

# OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

ENGLISH SERVICES

---

## ANNUAL REPORT 2003-2004

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Ombudsman's Report	2
Le Rapport de l'ombudsman des services anglais (French translation of the Ombudsman's Report)	4
Complaints reviewed by the Ombudsman	7
Admissions of Fault	44

## APPENDICES

I Review of Mr. Viggo Lewis's complaint	76
II Charts: Number of communications received; Communications by media	80
III Mandate of the Office of the Ombudsman	81

## THE OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT

In the affairs of the Office of the Ombudsman, some trends are apparent:

1. We're getting more and more complaints about CBC programming. Within the past year, the Office of the Ombudsman received 2,155 complaints, communications and expressions of concern, including 1,590 about information programming. This compares with 1,273 complaints about information programming in 2002-03 and 582 complaints in 2001-02. Much of the increase is the result of orchestrated e-mail campaigns by interest groups.
2. CBC's information programmers appear more and more willing to acknowledge and address their mistakes. Within the past year programmers admitted they were at fault 77 times. This compares with 53 admissions of fault in 2002-03 and 15 admissions in 2001-02. A new feature of this year's annual report is a summary of the admissions of fault. It provides a good glimpse of the dialogue that takes place nowadays between programmers and listeners, viewers and users of CBC.ca.
3. CBC's programmers are responding to the concerns of citizens more promptly than ever. In the past year, on average, programmers at CBC TV News responded to the complaints about their programs in about 12 days. So did the folks at CBC News Online. CBC Radio's information programmers took longer, around 21 days, but that's within the public broadcaster's Standard of Service, which calls for a response within 28 calendar days. The response times reflect continuing improvement over the situation a few years ago when programmers were taking six weeks and more to address complaints about their work.

When complainants express dissatisfaction with the response they receive from program staff or management, the Ombudsman conducts an independent review. During the past year, I conducted 76 reviews, finding some degree of fault with CBC News in 29 cases. A summary of the reviews is published in this report.

### COMPLAINTS

An e-mail campaign orchestrated by a pro-Serbian organization devoted, among other things, to the prosecution of NATO's military and political leaders "for the crimes they committed in Yugoslavia" gave rise to the biggest single number of complaints (344). The campaign attacked *The National* for broadcasting a documentary, *Of Crimes and Courage*, which told the story of the struggle for justice

of some Albanian children who survived a massacre by Serbian police during the war in Kosovo. The campaign's form letter accused CBC of bias without, however, taking issue with a single fact in the documentary. In another e-mail campaign 216 supporters of the Green Party of Ontario wrote to complain that the consortium of broadcasters did not invite their leader to take part in the leaders' debate during the provincial election campaign. And, during the campaign for the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party, 85 supporters wrote to complain that CBC Newsworld did not invite all the candidates to its leaders' debate.

There was a decline this past year in the number of complaints about CBC's coverage of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East (143 in 2003-04 compared with 318 in 2002-03). And CBC's coverage of Iraq, honored by the Canadian Journalism Foundation with its annual Excellence in Journalism Award, gave rise to 68 complaints, primarily accusations that CBC News was anti-American.

Don Cherry's performance on Coach's Corner on *Hockey Night in Canada* dominated complaints about entertainment programming, which generally falls outside the Ombudsman's mandate. One hundred and sixty hockey fans wrote to complain about his sortie against "French guys" and "Europeans" and his suggestion that players who wear protective visors are wimps; about half as many wrote to censure CBC management for criticizing Cherry's remarks. That tends to reflect a pattern: For every two complaints filed against Don Cherry, this office tends to receive at least one communication praising the commentator.

## **ON-AIR ACCOUNTABILITY**

Within the past year a committee of senior journalists met to address a problem I raised some time ago, notably that there tended to be fewer corrections on air than admissions of fault in communications with this office. Among other things, the committee recommended that CBC News develop a format ("a branded vehicle") for corrections and clarifications across all three media lines---TV, Radio and CBC.ca. Tony Burman, Editor in Chief of CBC News, pointed out that programmers are already making on-air corrections and clarifications far more frequently than in the past. The next step would involve co-ordination with a similar team from Radio-Canada, he said, and their recommendations would be fully implemented within the next year. I applaud this move towards greater on-air accountability.

David Bazay  
Ombudsman, English Services  
June 2004

## **RAPPORT DE L'OMBUDSMAN DES SERVICES ANGLAIS**

Certaines tendances se dégagent des dossiers confiés au Bureau de l'ombudsman :

1. Nous recevons de plus en plus de plaintes au sujet de la programmation des Services anglais. Au cours de l'année, le Bureau de l'ombudsman a reçu 2155 plaintes, communications et expressions de préoccupations, dont 1590 avaient rapport à l'information. En 2002-2003, nous avons reçu 1273 plaintes à propos d'émissions d'information comparativement à 582 en 2001-2002. Cette augmentation est attribuable en grande partie aux campagnes de courriels orchestrées par des groupes d'intérêts.

2. Les programmeurs d'émissions d'information des Services anglais semblent de plus en plus disposés à reconnaître et à corriger leurs erreurs. Au cours de l'année, les programmeurs ont admis avoir été dans l'erreur dans 77 cas, comparativement à 53 en 2002-2003 et à 15 en 2001-2002. Le rapport annuel de cette année contient une nouvelle rubrique qui résume les erreurs admises par les programmeurs, ce qui donne une bonne idée du dialogue qui s'instaure aujourd'hui entre les programmeurs et les auditeurs, les téléspectateurs et les internautes.

3. Les programmeurs des Services anglais répondent plus rapidement aux préoccupations des citoyens. Cette année, en moyenne, les programmeurs des émissions d'information de CBC Television ont répondu aux plaintes concernant leurs émissions en 12 jours environ. Il en est de même pour les programmeurs de News Online. À CBC Radio, on a mis plus de temps à réagir, environ 21 jours, tout en restant dans la norme de service du radiodiffuseur public, qui exige une réponse dans les 28 jours. Le temps de réponse reflète l'amélioration continue par rapport à la situation d'il y a quelques années, lorsque les programmeurs mettaient plus de six semaines à répondre aux plaintes.

Lorsque les plaignants expriment leur insatisfaction à l'égard des réponses qu'ils reçoivent du personnel ou de la direction d'une émission, l'ombudsman procède à un examen indépendant. Au cours de l'année, j'ai procédé à 76 examens, et j'ai relevé 29 cas où CBC News était en tort. Un résumé de ces examens est publié dans le présent rapport.

## PLAINTES

Une campagne de courriels orchestrée par une organisation pro-serbe, qui s'est spécialisée entre autres dans les actions en justice contre des chefs militaires de l'OTAN et des leaders politiques « pour les crimes qu'ils ont commis en Yougoslavie », a déclenché un déferlement de plaintes (344) sans précédent. On a reproché à l'émission *The National* d'avoir diffusé un documentaire, intitulé « Of Crimes and Courage », qui raconte l'épopée judiciaire de quelques enfants albanais qui ont survécu à un massacre de la police serbe pendant le conflit du Kosovo. Le courriel accusait CBC Television d'avoir un parti pris, sans toutefois citer un seul fait décrit dans le documentaire. Dans une autre campagne semblable, 216 défenseurs du Parti vert de l'Ontario se sont plaints du fait que le consortium de radiodiffuseurs n'avait pas invité leur chef à prendre part au débat des chefs pendant la campagne électorale provinciale. Enfin, pendant la course à la direction du parti progressiste-conservateur, 85 militants se sont plaints par écrit que CBC Newsworld n'avait pas invité tous les candidats au débat des chefs.

Le nombre de plaintes concernant la couverture du conflit israélo-palestinien a chuté cette année (143 en 2003-2004 contre 318 en 2002-2003). La couverture de la guerre en Irak, récompensé par le prix d'excellence en journalisme, décerné par la Fondation pour le journalisme canadien, a suscité 68 plaintes. CBC News étant principalement accusée d'anti-américanisme.

La prestation de Don Cherry à Coach's Corner dans le cadre de l'émission *Hockey Night in Canada* a été au centre des plaintes relatives aux émissions de divertissement, qui ne sont pas généralement du ressort de l'ombudsman. Cent soixante amateurs de hockey ont écrit pour se plaindre de sa sortie sur les « francophones » et les « Européens » qui portent des visières parce qu'ils sont peureux. Quelque 80 défenseurs de Don Cherry ont écrit pour blâmer la direction de CBC d'avoir critiqué les propos du commentateur. Cela reflète une tendance: pour deux plaintes contre Don Cherry, le Bureau reçoit au moins une communication qui fait l'éloge du commentateur.

