundly ignorant reporting is very disappointing.

That complainant also filed his Ruling Request on August 23 and pasted the most relevant portions of the above letter into the document.

File 10/11-1805

The complainant wrote back to the broadcaster on August 26:

I appreciate your efforts at explaining the Sun/Erickson interview with Ms. Margie Gillis.

I am very familiar with the difference in opinion as to whether or not the arts should be funded by our government. The same argument is made with respect to education, poverty, social services, health care and sports. The arts advocates and artists in our country are well versed in the dialogue and can easily participate in a critical exploration of most of these issues and particularly any conversations or explorations that surround arts funding.

In reading your response, it would seem to me that we are talking about two distinctly different interviews. Your claim of a desire to explore the topic of art funding in this interview has no rationality to substantiate it.

I certainly appreciate thought-provoking and fearless critical thinking. As for hard-hitting, I am not clear what you mean by that. The interview I witnessed and complained about shows Krista Erickson, clearly with the support of Sun TV, in the act of bullying rather than dialoguing critically or thought provokingly. There was no dialogue here. Ms. Gillis was a sitting target for public mockery and humiliation. That, by our *Charter of Rights*, is bullying and is not acceptable by law in Canada. Ms. Gillis' conversation attempts were interrupted and over-run at critical moments including the final word. Ms. Gillis continually attempted to re-direct the mockery toward the respectful, engaged and civil dialogue that we were all led to believe was the agenda.

As a viewer, I was interested in hearing what the right-representing station might have to say and how they would listen to an advocate for freedom of expression. I was led to believe that Ms. Gillis would take questions about 'Arts Funding' in Canada and participate in a free and open dialogue in front of viewers.

What I witnessed was a public personal attack on her finances which lacked accuracy and humiliated me as a taxpaying Canadian Citizen.

The information on which Ms. Erickson based her diatribe was inaccurately represented. For instance, The Walter Carsen prize is not taxpayer money at all. It is private money awarded through a selection committee of The Canada Council for the Arts. Most of her funding is based on a lifelong investment in her art form and some are actual lifetime achievement

awards. A more realistic explanation of the funding Ms. Gillis received would have gone a long way to stimulating actual thought-provoking dialogue.

The interview encouraged the public to mock and humiliate the artist and the art form as opposed to engage in thought stimulating dialogue. It invited hate mail visible on Gillis' Facebook page and on your own YouTube comments section. On that same page Ms. Gillis encouraged her advocates to not engage in disrespectful communication, to use complaint systems in place if they desired to complain, yet to refrain from "fighting fire with fire". Yes, she was graceful, intelligent and articulate. Margie is a fiercely intelligent woman. She was prepared for the dialogue she was invited to participate in. She was not prepared for what transpired. It was clear in the watching that her invitation came under false pretenses. As one of the public, I was invited to witness under false pretenses and before my eyes Margie was assailed verbally and cut off at critical moments in the conversation. This, [Mr. M., Sun News Director of Legal Affairs], is bullying and is not acceptable. For your information, I did inquire as to the pretenses under which she was invited and my evaluation, as a certified movement analyst, was accurate.

Beyond the interview itself, the style and the purported purpose, the network misunderstood a line in a film made about Ms. Gillis for the Governor General Awards. She said that she used to think we live in a compassionate society and that she doesn't think that anymore. Ms. Gillis was speaking about the very humanitarian issues that would require soldiers to be in Afghanistan. She was speaking about a shift in society to one that is more self-engaged than engaged in the greater good. It doesn't take a scholar to get that, Mr. [M.]. Sun saw fit to extract that line, use it out of context in two ways: 1) to say that she meant the government was not generous enough in arts funding; and 2) to ask the public to compare the compassion level of arts funding to the fact of a soldier's death in Afghanistan. This was a sensationalized, manipulative and mis-representational twist on her words which was utterly inflammatory and disgusting. No one could be prepared for such a misrepresentation, especially given that Ms. Erickson did not allow Gillis time to respond. I have had a family member sacrifice in combat on the front lines, Mr. [M.]. He fought for freedom of expression and this is not a wasted fight. It includes the right to health care, education, politics, a humane standard of living, sports, arts and media (which also receives funding).

Further, it is an old media tactic to turn a complaint into a complaint and is easily seen through. Ms. Gillis, and the arts community in general, stands behind the principles of free speech as much as you purport Sun TV to. In fact, Sun TV stands to learn from artists about exploratory, thought-provoking dialogue that is frank and to the point. The difference is dialogue WITH. One dialogues and explores with another, one spars verbally with another. When a human being is set up under manipulative parameters as a target for verbal abuse, monologue style, we are talking about abuse of privilege.

