
APPENDIX B

CBSC Decision 11/12-0729 CFNY-FM re the *Dean Blundell Show* ("Wha' Happened?" – Vehicle Accident)

The Complaint

The following complaint was received via the CBSC webform on December 6, 2011:

station: The Edge 102.1

program: *The Dean Blundell Show*

date: December 5, 2011

time: 7:00-8:00 am

concern: During their normal "Wha' Happened?" segment a caller named "Al" called in to share a story about hitting a woman with his "monster truck" the previous night.

This woman was my best friend's mother and I personally was at the hospital until approximately 1 am with her.

While he was sharing his story (and humiliating my friend's mother), it actually seemed as if Dean Blundell and Todd were egging this man on, asking for more information and laughing; they continued on to AWARD him the win.

This man HITS a woman with his truck then calls a radio station to brag, slander an INNOCENT PEDESTRIAN, and then gets rewarded for it by the positive reinforcement that Dean and Todd provided him, laughing, you "win", "buy a lottery ticket". This man got concert tickets and gift cards to McDonald's, and the poor woman he hit woke up to being humiliated and embarrassed on the radio.

I simply do not find any humour in the fact that he hit a pedestrian. Friend or stranger, she is someone's mother/daughter/sister/wife/aunt If there was a personal connection for Dean and Todd, would they have allowed this man to gloat like that? They shut down people and are rude to people all the time, but the one time they should be stopping someone and censoring what they are airing, they allow the man to continue on, adding to his pride and evident lack of remorse.

Broadcaster Response

The station responded with a letter dated December 26:

The Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (the "CBSC") has asked us to respond to your email of December 6, 2011 in which you raised concerns regarding comments made during the *Dean Blundell Show* on CFNY-FM on December 5, 2011. Specifically, you expressed concern regarding a segment of the show in which a caller named "Al" claimed to have hit

somebody with his truck the previous night. You advised us that this woman was your best friend's mother and that you were personally at the hospital until approximately 1 am with her the night of the accident. You stated that while "Al" was sharing his story (and humiliating your friend's mother) it actually seemed as if the hosts were "egging this man" on "with positive reinforcement", by asking for more information, laughing, and ultimately awarding him the "prize". You stated that you did not find any humour in the fact that the caller hit a pedestrian (friend or stranger) and that she is "someone's mother/daughter/sister/wife/aunt". You concluded by stating that the hosts should have stopped the caller and censored what they aired.

We have listened to the broadcast. As you may know, "Wha' Happened?" is a regular call-in segment of the show during which listeners call into the studio to report incredible stories. The one considered the most outrageous is awarded a nominal prize. What makes the segment amusing to those who like it is the spontaneity of the dialogue between the callers and the hosts. On December 5, the caller in question told a story in which he purports to have "run over somebody". Although it takes the caller some time to explain the event, it becomes clear that he was reporting a car accident he had been involved in the day before. According to the caller, the accident was quite serious, resulting in police arriving at the scene and the woman he'd hit being taken away by ambulance.

All of this said, the question remains as to whether the treatment of the subject matter was appropriate for broadcast. Certainly, we can appreciate that you did not find the exchange amusing. It was regrettable in a couple of respects: first, because we learned that someone had been injured in an accident, and second, because the person who had allegedly injured her was vulgar enough to exploit the incident for his own personal gain. To be clear, however, the hosts were not supportive of the accident itself; rather, they were taken aback by the absurdity of the caller's story. It was quite clear that the hosts were stunned by the caller's frankness, at one point suggesting he lacked a "conscience". By awarding him the prize (even if the prize rewarded him for being the most *preposterous* caller they'd heard), the hosts may have left the listener with the impression that this kind of tragedy is something to be trivialized. Certainly this was not the case.

We regret that you were offended by some of our programming. We take our responsibilities as broadcasters very seriously, and work hard to make sure all of our programming complies with Canadian broadcast standards required of us as a member of the CBSC.

We trust that this letter has addressed your concerns. We recognize the importance of listener feedback and appreciate all comments.

Additional Correspondence

The complainant submitted her Ruling Request on December 30 with the following letter:

Upon reading the response I received from [CFNY-FM's Program Director], I am still uncertain as to why there was a prize awarded to an individual who should be penalized for his actions, not awarded for his heroic assault on a pedestrian. In the response I received, I was informed that the hosts were "stunned by the caller's frankness" and "taken aback by the absurdity of the caller's story". I have listened to the segment several times and even listened and reviewed it again after I received the response. I do not find laughter to be a sign of someone being "stunned" or "taken aback" and I'm certain that the caller did not either. While I can admit that at one point the hosts did suggest that the caller did not have a

conscience, they did nothing to redirect the caller in an attempt to censor their show. The continuous laughter throughout the caller's story did nothing but encourage this caller.

I feel as if the email I received in response did not satisfy me as a viewer [sic]. It seems as if Dean and Todd are being defended for their inappropriate on-air behaviour. My biggest concern, above all else, is how do I, as a viewer/listener, know that something like this won't happen again? What has been done to ensure that more people aren't slandered and humiliated?