## RESPONSABILISATION EN ONDES

Cette année, un comité de journalistes chevronnés s'est réuni pour débattre d'un problème que j'avais évoqué il y a quelque temps, notamment le fait qu'il semblait y avoir moins de corrections en ondes que d'admissions d'erreurs dans les communications avec le Bureau. Entre autres choses, le comité a recommandé que CBC News mette au point une formule (un outil « radio-canadien ») pour les corrections et les clarifications à faire dans les trois composantes médias, télévision, radio et site Internet. Tony Burman, rédacteur en chef de CBC News, a souligné que les programmeurs font déjà beaucoup plus fréquemment de corrections en ondes et

de mises au point que par le passé. D'après lui, la prochaine étape consisterait à assurer la coordination avec une équipe semblable de Radio-Canada, dont les recommandations seraient mises en œuvre l'an prochain. J'adhère totalement à la démarche en faveur d'une plus grande responsabilisation en ondes.

David Bazay  
Ombudsman  
Juin 2004

## **COMPLAINTS REVIEWED BY THE OMBUDSMAN**



**PAUL ACREE** et al

Program: CBC Newsworld

Mr. Acree was among the 85 people who wrote to complain that Heward Grafftey and Craig Chandler had not been invited to take part in the debate for the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party organized by CBC Newsworld.

### **Review**

CBC Newsworld's decision to organize a debate between five of the seven candidates for the PC Party leadership offended Mr. Acree's sense of fairness, but it did not violate the public broadcaster's journalism policy. Programmers were entitled to exercise their editorial judgment in the selection of participants in information programming by "taking into consideration the weight of opinion behind a point of view as well its significance or potential significance." Information programs should strive to reflect the principal points of view, but this did not necessarily mean all points of view.

---

**MINDY ALTER**

Program: CBC Radio News

Ms. Alter complained about a report concerning how the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq was affecting Palestinians. The introduction said, in part, "The Iraqi government used to send money to the families who fought Israel." Ms. Alter felt that the story should not have said that Palestinians "fought Israel" because that suggested they were soldiers when they were "human bombs who purposely sought out civilian targets."

The CBC's Susanne Reber defended the report, saying that Palestinians describe anyone killed in the conflict with Israel as martyrs, and that CBC News avoids using the language of one side or the other.

### **Review**

While I agreed that the introduction could have been better written, the ensuing story provided listeners with a clear picture of Iraq's financial assistance to the families of the Palestinians killed in the conflict.

---

**JUDY ANDERSON**

Program: BBC World News

Ms. Anderson complained about a BBC World News report about the arrival of the so-called Dutch “abortion ship” in a port in Poland. She felt that the report was “nakedly pro-abortion.”

The CBC’s Tony Burman defended the report, saying that it “satisfied the BBC’s and the CBC’s stringent guidelines for balance and objectivity.”

**Review**

The story was introduced with the information that the vessel’s visit had “outraged many people in Catholic Poland,” and began with pictures of demonstrators protesting the ship’s presence. We then heard from the ship’s doctor, who explained why the ship was there. We heard from a young Polish woman who had had an illegal abortion. And we heard from a representative of the Polish Federation of Women and Family Planning who stated that in Poland “the Catholic church has too much power over the state.” And, in response, we heard from the Archbishop of Gdansk, who defended Poland’s abortion laws by stating that Europeans had “to respect Poland’s culture and moral values.” The story gave voice to a range of opinion, so I agreed that it did not violate CBC’s Journalistic Standards and Practices.

---

**KEVIN BARRY** (and Diane Ikonen, Bill Mullally, Shane Ottenbreit, Andrew Pol, Thaddée Renault and Ray Scott)

Program: TV News

Mr. Barry complained about the lack of coverage by the CBC of the March for Life, held on Parliament Hill in May, 2003.

A Communications Assistant with CBC Audience Relations replied that the decision about what stories to include in a news broadcast is rarely an easy one. In this case, CBC’s senior editors felt that the March for Life demonstration was overshadowed by other events.

**Review**

I looked into the media’s handling of this event and found that none of Canada’s major national news organizations – print or broadcast – had covered this event. So CBC News was not alone in its decision not to do a report about this demonstration. I also conducted a review of CBC TV’s coverage of the abortion issue over the last year or so and found it to be pretty even-handed. There were about as many stories

inspired by those on one side of the issue as the other. That said, I agreed that there was room for improvement in the coverage of this issue.

---

**GUY BEAUDRY**

Program: CBC Radio News

Guy Beaudry, Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs for the Business Development Bank of Canada, complained about a letter that had been sent by CBC journalist John Nicol to Christiane Beaulieu, the former Vice-President of Public Affairs at the Business Development Bank of Canada, asking that she speak with him. Mr. Beaudry felt that the letter was unprofessional and a clear case of harassment.

**Review**

While I agreed that the tone of the letter was a tad cheeky, I did not find that Mr. Nicol's initiative violated any of the CBC guidelines concerning interviews. He evidently identified himself as a CBC reporter and he made clear his journalistic purpose. The executive in public affairs could hardly be described as a member of the public who might be unaware of certain journalistic practices. And reporter Nicol's attempt to meet with Ms. Beaulieu occurred in the context of a news-gathering initiative conducted with the approval of senior management in CBC information programming. For all these reasons I found that reporter Nicol did not violate CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices.

---

**JACK CHIVO**

Program: The Afternoon Show, Vancouver

Jack Chivo wrote to complain about what he felt was biased coverage of the bombing in Saudia Arabia on Vancouver's *The Afternoon Show*. "Suddenly, when the victims were not Jewish, the words, 'terrorism,' 'terrorists,' 'terror attack' were on everybody's lips."

The CBC's Esther Enkin defended the coverage, saying she thought it important to bear in mind that *The Afternoon Show* should not be viewed in isolation, particularly since it is a local CBC program whose focus is more on local events. On the question of the use of the word 'terrorist' she said it is used only when attributed to another person such as a political leader or police chief.

**Review**

I shared with Mr. Chivo a review I conducted earlier about the CBC's use of language in its coverage of the Middle East conflict. The review can be found in The

Ombudsman's 2002-03 Annual Report, Appendix II. There's nothing in CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices that prevented the public broadcaster's journalists from calling a spade a spade or a terror attack a terror attack. These were not, in and of themselves, policy issues; they were matters of editorial judgment. From the Ombudsman's perspective this or that editorial decision would only become an issue when it gave rise to a report or a program that was either inaccurate or unfair.

---

**CARLOS COIMBRA**

Program: TV News

Mr. Coimbra felt that in a report about the American pilot who dropped a bomb on Canadians in Afghanistan the phrase "mistakenly bombed" should not have been used. He also felt that when Norman Spector is introduced as a commentator on CBC, the public should be made aware that in addition to being a former ambassador to Israel and Canadian representative to the PLO he also remained in Jerusalem as publisher of the Jerusalem Post, "a newspaper whose line is known to parallel that of the Likud party."

The CBC's Tony Burman felt that the word "mistakenly" was used correctly and neither implied a conclusion on the CBC's part nor exoneration of the pilot. He said that Norman Spector is generally introduced as both former ambassador and former publisher but that it is not CBC's practice to characterize guests or their points of view.

**Review**

I agreed that the word "mistakenly" was less than felicitous, but I did not share Mr. Coimbra's view that this was an example of editorializing because the rest of this brief copy story made very clear that the pilot was being held to account for his role in this so-called friendly fire incident. I agreed that commentator Norman Spector should be properly introduced as both Canada's former ambassador to Israel (in which capacity he was responsible for relations with the Palestinian Authority) as well as former publisher of The Jerusalem Post. This in conformity with CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices, which states that "Any relevant aspect of a commentator's credentials must be clearly summarized so that the audience may have a perspective from which to appraise the speaker's view."

---

**HUGH CROTHWAIT**

Program: TV News

Mr. Crosthwait complained that “Since the war in Iraq began the majority of references to the USA and their actions in the war have been that they are acting ‘unilaterally.’” He also felt that an April 20 report which quoted an Iraqi cleric who said the Americans were not doing enough to help find prisoners of Saddam Hussein’s regime was “clearly biased against American troops in Iraq.”

The CBC’s Jonathan Whitten defended the coverage, saying, “In fact ‘coalition’ is the word we use regularly to describe what American officials refer to as the ‘coalition of the willing.’” He also said that it appeared Mr. Crosthwait had seen only one of at least two stories done on the subject of prisoners of Saddam Hussein’s regime.

## **Review**

The word “unilateral” was often used in CBC’s coverage before the war began to reflect, accurately, the fact that many people around the world voiced their opposition to the possibility of unilateral American action in Iraq. However, once the war got under way, the expressions “coalition troops,” “coalition forces,” and even “coalition bombs” were typically used to describe military operations.

Correspondent Don Murray dealt twice with the controversy over the thousands of people who had disappeared into Saddam Hussein’s prisons. His April 16 report dealt exclusively with this issue, including a comment from an American soldier to an Iraqi doctor who felt the Americans were being uncooperative: “We’ve had your people helping us. We’re searching right now underground where you said. We have found nothing.” Murray made another reference to this issue in his April 20 report, when he quoted a Shi’ite Ayatollah who said, “The Americans have provided no assistance at all in trying to free the underground prisoners.” I thought it fair to describe the April 20 report as incomplete, which can happen when a lot of information is telescoped into a brief news report. However, I thought it unfair to describe the report as biased, given that Murray had already reported the American side of the story and had described the belief that Iraqis were still alive in underground prisons as “an Iraqi urban legend clung to by people desperate not to believe the worst.”

