
APPENDIX

CBSC Decision 14/15-0784 HGTV re *Timber Kings*

The Complaint

The CBSC received the following complaint via email on January 8, 2015:

Hi,

I understand from the website that I can file a complaint regarding something I have heard on HGTV's *Timber Kings*.

This television show has excessive bad language that I find inappropriate and offensive. HGTV has a reputation for family-appropriate shows at all times.

When this show first started on the network it was only played late at night – Sunday at 10 pm, I think. However, reruns and marathons are now played at any time.

I have heard sh*t repeatedly and b*tch as well.

I don't understand how this is allowed.

It's a great show. If only they didn't curse so much!

Thank you.

Complainant, explaining that, although she was concerned about the coarse language present in all episodes of the program, she would need to provide a date and time of a specific episode in order for the CBSC to proceed with her complaint.

The complainant responded on January 9:

Thank you for your quick response.

I viewed an episode yesterday with the two curse words in the initial message below. It was a re-run and was on at 7 pm.

I have Bell satellite service, HGTV is channel 600, 7 pm, January 8th.

From the HGTV website, here is the specific episode information:

Here is a link to above:

<http://www.hgtv.ca/timberkings/episodes/>

I would like to clarify – this is a great show, I don't mind the language when it is on later in the evening after little ones are in bed. However, the language is really offensive for prime time programming. I have given you information for just the one episode but the language is heard in every episode.

Thanks again for the quick response.

Broadcaster Response

HGTV responded to the complainant on February 9:

We have received a copy of your e-mail which was forwarded to us on January 9, 2015 by the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council. Your letter was regarding coarse language in the series *Timber Kings*, and you cited as an example the episode that aired on January 8, 2015 at 7 pm EST. We thank you for taking the time to bring this to our attention, as viewer feedback is extremely important to us.

Timber Kings follows the crew of Pioneer Log Homes in Williams Lake, B.C. as they build multi-million dollar homes for elite clients. The crew must complete projects under tight timelines and often in inclement weather, all while handling massive cedar logs, which can make for highly stressful situations. Given the premise of the series, the show captures the crew in a candid and up-close manner, and documents their real-life experiences and raw emotions.

Due to the coarse language in *Timber Kings* the program carries a PG rating, which indicates that parental guidance is advised. Programming with a PG classification may contain mild profanity, the type of language contained in this series that you were concerned about. This classification also allows viewers to use V-chip technology to screen out programs that are not suitable for their family.

As required by Clause 11(b) of the *CAB Code of Ethics*, to assist consumers in making their viewing choices, when programming includes mature subject matter or scenes with nudity, sexually explicit material, coarse or offensive language, or other material susceptible of offending viewers, broadcasters provide a viewer advisory at the beginning of the program, and after every commercial break, during programming telecast outside of late viewing hours which contains such material which is not suitable for children.

After careful investigation, we understand the viewer advisory was not in place for this episode and several other episodes of this series. We apologize for the error and would like to thank you for bringing this to our attention. Please be assured that we have notified our Programming Department of this error. Moving forward all episodes of *Timber Kings* will feature a viewer advisory warning for coarse language.

Thank you again for taking the time to voice your concerns. It is certainly not our intention to offend our viewers, but to introduce them to unique, high-quality programs. We do appreciate your feedback and hope that this letter has addressed your concerns.

Additional Correspondence

The complainant sent the following email on February 17, addressed to HGTV, but explicitly requesting the CBSC to pursue her complaint:

Thank you for your response and detailed explanation. I must admit, I have noticed the warnings at the beginning of each episode that is shown since my initial contact.

However, I am still deeply disturbed that as a Canadian Broadcaster you are permitted to broadcast shows with this type of cursing during regular hours (i.e. not late at night). The reruns of *Timber Kings* can be found during regular daytime, late afternoon and early evening broadcasting. Why is this permitted and even explained/encouraged by you as a media company? Not everyone has v-chip technology or knows how to use it properly. Even if everyone did have it, why do you want to broadcast shows with this level of cursing to all Canadians? If this was American broadcasting, it would not be permitted.

I am a huge fan of HGTV and even regularly watch *Timber Kings* – the premise and other content of the show is great. But I do not understand how you are allowed or why you would encourage this level of cursing to be broadcast on HGTV. Do you really believe that using this language on television is “unique, high-quality programs” as you state?

This is a very sad state of affairs if HGTV and Shaw Media would broadcast this kind of language and then try to convince me that you are not trying to offend me.

[Correspondence Coordinator] at CBSC – I am not satisfied with the response below and would request further action. Thank you.