I stand by my desire to see Sun TV's licence revoked until such time as your on-air work reflects honesty and expression which does not violate the *Charter of Rights*.
Your response lacks reflection and is unacceptable.

That complainant also filed her Ruling Request on August 26 with the following letter:

I received a response from the broadcaster in regard to this complaint and am unsatisfied with its lack of depth, self reflection, and its apparent use of the tactic of turning my complaint into Sun TV's complaint.

I responded to his email and have included it below.

The broadcaster's response would seem to reflect an entirely different interview than the actual one of which I complained.

The interview:

- 1) was misrepresentative: I was led to believe that this would be an interview on arts funding rather than a full-scale attack on one artist's funding and her articulation of a point of view on global humanitarianism. It is clear that Ms. Gillis was equally unprepared for the point of view of the attacking interview.
- 2) was misleading: the information provided was presented in a way as to inflame and mislead. Funding sources and purpose as well as time lines were misrepresented.
- 3) used bullying as a tactic. In any instance when Ms. Gillis attempted to deal with exacerbated information Ms. Erickson cut her off. The interview resulted in hate mail on Sun TV, You Tube and Gillis' Facebook. We are protected from this power tactic by our *Charter of Rights*. The Sun TV response had the audacity to turn the public complaint around to accuse those who disagreed with their tactics of believing in Censorship and of being against Freedom of Speech. This furthers the example of their use of bullying.

Thank you for ruling on this matter.

File 10/11-1900

The complainant filed her Ruling Request on August 12 with the following note:

I was not even remotely satisfied with the broadcaster's response. It was just as offensive as the program in question. The broadcaster remains unapologetic and claims not to have violated CBSC's guidelines or codes. The evidence, however, is firmly against them.

File 10/11-1911

The complainant indicated his dissatisfaction with Sun's response on August 14:

I must ask, is this type of response typical?

By that I mean a response that completely ignores the issue that many people (more than ever recorded to date) have expressed towards the treatment Margie Gillis received by Sun News Media and Krista Erickson?

Is [Sun News' Director of Legal Affairs] aware that Sun News Media receives funding from the Canada Government as well, yet still found it reasonable to attack a world-renowned artist for doing the same?

Is it standard to use buzz words like "hard-hitting", "fearless" and "though-provoking" as if they actually mean anything in the real world? As if they are excuses to behave like children?

Is it also standard to turn around and accuse those that take issue with unfair, unbalanced, unprovoked attacks by claiming that we are in fact the problem, that we somehow have no faith in Margie Gillis?

I am wholly unsatisfied with this response from Sun News Media, as I am sure many others will be as well and will request a Ruling by a CBSC Panel.

It is time for Canadians to take a stand against news organizations that take the opinion of a small number of Canadians as fact. A time to take a stand against the divisive nature of opinion polls and soft news. I feel fairly certain that half-truths and rhetoric are not what the news media look like in a free and democratic society

I thank you both for taking the time to respond and deal with this issue.

File 10/11-1921

The complainant filed her Ruling Request on August 16 with the following note:

I was not happy with the Sun TV's response concerning my complaint. Because of the amount of complaints Sun TV received they supplied a mass response which attempted to answer everyone's complaint.

I feel that the response misses the point of my complaint and maybe many others. I have no issue with a good debate and I also have no issue that the topic under fire was arts funding. What I took issue with was the complete lack of respect that Ms. Erickson showed to Ms. Gillis during her attack and yes it was an attack not a debate. Ms. Erickson waving her arms in mimicry saying "what is this and I don't get it" was completely disrespectful and had nothing to do with addressing, as Sun TV wrote, "a controversial topic." I was not upset at the topic that was being debated but how Ms. Erickson chose to pursue it [*sic*]. I see a debate as a formal interaction and representation of an argument while an attack is done in a hostile manner. And this is why I made my complaint, I feel that Ms. Erickson was hostile towards Ms. Gillis which crossed the line in providing the viewers with a democratic debate.

File 10/11-1965

The complainant sent an e-mail to both the CBSC and Sun News on August 14:

As you must surely realize from the volume of complaints, and the journalistic principles you must surely have learned at some point in your career(s), the response from Sun News is an irresponsible dodge. Sun News has expressed concern only about its potential legal liability. I am not a lawyer, and cannot pass judgement on the legality of the company's and its employees' behaviour. However, as a media ethicist with considerable experience and relevant credentials, I feel qualified to say that the interview in question – and the company's decision to air it and continue to defend it – violates the principles of responsible journalism as most ethicists would understand it.

Along with countless others who have expressed their concerns, I continue to be deeply dissatisfied with the journalistic standards that you have demonstrated, and continue to demonstrate and defend.