---

## **JAMES DARWISH**

Program: Radio Active, Edmonton

Mr. Darwish felt that an interview with a Rabbi in Potomac, Maryland, during the series of random sniper attacks in the Washington area was “a contrived interview,” that CBC’s programmers “called a Rabbi so they could turn the horrible episode in the U.S. into a condemnation of Palestinians and suicide bombings.”

The CBC's Andrea Graham replied that "the interview was designed to show how one community was dealing with the shootings; it wasn't a direct or even implied condemnation of the Palestinians."

## **Review**

The Rabbi was asked to compare fears of random violence with the fears in his community arising from the 9/11 attacks and with the fears in Israel arising from suicide bombings. The reference to suicide bombings did appear to come at us out of the blue, but for this Rabbi the comparison was relevant. He clearly believed that during the 9/11 crisis Americans developed greater sympathy for Israel and for what he described as living "in a state of the unknown." However, it's something of an intellectual stretch to maintain that the entire interview was conducted just to enable him to deliver this thought. This was just one of seven questions asked and the interviewer did not dwell on the subject. I did not believe there was any merit to the complaint that this interview amounted to some kind of attempt to disparage the Palestinians.

---

## **BRETT DELMAGE**

Program: Ontario Election Debate (TV)

Mr. Delmage felt that the leader of the Green Party should have been invited to participate in the televised debate of the major party leaders prior to the Ontario provincial election.

CBC Audience Relations replied that the consortium of broadcasters (CBC, CTV, CanWest Global, CHUM Television, TV Ontario, CPAC and OMNI-TV) took note of the Green Party's request to participate but decided to decline, saying the decision was made for editorial reasons.

## **Review**

CBC's journalism policy speaks about equitable treatment and notably about "taking into consideration the weight of opinion behind a point of view, as well as its significance or potential significance." In other words, programmers are required by CBC journalism policy to exercise their editorial judgment about what points of view are relevant in any of the programs they produce, including leaders' debates during general elections. In my view, so long as leaders' debates remain a journalistic endeavour, information programmers have every right to construct a program they believe will be of greatest relevance to the greatest number of listeners and viewers. Given the weight of opinion behind its point of view reflected in past elections and in public opinion polls, the Green Party of Ontario did not make the editorial cut in this particular information program this time around. There were of course other ways of dealing equitably with the smaller political parties involved in election campaigns,

notably in news and current affairs coverage. In this regard the CBC dealt equitably with the Green Party of Ontario, giving it far more coverage than any of the other smaller parties.

---

### **HENDRIK DE PAGTER**

Program: Radio & TV News

Mr. de Pagter complained about the way CBC Radio and TV were reporting casualties in the invasion of Iraq. “I have a serious problem with the CBC emulating this American-style ‘body count,’ because it does not report how many American, British and ‘coalition’ soldiers are actually dying in Iraq, whether or not it is in combat.”

The CBC’s Tony Burman replied that “...when we report casualty numbers, it is because they are relevant to the story. We do not carry a nightly total, as some American media did during the Vietnam War. When we do report casualty totals, we try to make it clear to viewers what is included in those numbers.”

### **Review**

Mr. de Pagter’s complaint seemed to ignore the true extent of CBC’s coverage, and notably what is posted at CBC News Online, where a list of casualties in the Iraq war is published. Among other things this list includes the number of combat and non-combat deaths suffered by the American, British, Italian and Polish military; it also includes the estimated number of Iraqi deaths, provided by Iraqbodycount.net.

---

### **JOHN EVERS**

Program: Richardson’s Roundup

Mr. Evers complained about a report from Radio Polonia that was broadcast on *Richardson’s Roundup*. He felt that it amounted to a “diatribe damning guns and gun owners world wide.”

Executive Producer Heather Kennedy responded that the program had no intention to raise questions about guns and “the piece...was meant to be a general slice-of-life feature about behaviour in modern-day Poland.”

### **Review**

This feature, known as Letter from Warsaw, was evidently intended to provide us with a glimpse of everyday life in Poland, on this occasion at a shopping mall. The columnist walked us through the mall, past its Nike and Gucci shops to “a place that gives away the fact that you are standing in a shopping mall in Poland, a gun store,

selling firearms, right by the children's play area, something he found "very strange." He talked about regulations concerning gun ownership in Poland and expressed the view that the popularity of the gun store could be explained by the presence, a kilometer down the road, of a town that was home to the second largest criminal gang in Warsaw. What we have here is one person's view of everyday life in today's Poland, the view of a columnist employed by Radio Polonia. Under CBC journalism policy columnists are entitled to express their views. So, in that sense, this feature did not violate the public broadcaster's journalism policy. Of course columnists are entitled to their opinions, and not to their facts. But Mr. Evers did not single out anything in the feature that he considered to be inaccurate.

---

### **FRANCIS EWEN**

Program: The Arts Today

Francis Ewen wrote to complain about *The Arts Today's* broadcast about his late father, Paterson Ewen. He took issue with some remarks made by critic John Bentley Mays.

### **Review**

I discussed this portion of the interview with Susan Feldman, Executive Producer of *The Arts Today*, who asked me to convey her regrets for any offense the broadcast might have caused. She said that no one at the program had any intention of upsetting anyone in Mr. Ewen's family. The CBC does not adopt as its own the opinions of those commentators whom it invites to express views on any given subject. Ms. Feldman said that there was no plan to rebroadcast the interview, but that if it was ever re-broadcast the remarks would be edited out.

---

### **ED FEUER**

Program: Radio News

Mr. Feuer said he was "shocked to hear Mary Kay Magistad describe what she termed the 'justifiable skepticism' of the North Korean government to the American stance in the current negotiations because the U.S. had included North Korea in the Axis of Evil." He felt this was an example of anti-American editorializing.

The CBC's Jamie Purdon replied that in fact Ms. Magistad used the word "understandable," not "justifiable." He said she explained that North Korea sees its nuclear weapons program as the best possible deterrent against U.S. aggression and concluded her report by saying, "The challenge then for those seated around the table this week is to convince an understandably skeptical North Korea that better options await if it backs down."



## **Review**

To understand someone's point of view is one thing; to say it has merit, or to find it justifiable, is another. North Korea's position, arguably, was easy to understand. But so, arguably, was the American position. However, in this report the position of only one side was described as understandable. I therefore understood Mr. Feuer's view that this amounted to editorializing. While I didn't believe this report or indeed this reporter (Ms. Magistad is correspondent for National Public Radio in the U.S.) was anti-American, and while I thought the reporter was trying to provide listeners with some context to better understand North Korea's position, I thought this item would have been, and would have appeared to have been, more even-handed had the word 'understandably' been edited out.

---

### **ED FEUER**

Program: Commentary, CBC Radio

Ed Feuer felt that the CBC should have provided more information about Andrea Anderson in the introduction to her commentary about the situation in the Middle East. "For CBC listeners, knowing the name of the Middle Eastern country she works for would be essential in evaluating her strong opinions about the Middle East."

The CBC's James Wark replied that Ms. Anderson's commentary was made on the basis of her well-established credentials as an academic expert on the Middle East and not on the basis of her current employment. He said that "...in retrospect it may have been more helpful to listeners to say specifically she works for an Arab government in order to be more clear. I can assure you again her commentary had nothing to do with the specific Arab government or its foreign affairs policy."

## **Review**

Ms. Anderson was until August, 2003, the Associate Director of the Middle East Initiative at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Authorities there informed me that she had moved on to work for the embassy for Kuwait in Washington. I agreed that CBC Radio should have shared this information with its listeners.

---

### **ISHAY FRIEDMAN**

Program: The National

Mr. Friedman complained about a January 7, 2003, report about President George W. Bush's plan to reduce taxes in the U.S. He asked why the report included two people

opposed to the cuts when “it could have easily quoted one supporter of it and one detractor.”

The CBC’s Tony Burman replied, saying, “In fact, the story included three statements from the plan’s chief supporter, President Bush, who explained why he was proposing the cuts and what effect he expected the plan would have. The two people you noted offered a dissenting view.”

## **Review**

In fact there were two reports about the proposed tax cuts. The first item quoted President Bush and two critics. The second item, done in Canada, noted that the Bush plan could have “considerable impact here at home” and included praise for the tax cuts from four business executives. In its coverage of the Bush proposals, in this newscast, *The National* cited more people who had praise for tax cuts than those who had expressed concerns about them.

---

### **ISHAY FRIEDMAN**

Program: The National

Mr. Friedman complained about Don Murray’s January 7, 2003, report about a speech Prime Minister Tony Blair made to his ambassadors about Britain’s relationship with the United States and the war with Iraq. He felt that the reporter misrepresented some of the prime minister’s statements.

The CBC’s Tony Burman said that Mr. Blair spoke for the best part of an hour and that Mr. Murray summarized his remarks in a few seconds as part of a longer report since that was not the only significant war-related news from the U.K. that day.

