
APPENDIX

CBSC Decision 11/12-1780 TLN en Español re *El cartel de los sapos*

The Complaint

The CBSC received the following complaint via its webform on April 16, 2012:

station: TLN, 780 HD, Rogers
program: *El cartel*
date: 16 April 2012
time: 10 pm to 11 pm
concern: Dear Sir;

We were watching the program which broadcasts in Spanish and subtitles in English. To the horror of me and my wife and my son, the subtitles for the Spanish word whenever any actor says it is translated in English to the word “nigger”. We had to endure this horrible word; every time the actor said “el negro” in Spanish it was translated to “nigger”.

I speak fluent Spanish and lived in [a] Spanish country. When the Spaniards use the word “negro” or “el negro” it’s translated to “you black man”. It does not translate into “nigger”. “Nigger” is a derogatory word used by USA [s/c] and people who want to demean black people.

Please, please, please ask the television station to stop showing the word “nigger” in the translation of the word “el negro”. The translation is demeaning. I will send a letter to the office of the prime minister to complain also and to the human rights commission.

Broadcaster Response

TLN en Español responded to the complainant on June 25:

The Canadian Broadcasting Standards Council (CBSC) has forwarded to us your email in which you expressed concern in regards to the language used in the Latin soap opera *El cartel de los sapos* which was broadcast from 10 pm to 11 pm Eastern Time. Please note that in your complaint you stated this program aired on TLN Television. In fact, this all-Spanish language soap opera was broadcast on TLN en Español, our 100% Spanish language digital channel. TLN en Español is Canada’s “Latino Superchannel” and offers a wide range of programming including daily news, telenovelas, movies, talk and variety shows plus big live music specials and top soccer coverage. Your letter states that you were offended by the characters referring to each other as “niggers”. However, it must be noted that the program is a Spanish language soap opera from Colombia and it airs with English

sub-titles, which are also done in Colombia. While one character refers to another as „*negro*” on one occasion and „*negrito*” on another, in that culture, the term is not meant to be offensive or derogatory in any way, and is simply a colloquial term used by men to acknowledge each other. While we understand that you may not agree with the general use of the term period, the cultural context of the program should be recognized.

Notwithstanding, we do recognize that not all programs, such as those that form the subject matter of your complaint, broadcast on TLN en Español are suitable for all viewers. As such, the program was broadcast past the watershed hour of 9 pm as mandated by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters’ *Code of Ethics* (“Code”) administered by the CBSC: “Programming which contains sexually explicit material or coarse or offensive language intended for adult audiences shall not be telecast before the late viewing period, defined at 9 pm to 6 am”.

We trust that the foregoing responds to the concerns you raised in your complaint. We recognize the importance of viewer feedback and appreciate all comments. We thank you for taking the time to voice your concerns. Please be assured that your comments will be kept on file for future consideration.

Additional Correspondence

The complainant filed his Ruling Request on July 11 via webform. He re-pasted his original complaint and provided additional comments:

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I speak fluent Spanish and lived in [a] Spanish country. When the Spaniards use the word “negro” or “el negro” it’s translated to “you black man”. It does not translate into “nigger”. “Nigger” is a derogatory word used by USA [sic] and people who want to demean black people.

Please, please, please ask the television station to stop showing the word “nigger” in the translation of the word “el negro”. The translation is demeaning. I will send a letter to the office of the prime minister to complain also and to the human rights commission.

The answer received from President, TLN Television Network was as bad as saying to African-Americans it’s ok to be called “nigger”, after all it is an accepted word by whites or it’s accepted by rappers. I request that Telelatino advise the Colombian network to change the word from “niggers” to “black” otherwise they (Telelatino) will not buy the episodes. This is the right thing to do, not to defend the word “nigger” by Telelatino.