## **Review**

I thought it was entirely appropriate for correspondent Murray to focus on the British prime minister’s appeal for the renewal of peace negotiations. Of course the brief TV news report didn’t cover all the matters raised by the prime minister in his lengthy address. *The National* isn’t a stenography service; it’s a newscast, which in this case reported the latest developments in a continuing story. I found that this report reflected Mr. Blair’s views about the need for peace negotiations with fairness and accuracy.

---

### **ISHAY FRIEDMAN**

Program: Foreign Assignment

Mr. Friedman complained about *Foreign Assignment's* report about the rationing of food in pre-war Iraq. He said the feature “quoted a professor discussing the possibility or probability of the then upcoming war to lead to mass starvation with no other expert providing a countering viewpoint.”

## **Review**

I believed Mr. Friedman had misunderstood this part of the report, which was an expression of concern that Iraq's food distribution system would likely be in big trouble even if there had been no war there. Reporter Nahlah Ayed documented the point the professor was making by visiting an Iraqi family which wasn't putting aside food for future use. So this wasn't a comment about war leading to mass starvation; it was a comment about the future of the food distribution system even if war did not happen there.

---

## **ISHAY FRIEDMAN**

Program: CBC News: Sunday

Mr. Friedman complained about *CBC News: Sunday's* report concerning the detention at Guantanamo Bay of combatants captured during the American invasion of Afghanistan. While he thought that Evan Solomon's report was well done, he objected to his use of the expression “the war on international law,” suggesting it was “an example of irrational anti-Americanism.”

The CBC's Nigel Gibson defended the broadcast, saying the program gave fair voice to both sides of a legitimate debate over whether the United States was violating international law.

## **Review**

In the context of this documentary, the expression “war on international law” was quite clear. It was the characterization of what Solomon described as “America's disregard for international law.” According to CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices, “Programs may lead the audience to conclusions on the subject being examined. These must be logical conclusions derived from the facts and not from expressions of editorial opinion or unfair methods of presentation. It is essential, therefore, that to conform with the principles of accuracy, integrity, fairness and comprehensiveness, the programs must be based on the most scrupulous and painstaking research. They should take into account all the relevant evidence available and should include recognition of the range of opinion on the matter in question.” This documentary did so. While I believe this program did lead its audience to a conclusion, I also found that Evan Solomon conducted his investigation into Camp Delta in conformity with CBC's journalism policy.

**ISHAY FRIEDMAN**

Program: the fifth estate

Mr. Friedman complained about *the fifth estate's* documentary, "Hot Air." He wrote, "Although the documentary focused on the political aspects of the Kyoto accord, it left a distinct impression that the issue of global warming due to human activity is a virtual scientific consensus. This is not true."

While acknowledging that there was debate among scientists, the CBC's David Studer stated that the purpose of this broadcast was to examine the political debate over the Kyoto accord in Canada.

**Review**

While I agreed that this program about "the hot air" of Kyoto did not need to explore the scientific issues in detail, I also agreed that it should have given voice to at least one of Kyoto's scientific critics. An alternate view of the science involved would have provided greater context to the politics of Kyoto, and to the position taken by the Alberta government.

---

**GERALD GAUTHIER, MARTIN GIBB, EEVA SODHI**

Program: Metro Morning (CBC Radio, Toronto)

Mr. Gauthier, Mr. Gibb and Ms. Sodhi complained about a comment made by business commentator Michael Hlinka on Toronto's *Metro Morning*. During a conversation with host Andy Barrie about fathers who do not pay child support Mr. Hlinka said, "Let them die like dogs in ditches."

The CBC's Susan Marjetti noted that Mr. Hlinka did offer his apologies immediately after making the remark. And the next day Mr. Barrie and Mr. Hlinka took time to explain that the comment came from a Robert Service poem and that Mr. Hlinka employed "a poetic turn of phrase" to express his opposition to any government program that would support parents who abandon their children.

**Review**

I noted that CBC's Deputy Chief News Editor, Esther Enkin, in a letter to complainants, said Mr. Hlinka's use of the phrase was regrettable. On Feb. 3 and Feb. 9, 2004, *Metro Morning* explored the issue of parents who fail to meet their obligations to support their children. On Feb. 3 the focus was on so-called "dead-beat dads." On Feb. 9 the interview was with a representative of Dads of Canada, who spoke from the perspective of a single father who took care of his children without any support from their mother. Under CBC's journalism policy, continuing programs such as *Metro Morning* are required to present a balanced view of

controversial matters and must avoid a cumulative bias or slant over a period of time. Upon review, I found that *Metro Morning* did provide overall balance in coverage of this issue with its interviews on Feb. 3 and Feb. 9. However, given all that was said about so-called “dead-beat dads” on Feb. 3, and given the time it took to air a father’s view, I thought that the program exposed itself to the appearance of promoting certain opinions. In my view CBC’s listeners—and *Metro Morning*’s reputation for fairness—would have been better served by exploration of both sides of this complex issue on the same day in the same program.

---

### **TERRY GOULD**

Program: The Current, CBC Radio

Terry Gould complained about an exchange on *The Current* in which guest T. Sher Singh offered four examples of people whose moral standards he found objectionable, including Adolf Hitler and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. He felt that “comparing an Israeli to a Nazi ranks high on the list of thinly disguised anti-Semitic remarks.”

The CBC’s Jamie Purdon replied that it was an unfortunate and likely unintended parallel, but he did not believe it was anti-Semitic.

### **Review**

I did not interpret Mr. Singh’s remarks to be anti-Semitic. Mr. Singh told me that in naming the four names he wasn’t doing so to equate their moral standards; that he named four leaders, past and present, to ridicule the suggestion that the world we live in might agree about whose views should prevail. Upon review, however, I did not think that Mr. Gould’s concerns should be lightly dismissed. I could understand why he asked that if and when such occasions arise the comments be fully explained so there can be no misunderstanding. At the very least it was an appeal for clarity, an appeal that merited the attention of CBC’s information programmers.

---

### **STANLEY GRIFFIN**

Information Morning (CBC Radio, Saint John)

Stanley Griffin, President and CEO of Insurance Bureau of Canada, questioned the accuracy of statements made in a discussion related to auto insurance in Atlantic Canada.

The CBC’s Susan Lambert replied that the CBC addressed all the points Mr. Griffin raised in an interview the next day with Paul Kovacs, then chief economist with the Insurance Bureau of Canada.

## Review

I found there was merit to Mr. Griffin's complaint that the broadcast was misleading. I thought the problem was with the way the report was introduced, specifically the comment that "car insurance profits are up, way up." Reporter Robert Jones never said the industry had become profitable, but rather that it had "really turned around." I had no reason to doubt reporter Jones' good faith. Nevertheless, given the introduction and given the remarks about the "four-million-dollar-a-week turnaround," I did think a listener might reasonably have concluded that the profits of the auto insurance industry in Atlantic Canada were "way up." So I understood why, the very next day, CBC Radio in New Brunswick gave voice to a spokesperson for the Insurance Bureau of Canada, who was given the opportunity to state the industry's case.

---

## FRANK GUE

Program: CBC Radio

Frank Gue had written to Carole Taylor, Chair of CBC's Board of Directors, complaining about what he described as persistent and anti-conservative bias of CBC Radio One. He singled out the Oct. 2, 2003, edition of *Commentary*, one of the vehicles CBC Radio has established to give voice to a wide range of Canadian opinion. On this occasion, a freelance journalist criticized the Alliance Party for its views about the Canadian Wheat Board. Mr. Gue felt that someone from the Alliance should have been given the right to respond to the critique.

## Review

Producer James Wark provided a list of about twenty commentaries (between October, 2003 and February, 2004) that had featured commentators with a conservative point of view and said that "for most of them there was also no responding or opposing commentary." It seemed to me that the list demonstrated that *Commentary* provides much greater and fairer voice to conservatives than Mr. Gue's comments indicated. However, I could understand why one of these single, stand-alone commentaries, critical as they tend to be, might give rise to perceptions of partiality. So, as we moved towards a federal election, I thought it was a good time to remind programmers that they must pay close and meticulous attention to overall political balance.

---

## TOM HARRIS

Program: CBC Online News

Tom Harris had corresponded with CBC Audience Relations since December, 2002, about external links on an online feature about the Kyoto Accord. He felt the links

did not provide a balanced perspective on the issue; that they were very pro-Kyoto and supportive of the concept of significant human-caused climate change, a concept that he felt should be questioned.

## **Review**

Mr. Harris provided me with a list of websites that, in his view, needed to be added to CBC's list of external links. I asked the CBC's Mary Sheppard to review the list of links at the Kyoto page. It seemed to me that Mr. Harris's criticism was pretty fair. Since the CBC is committed to reflecting the full range of opinion and since in any case the CBC does not endorse any of these sites, I didn't understand why well-known Canadian opponents of the Kyoto accord like the Fraser Institute, among others, were not listed. Ms. Sheppard told Mr. Harris that they had added links to The Fraser Institute, the George Marshall Institute and the World Climate Report.

---

## **L.H. HEPWORTH**

Program: Canada Now (Toronto)

Mr. Hepworth, Executive Director of the Urban Pest Management Council of Canada, complained about a report that pesticides used on Toronto's lawns were getting into the Don and Humber rivers. He felt that the item misrepresented the findings of a study commissioned by the federal, provincial and municipal governments.

The CBC's Craig Dale believed their report was accurate, fair and balanced.

## **Review**

I agreed that there was merit to Mr. Hepworth's complaint about the introduction to the report, which read: "They're invisible, toxic and deadly. And a new government study shows that the Don and Humber rivers are being poisoned." It appeared to me to overstate the study's findings. However, I had no problem with the report itself, which I found to be fair and accurate. The item gave voice to the relevant players, including a representative of the lawn care industry.

---

## **ROSALIND HESSER**

Program: Disclosure

Ms. Hesser felt that *Disclosure's* program about body checking and children who play hockey was incorrect.

The programmers drew Ms. Hesser's attention to a later edition of *Disclosure* in which a professor who researched the matter acknowledged that there was an error in his study.

## **Review**

CBC's *Disclosure* reported that the study into hockey injuries among youngsters erred in its findings, the study's author acknowledged the error on air, and the people who commissioned the study ended up changing their policy because they felt the study was flawed. Therefore I found that *Disclosure* did not violate CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices in its two programs that dealt with this matter.

---

## **ALLEN HOLMES**

Program: Information Morning (Saint John)

Mr. Holmes felt he had correctly responded to the contest question: "Where was Elvis Costello born?" but the programmers were not in agreement.

The CBC's Susan Lambert said that the program had been unable to come up with a definitive answer and that Mr. Holmes might well be right.

## **Review**

According to the Elvis Costello website, he was born in London as Declan Patrick MacManus; adopted the stage name DP Costello in 1975; and changed this stage name to Elvis Costello at the suggestion of one of his managers, Jake Riveria. While the home page said, "And so a star was born," it didn't tell us where the birth of this new "star," i.e. Elvis Costello, occurred. It simply said, "Later MacManus was to officially change his name to "Elvis Costello" to complete the transformation. So, while this document informed us where and when Declan Patrick MacManus entered this world, it did not really tell us "where Elvis Costello was born." Perhaps only Jake Riveria knew for sure.

---

## **MARJORIE KEYSER**

Program: Noon Edition Phone-in (Saskatchewan)

Ms. Keyser complained that Lindy Thorsen, host of the *Noon Edition*, "used his position with the CBC to further the cause of the political party of his choice and slight the party he opposes. Thorsen's disregard for the NDP has been and continues to be blatantly obvious."

The CBC's David Kyle, while describing one of the host's comments as questionable, said he heard "no overt evidence of bias or unprofessional conduct."



## **Review**

In my view, in the twists and turns of a convoluted question, host Thorsen did give the appearance of expressing agreement with Saskatchewan Party policy. However, I thought Ms. Keyser overstated her case when she said he used his position with the CBC to further some personal political cause. While I agreed that there was some merit to her complaint, and to her plea for greater editorial control, I also found that the programs at issue gave fair voice to political opinion abroad in Saskatchewan at the time.

---

### **RICHARD KLAGSBRUN**

Program: Radio News

Mr. Klagsbrun was concerned about “the gross over-representation of the NDP in national news stories” on CBC Radio.

While the CBC’s Jamie Purdon did not share Mr. Klagsbrun’s view, he understood his point. “The question of whether we have given too much or too little coverage to a particular story – or party, for that matter – is often the subject of occasionally heated discussion among journalists and in our newsrooms.”

## **Review**

I examined CBC Radio’s *The World at Six* for the months of November and December, 2003. In this period there were two stories about the NDP. In the same period there were 20 stories about the Progressive Conservative and Canadian Alliance Parties. While the Alliance leader Stephen Harper appeared in news stories eleven times, and while Conservative leader Peter MacKay appeared in news stories eight times, the NDP leader was given voice six times. I rejected as unfounded Mr. Klagsbrun’s complaint that there had been “gross over-representation” of the NDP in CBC national Radio News.

---

### **DR. BRIAN LAURSEN**

Program: Radio News and CBC.ca, Saskatchewan

Dr. Laursen, Senior VP, Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region, complained that some remarks by a CBC Radio reporter on CBC’s website in Saskatchewan were “false and defamatory.” The CBC’s Bill Gerald defended the reporter, describing CBC’s relationship with the health authority as problematic.

## **Review**

I listened to the tapes of two scrums where reporters were trying to gather information about an outbreak of the Norwalk virus, one involving Dr. Laursen on Oct. 7<sup>th</sup> and another involving other officials on Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>. I found that CBC Radio News dealt fairly with Dr. Laursen by broadcasting a good part of the Oct. 7<sup>th</sup> scrum, but I could not say the same about CBC's website in Saskatchewan, which only posted the Oct. 9<sup>th</sup> scrum. In fairness the website should have given its users the opportunity to hear the Oct. 7<sup>th</sup> scrum in its entirety so that they could make judgments of their own about Dr. Laursen's answers.

---

## **ROD LEMAY**

Program: Radio News

Mr. Lemay complained about a report by Mike Hornbrook concerning the killing of four Israeli soldiers by Palestinian militants. He objected to the use of the word "executed" and wanted to know how Mr. Hornbrook came to brand the action as an "execution."

The CBC's Esther Enkin discussed the incident with Mr. Hornbrook, who said that three of the soldiers were shot from behind and at close range after they were injured. He felt this was an "execution style" killing. Later in the day, after discussion with editors, it was agreed that it was more accurate to describe what happened rather than use a word that is loaded.

## **Review**

On the use of "execute": The Canadian Oxford Dictionary informs us that in this context the word can be used in two ways: (a) carry out a sentence of death on a condemned person, and (b) kill as a political act. There is no doubt that Palestinian fighters had taken up arms against the Israelis as part of their struggle to establish an independent state. So, in this sense (to kill as a political act), Hornbrook's phrase was not inaccurate. I noted that in subsequent reports about the incident the wording was changed for the reasons outlined by Ms. Enkin.

On the issue of attribution: I agreed with Mr. Lemay about the importance of properly identifying the sources of information, especially in a war zone where there are often sharply conflicting versions of events. On this occasion, Mr. Hornbrook said, details about the way the soldiers died were published in the local news media, and not in press releases of either the Israeli government or the Israeli Defence Forces. To my knowledge no one on the Palestinian side had come forward to challenge the accuracy of these accounts, and at least two Palestinian groups had come forward to claim responsibility for the killings.

---

**MORRY LEVIN**

Program: World Report (CBC Radio News)

Mr. Levin complained about a Radio news report “that the Prime Minister of Malaysia had just retired after a long career amid a protest over a parting speech in which ‘he referred to the world-wide Jewish conspiracy.’”

The CBC’s Jamie Purdon said the brief copy story stated that Mahathir Mohamed was a controversial figure and that he raised a storm of protest “when he referred to the Jewish domination of the world in a speech to an Islamic summit....” He said there was nothing in that phrase that implied such a conspiracy existed and it was clear that it was the prime minister who made the reference.

**Review**

While I agreed with Mr. Purdon’s assessment, I did think that the brief copy story could have been improved with the qualifier that “he referred to what he described as the Jewish domination of the world....” thus eliminating any shadow of a doubt that these comments were his and his alone.

---

**VIGGO LEWIS**

Program: Metro Morning

Mr. Lewis monitored CBC Radio’s morning program in Toronto for 14 days in November of 2002 to document his complaint about left-wing bias, saying “people like I, who elect the many conservative governments and parties in this country, do not have our views adequately represented on our publicly owned radio.”

The CBC’s Jane Chalmers provided a detailed response, disagreeing with the complainant’s assessment of the program.

**Review**

I listened to sixty hours or so of *Metro Morning* programming, all the programs produced in November of 2002, and concluded that while there was merit to some of Mr. Lewis’ specific complaints, the evidence did not support his view that *Metro Morning* and its host Andy Barrie were promoting some sort of left-wing agenda. My review is published in the appendix of this report.

---

**VIGGO LEWIS**

Program: The Sunday Edition

Mr. Lewis complained that host Michael Enright's essay on Nov. 2, 2003, ("his biased diatribe on the Common Sense Revolution") violated CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices.

Producer Brooke Forbes defended the broadcast, saying that "balance is an over-all thing," and that over time host Enright's essays had been accused of being both right-wing and left-wing.

## **Review**

I agreed that host Enright had crossed the line of CBC journalism policy, from analysis to opinion-mongering, by describing the Common Sense Revolution as "a gigantic hoax."

---

**JASON LOFTUS**, Falun Dafa Association of Canada  
Program: CBC News Morning

Jason Loftus wrote on behalf of the Falun Dafa Association of Canada about a copy story that appeared on *CBC News Morning* on December 31, 2003. The story reported that the Chinese government planned to execute a follower of Falun Gong accused of murdering sixteen beggars. Mr. Loftus complained that the report violated the public broadcaster's standards of accuracy and fairness by what he described as the spread of misinformation and propaganda orchestrated by the Chinese government as part of its campaign to discredit the Falun Gong movement and its practitioners.

The CBC's Cynthia Kinch defended the broadcast, saying that the information in the story was clearly attributed to the Chinese government. She also noted that after members of the movement called CBC News, a second copy story ran on January 7, 2004, stating that representatives of Falun Gong in Canada were challenging the statements made by the Chinese government.

## **Review**

The Dec. 31 copy item was incomplete, failing to reflect the views of the Falun Dafa movement, failing also to provide relevant contextual information. However, CBC News did broadcast another copy story on Jan. 7 to put Falun Dafa's views on the record. So while I found there was merit to Mr. Loftus's complaint about the Dec. 31 story, I also found that the CBC acted in good faith to correct its error. I also noted that since 1999, when the Chinese government began its crackdown on Falun Gong, CBC's reporters at home and abroad had taken care to tell both sides of this story.

---

**BRUCE MACDONALD**

Program: All in a Day (CBC Radio, Ottawa)

Mr. Macdonald complained about a panel discussion about the travels of Governor General Adrienne Clarkson. He said that no one mentioned that the Governor General was leading a trip to some northern countries at the request of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

The CBC's Miriam Fry defended the broadcast, saying that "mention of the DFAIT involvement was made several times" during the program.

**Review**

The transcript indicated that Miriam Fry was correct. However, Mr. Macdonald also rightly stated that no one mentioned that the Governor General's state visits are "instigated" by Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The Governor General's press secretary told me that the Governor General travels on state visits at the request of Canada's prime minister and upon recommendation of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, which determines the destinations and themes of such travel and covers most of the costs involved. He said other government departments could be involved in helping fund state visits, including the Department of National Defence, which provides the aircraft for such travel.

---

**STEVE MACDONALD**

Program: TV News

Mr. Macdonald complained that when CBC News interviewed Iraqi citizens in Baghdad before the war reporters pretended that these "man in the street" interviews "somehow represented valid, independent opinions." He felt that the CBC "routinely and willfully exploited these oppressed and frightened people in order to bolster its morally questionable, deeply naïve (at best) and self-indulgent bias against the US effort to liberate Iraq."

**Review**

I went over transcripts of *The National* in the six weeks or so preceding the outbreak of war. There were very few cases when so-called "streeters" appeared in reporter Don Murray's reports. Murray took care to report the views of the Iraqi public in the context of the restrictions imposed on the media by the Iraqi regime.

---

**WALID MADHOUN**

Program: Radio News

Mr. Madhoun complained about a Radio News item concerning a report published by the Committee to Protect Journalists. “The reporter told us that reporters are abused in a number of countries, Iran was mentioned among other countries, but Israel, a habitual abuser of reporters, a country that has recently arrested an Arabic reporter and is holding him without charges or trial, was not mentioned by your reporter.”

## Review

According to the CPJ annual report, two journalists were killed by Israeli Army gunfire last year. True, the CBC news item did not report this. But neither did it report that 13 journalists were killed in Iraq. The report emphasized what the study emphasized, notably that “the majority of the thirty-six killed were murdered far from traditional battlefields like Iraq. Most died for their coverage of local corruption or criticism of public officials.”

---

## H. MATSON

Program: counterSpin

H. Matson complained that “Under the guise of ‘satire,’ a panel of like-minded panelists ridiculed the American president and America in general. There was no attempt to be fair or balanced.”

The programmers replied that “*counterSpin* has a long history of balanced yet dynamic debates...(but) when dealing with comedians we believe it is not necessary to require the same level of balance we normally require from our guests.”

## Review

CBC’s journalism policy permits satirical treatment of news events, provided there is no confusion about the nature and purpose of the program. This program was clearly presented as “*counterSpin*’s satirical year-end review.” But as the policy book states, “Quality is an important consideration in its acceptability.” I could understand why H. Matson found the program to be unacceptable. The three comedians appeared to me to take themselves so seriously they often sounded like run-of-the-mill pundits, like minded and one sided in their critique of American neo-conservatism. At least, towards the end of the show, two members of the studio audience were given the opportunity to defend the American government. I thought H. Matson’s criticism of this program was fair.

---

**KEVIN McDONALD**

Program: Radio News

Mr. McDonald complained about a report involving two scientists who criticized pending federal legislation concerning cloning. He felt the report was one-sided; that at a conference of 200 people the CBC reporter “interviewed only two who disagree with the contention that all cloning should be illegal.”

The CBC’s Susanne Reber defended the report, saying that while the public broadcaster must reflect all relevant points of view over a period of time, “one story cannot reasonably be expected to encompass all points of view.”

**Review**

I shared Mr. McDonald’s view that this report did not reflect the range of views within Canada’s scientific community on the issue of cloning. However, according to what I was told by participants, the brief news report accurately reflected what happened at the meeting, where the federal legislation – Bill C-13 – was not in fact subject of debate and came up as “something of a side issue.” CBC’s journalism policy recognizes the fact that news comes to us in bits and pieces, especially when news reporting is event based. It states that, in their continuing coverage, programmers must avoid a cumulative bias or slant over time. As Susanne Reber pointed out, the public broadcaster had given voice to the range of relevant opinion since, as she put it, this issue had become more reality than science fiction.

---

**REV. LLOYD McDUGALL**

Program: CBC Online News

Rev. McDougall complained about an online report which described the leader of Hamas, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, as “a quadriplegic who relied on a wheelchair.” He felt that the reference to his disability “bears no relevance to the Hamas leader’s death unless it is intended to inappropriately elicit pity from the reader.”

The CBC’s Mary Sheppard replied that “the information was not included to evoke pity, but merely as a statement of fact.”

**Review**

I examined media coverage of the Israeli military’s attack on Sheik Yassin, including coverage in the Israeli press. These accounts mentioned the fact that he was disabled, perhaps because, as The New York Times reported, the Hamas leader was killed in a Gaza lane while he was being “pushed home in his wheelchair after dawn prayers.” The first pictures from the scene included debris of a shattered wheelchair, and an empty wheelchair was carried on the shoulders of protestors in demonstrations

around the Muslim world. So these details were relevant to the story of his assassination.

---

**DAVID MILLAR**

Program: News (Newsworld)

Mr. Millar complained about a CBC TV News report concerning a survey conducted by the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters. He dismissed the brief news report as "another shot of femmunist (sic) propaganda being fed to the Canadian people via the publicly funded airways," saying this was a report about "the 'need' for more funding for women's shelters in Alberta."

The CBC's Cynthia Kinch pointed out that he had clearly misunderstood the story, which reported that "almost half of the women surveyed returned to their abusive relationships because they didn't have the money to live on their own."

**Review**

No one cited in this story made the case for "more funding for women's shelters." The report cited critics who said "Higher rates of social assistance and more affordable housing would give women at risk more options and a better chance at a new life." Mr. Millar evidently disagreed with the people who held these views. However, the CBC would fail to live up to its mandate to inform Canadians if it undertook to limit its reporting to matters with which we might all find ourselves in agreement.

---

**DR. THOMAS NAGY**

Program: CBC News Online

Dr. Nagy complained about the lack of coverage of the Medact report that examined the medical impact of the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

The CBC's Mary Sheppard replied that although the Medact report did not receive the coverage Dr. Nagy thought it should, it was included on CBC News Online as part of a longer AP story from Baghdad.

**Review**

I thought the Medact report merited better coverage. But it was not as if the CBC never mentioned the effects of the war on the people of Iraq. Among many other things, CBC News Online features a list of casualties of the war in Iraq. And this feature cites as its source for Iraqi civilian casualties the very same organization, Iraq Body Count, that Medact cited in its report. That said, I thought CBC News Online



would provide a better service to its users by including Medact in its list of online resources.

---

**PAUL NEILSON**

Program: Sunday Report

Mr. Neilson complained about host Mark Kelley's interview with Eric Margolis about the hunt for Saddam Hussein. He felt that Mr. Margolis had an anti-American bias and was allowed to make tendentious comments.

**Review**

Like other guest commentators who appear on the CBC from time to time, Mr. Margolis is by definition engaged to express his personal views. As CBC's policy handbook states, "the CBC does not adopt as its own the opinions of those commentators whom it invites to articulate the various shades of current opinion on a given subject."

---

**ALEXANDER NORRIS**

Program: Disclosure

Mr. Norris complained about the delay in the broadcast of the *Disclosure* report about Paul Martin and Canada Steamship Lines. He expressed "deep concern that the broadcast of the report was delayed as a consequence of political pressure rather than for sound reasons of journalism."

The CBC's Tony Burman replied that the broadcast was delayed because the report wasn't ready; that it needed more editorial work.

**Review**

I spoke separately with reporter Mark Kelley and producer Harvey Cashore. Both flatly denied the allegation that the broadcast of their report was delayed because of political pressure. Mr. Cashore said he was "thankful that we had an extra two weeks. The piece was far better, more thoughtful and more hard-hitting."

---

**ALLEN NUTIK**

Program: The National

Mr. Nutik complained that CBC National News reported that “a ‘terrorist’ suicide bomber killed a Canadian soldier in Afghanistan, but in your eyes, only ‘militant’ Palestinians murder Israeli citizens.”

## **Review**

I watched the report but could find no reference to a “terrorist suicide bomber.” Mr. Nutik insisted he heard the term, and quoted from an online report that stated that “...a terrorist jumped on one of the vehicles and blew himself up.” I pointed out that a police officer, and not the CBC, described the bomber as a terrorist. That was exactly the way CBC News generally used this term in its coverage of the Middle East, where the “T” word was employed with attribution, most often to Israeli authorities who tended to describe all Palestinian fighters, including those who attacked Israeli soldiers, as terrorists.

---

## **BLAIR PHILLIPS**

Program: the fifth estate

Mr. Phillips complained about a report that mentioned the gassing of the Kurdish town of Halabja in 1988 during the war between Iran and Iraq. He questioned the credibility of the program, saying there was no mention of an article in the New York Times (January 31, 2003) by Stephen Pelletiere, refuting the Bush administration’s allegation that Saddam Hussein gassed his own people and asserting that it was Iranian gas that killed the Kurds, not Iraqi gas.

## **Review**

In the same newspaper, on February 5, 2003, there was a letter from Kenneth Roth, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch. Among other things, he said that their researchers interviewed survivors and reviewed 18 tons of Iraqi state documents to establish beyond doubt that the attack was carried out by Iraq. I discussed this incident with one of the first Western journalists to visit Halabja following the attack, Paul Koring of The Globe and Mail. He said that while there is evidence that both sides were using gas during this war there was no doubt whatsoever in his mind that the Iraqis were responsible for this incident. “Iran had no military purpose to be gassing Kurdish civilians. Also there is pretty good evidence that Iraq had gassed other Kurdish villages near the front lines in their areas of control.” Terry Lloyd of Britain’s Independent Television News, who gathered the first TV pictures of the slain Kurds, had reached the same conclusion.

---

## **JOSEPH POPE**

Program: Life and Times, CBC TV

Mr. Pope complained that the two-part documentary on the *Life and Times of Pope John Paul II* gave voice to two of John Paul's critics, Fathers Hans Kung and Charles Curran, theologians whose views on Catholic matters, he felt, were not worthy of any consideration.

## **Review**

The three hours of programming gave voice to twenty people apart from the Pope. By my count, sixteen spoke glowingly about the Pope, his spiritual leadership and his contribution to the fall of communism. Fathers Kung and Curran, both censured by the Church and stripped of their right to teach as professors of Catholic theology, spoke critically about the Pope's interpretation of Catholic doctrine. I concluded that their views were worthy of consideration within this documentary, reflecting as they did a reality within the Catholic community---the reality of disagreement among the faithful over issues such as birth control, abortion, celibacy, the role of women and so on.

---

## **GREG PROUDMAN**

Program: Labour Day Programming, CBC Radio

Mr. Proudman was shocked to hear a steady stream of profanity coming from his radio shortly before noon on Labour Day. He said it appeared to be an interview with gang members.

The CBC's Jennifer McGuire said he heard part of a series that examined the rise in gang activity and violence in Toronto. She regretted that he was offended by the language but said that they looked to the guidelines set out in the CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices, which state that as a general rule profanity must not be used, but that there are occasions when its use may be justified, among them when it is apparent that the editing of the material would impair the integrity and significance of the information in the story. The producers felt that editing out the language would distort the story by dishonestly portraying the gang members.

## **Review**

In dealing with an earlier complaint about this series of reports when it was first broadcast on Toronto's *Metro Morning*, I stated that while these broadcasts did not violate CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices, for essentially the same reasons as outlined by Ms. McGuire, I agreed that this kind of material should be broadcast at a time in the schedule when children were least likely to be among the listening audience.

---

**LARRY RITEMAN**

Program: Radio News

Mr. Riteman complained that CBC's reporters in the Middle East were neither impartial nor unbiased, citing as an example a Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> news report which he felt did not provide sufficient context to explain why some Palestinians had been killed.

**Review**

I reviewed the coverage of CBC Radio News, comparing its reports with the coverage in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, which Mr. Riteman had also cited. His complaint appeared to confound the newspaper's coverage of Palestinians killed in incidents on Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> with the CBC's coverage of Palestinians killed on Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>. Both CBC News (on Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>) and Haaretz (on Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>) had reported that the Palestinians were killed when violence erupted as tens of thousands took to the streets of the West Bank and the Gaza strip, breaking Israeli curfews to protest the siege of Yasser Arafat's headquarters.

---

**CLYDE ROSE**

Program: Weekend Arts Magazine, CBC Radio, St. John's

Clyde Rose, President of Breakwater Books, complained about CBC Radio's handling of the dispute between publishers in Newfoundland and Labrador and the writer and book reviewer Robin McGrath. He felt that the interview with Ms. McGrath was "a scurrilous and unwarranted attack on the local publishing industry."

The CBC's Diane Humber could not agree with his assertion that the radio pieces constituted an attack on the publishing industry, but she did agree that it would have been "more desirable to air an interview with the Publisher's Association on the same program as the first interview with Robin McGrath." She said the CBC was not "launching an unmitigated attack on the profession" but was reflecting a concern that had already been raised in public by a member of the province's artistic community. Ms. McGrath had written an article stating that she felt there was a lack of editing attention in most of the books she reviewed in the previous year.

**Review**

I listened to Angela Antle's interviews with Ms. McGrath on May 24 and May 31, and her interview on June 14 with Debbie Hanlon, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Publishers Association. I agreed with Mr. Rose, and with the CBC's Diane Humber, that a representative of the publisher's association should have been interviewed on *Weekend Arts Magazine* on May 24, when Ms. McGrath criticized the publishing industry. However, I found no evidence that the initial interview with Ms. McGrath was, as Mr. Rose maintained, "deliberately concocted and prepared in

advance to do damage to our industry and its workers.” Ms. Hanlon declined to be interviewed for the May 31 broadcast, but did agree to the interview that was broadcast on June 14, in which she dealt squarely with the issues raised by Ms. McGrath. So while there was merit to Mr. Rose’s complaint about the May 24 broadcast, the CBC’s overall coverage of this issue was fair, balanced, and in conformity with CBC policy which states that continuing news and current affairs programs “must avoid a cumulative bias or slant over a period of time.”

---

**ALLAN RUTMAN**

Program: Radio News

Mr. Rutman complained about a report from Jerusalem that he felt was “not news but an opinion piece and was misleading and reflected bias.”

The CBC’s Jamie Purdon defended the report, saying correspondent Mike Hornbrook covered six elements in the continuing Middle East conflict in just over one minute, and that “one story cannot reasonably be expected to encompass all points of view or all the information available.”

**Review**

At issue was a brief report (1:03) in a brief newscast (4:29). While no one-minute report could provide a complete summary of this conflict, everything correspondent Hornbrook said was verifiable and accurate. Indeed, Mr. Rutman did not question the facts; he questioned the way the facts were juxtaposed, saying: “...The story line is intended to compare or contrast Israeli and Palestinian deaths as a cause and effect or that the Israeli deaths are minor in comparison with Palestinian deaths.” When a reporter mentioned how many combatants had been killed on one side of a conflict there was nothing sinister about mentioning how many had been killed on the other. Mr. Rutman criticized Mr. Hornbrook for reporting U.S. pressure on the Israeli prime minister without mentioning American pressure on the Palestinians. A fair point. But the truth is Mr. Hornbrook had documented the American position fully and well, time and again, during his coverage of this conflict. Finally, contrary to what Mr. Rutman maintained, this report made quite clear that the Israelis had been conducting their military operations because the Palestinian Authority was “not acting to rein in militants.” I did not find that this report was a misleading opinion piece.

---

**LARRY SHAPIRO**

Program: The National

Mr. Shapiro complained about coverage of an incident where “a Palestinian terrorist blew up a bus in Jerusalem killing 10 people and seriously injuring 50. None of the passengers were combatants, so the act against innocent civilians was a dreadful terrorist act. Yet the CBC, and most specifically Peter Mansbridge, referred to the bomber as an extremist...By sugar coating the description of these killers, the CBC is showing a degrading bias towards them...”

## **Review**

I screened the January 29 edition of *The National*, which featured Adrienne Arsenault’s report from Jerusalem on the suicide bomber’s attack on the Israeli bus. Peter Mansbridge did not present the program (Alison Smith did), and the word extremist was not employed, neither in the introduction nor in the report itself.

---

## **SIMON SHAPIRO**

Program: As It Happens

Mr. Shapiro wrote that “Tony Burman tells us that on the *As It Happens* program, ‘balance on the program is monitored and maintained over time.’” He asked the Ombudsman to share what this balance has been. “My own observations of *As It Happens* are that it shows a marked tendency to ‘balance’ a Palestinian criticism of Israel with a left-wing Israeli criticism of Israel.”

## **Review**

I reviewed *As It Happens* programming over the previous two months. In May the program dealt with the Arab-Israel conflict four times; in June it dealt with this issue five times. Over this two-month period listeners were provided with a pretty good range of views surrounding this conflict.

---

## **Shoel Silver**

Program: Radio News

Mr. Silver complained that the reports on *World Report* on July 24 and 25 “left listeners with the unmistakable impression that release of ‘significant numbers of Palestinian prisoners’ was one of Israel’s road map ‘obligations.’”

The CBC’s Susanne Reber defended these reports, stating that while Mr. Silver was right in saying the release of prisoners was not mentioned in the road map, “in the past few weeks it seems to have become an important part of it.”

## Review

The July 24 report did not refer specifically to the road map; it mentioned the peace process and in my view accurately reflected the state of affairs between the two sides at the time. In the July 25 report, while it was evident that correspondent Hornbrook was paraphrasing the views of the Palestinian leader, I thought Mr. Silver made a fair point in stating that these remarks could have given listeners the mistaken impression that the release of prisoners was one of Israel's obligations under the road map. However, I did not think it was fair to conclude that this case could be cited as evidence that this reporter had fallen prey to what Mr. Silver described as "Palestinian spin." Rather it was an example of the imprecision that can arise when a lot of information is telescoped into a brief news report. In the course of his coverage I had heard Hornbrook make abundantly clear that while not mentioned in the road map, the release of Palestinian prisoners had become a significant issue in the peace process.

---

**JEAN SZKOTNICKI**, President, Canadian Animal Health Institute  
Program: *Country Canada*

Ms. Szkotnicki complained about a *Country Canada* program concerning the controversial approval of a new cattle drug. She felt that it failed to provide a fair and accurate portrait of scientist Shiv Chopra and his role at Health Canada's Veterinary Drugs Directorate. She felt there was a bias towards Mr. Chopra and against Health Canada management.

The CBC's Nigel Simms defended the broadcast, saying *Country Canada's* examination of disagreements within this public service featured eloquent arguments from scientists, government and industry representatives.

## Review

I thought that *Country Canada* could have done a better job informing its viewers about the drug approval process. We were informed about a dispute among the watchdogs, but were never told whether disagreements were commonplace; if there was ever unanimity, or if there should be. However, in my view this program provided viewers with enough information to enable them to make judgments of their own; therefore, I did not find it to be in violation of CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices.

---

**BRENT TOLMIE**  
Program: Radio and TV News

Mr. Tolmie complained that the CBC covered Alliance MP Larry Spencer's controversial comments about homosexuals but failed to cover Liberal MP David Kilgour's controversial comments about same-sex marriage.

The CBC's Tony Burman agreed that it was unfair to cover one but not the other. However, he also said "the reason had nothing to do with bias," but that "regrettably, in this case, our news gathering system failed."

## **Review**

There was no doubt that Mr. Tolmie's complaint was justified. Mr. Burman said so, and announced he was taking "immediate corrective action." This could, arguably, be described as an example of bias to the extent that bias, whether intended or not, does arise when reporting is incomplete. Under CBC's journalism policy the balance of political coverage is not determined on the basis of a single report, but "must avoid a cumulative bias or slant over a period of time." Over time, CBC news has covered verbal gaffes of politicians of all parties, including the governing Liberals.

---

## **GRANT TROWER**

Program: CBC News: Sunday

Mr. Trower complained about coverage of the war in Iraq, including *CBC News: Sunday's* interview with former Attorney General Ramsay Clark, during which he felt the hosts used "rude and disruptive tactics." He also alleged that "eighty-nine per cent of CBC TV information programming...ensured a definite pro-war position."

## **Review**

I noted that the CBC's Stuart Coxe wrote to Mr. Trower to tell him that the programmers agreed that they were at fault; that they were to be faulted for not always letting Mr. Ramsay complete his thoughts before jumping in. I considered this to be both an admission of fault and recognition that there was merit to this part of his complaint. His allegation about CBC having "a definite pro-war position," while a pretty good rant, was not supported by any detailed reference to actual CBC programming.

---

## **WILLIAM WALKER**

Program: The National

Mr. Walker objected to the phrase, "(Prime Minister) Martin met with the King of Jordan and no doubt discussed the war in Iraq," saying that maybe he did discuss the subject "but what it certain is that the reporter...was too idle to find out."



## **Review**

Correspondent Paul Workman told me that he employed this expression because (1) in briefings with government officials prior to the meeting he was told the conflict would be discussed, that (2) discussion of the conflict had dominated this Davos meeting, but (3) that he filed his report under pressure of deadline at a time when he could not confirm that the conflict had in fact been discussed. The CBC's Jonathan Whitten pointed out that the CBC did confirm "between feed and airtime" that the two leaders discussed the subject. So the report was accurate. Mr. Walker also felt that "the war in Iraq" had ended many months before. But I thought it fair to say that major American combat operations had ended but the war continued in different shapes and forms.

---

### **GORDON WISEMAN**

Program: Radio News

Mr. Wiseman complained about a report by CBC Radio's Middle East correspondent Mike Hornbrook in June, 2003. He objected to a reference to Israeli settlements being on "Palestinian land."

The CBC's Susanne Reber defended the report, saying that Hornbrook referred to the geographic location of the settlements (the "West Bank and Gaza") and, having done that, he added that they were on land "most of the world regards as Palestinian" to help clarify their significance in the context of the roadmap.

## **Review**

Mr. Wiseman heard the term "Palestinian land" again at the end of July, 2003. I listened to the report in question and the phrase was not employed therein. The language used was neither pro- nor anti-Israeli or Palestinian. I later listened to CBC Radio's *World Report* in that period and could not find any report that employed this expression.

---

### **JAY WORTSMAN**

Program: Radio News

Mr. Wortsman complained about the use of the expression, "the militant group Hamas" in the introduction to a radio news report. He felt that CBC News should have followed the lead of the American and Canadian governments which have labeled Hamas as a terrorist organization.

The CBC's Tony Burman replied that the long-time practice of CBC News is to use the word "terrorist" only with attribution.

## Review

As the Canadian Oxford Dictionary points out, the word militant describes an individual or an organization “engaged in warfare.” And as the Manual of Style and Usage published by The New York Times says of militant: “Its literal meaning is at war or ready and willing to fight.” So I found that this description of Hamas was accurate and did not violate CBC’s Journalistic Standards and Practices.

---

### **TADEUSZ VAN WOLLEN**

Program: Life and Times, CBC TV

Mr. van Wollen complained that the two-part documentary on the *Life and Times of Pope John Paul II* gave voice to two of the Pope’s critics “completely unchallenged by those who could provide not only a balancing and countervailing voice but factual information.”

## Review

The issue of voice---and about what constituted reasonable balance---was often the subject of dispute, but in this case three points should be taken into consideration:

1. The documentary gave voice to twenty people apart from the Pope. Sixteen people spoke glowingly about the Pope, his spiritual leadership and his contribution to the fall of communism;
2. The dissenting theologians Hans Kung and Charles Curran reflected a relevant strain of opinion within the Catholic community, giving voice to disagreement among the faithful on several issues;
3. The Pope and his admirers provided ‘countervailing voice.’

In my view, the three hours of programming provided sufficient voice to the Pope, his supporters and his critics to enable viewers to make judgments of their own.

## **REVIEWS CONCERNING DON CHERRY**

### **TREVOR CRANNEY**

Program: Coach's Corner

Mr. Cranney wrote to complain about CBC's decision to impose a seven-second tape delay on this broadcast, asking the Ombudsman to investigate "the censorship of the great hockey personality Don Cherry." Furthermore, why wasn't the Ombudsman defending Don Cherry's right to free speech?

#### **Review**

Like other broadcasters, the CBC had the right, as well as the responsibility, to edit the content of its programs. The Ombudsman had a mandate to defend responsible speech---speech that was fair, accurate, thorough, comprehensive and balanced. In my view Don Cherry's comments did not meet this standard and therefore did not merit my defense.

---

### **David Hallam**

Program: Coach's Corner

Citing a report in The Toronto Star, Mr. Hallam complained that Don Cherry 'had his facts dead right' in his comments about Europeans and 'French guys' who wear visors, and 'the CBC has pilloried Cherry for an utterance which is true.'

#### **Review**

According to The Star's report (Feb. 14) at least one of the things Don Cherry said was true, in part, and another was false. The Star's survey indicated it was true that a greater percentage of players from Quebec than from the rest of Canada wore visors, but that it was false to say that most of the players penalized for high sticking wore visors. In any case, as an editorial in The Globe and Mail pointed out, what provoked the controversy was the suggestion that NHL players who wore visors were 'sucks,' and, as the Globe wrote, the suggestion that "most of the 'sucks' who wear visors are Europeans or 'French guys.'"

---

### **L. MORIN**

Program: CBC News Online

Mr. Morin wrote to complain that CBC.ca's news reports about Don Cherry's comments did not provide sufficient context to enable users to understand that "Mr. Cherry intended to imply that European and French-Canadian hockey players are sucks, dirty and disrespectful players."

The CBC's Mary Sheppard defended the copy stories, saying a lot of information had to be telescoped into the available space and no copy story could convey all the details.

### **Review**

While I understood Ms. Sheppard's remarks about the need to telescope a lot of information into the space and time available, I did agree that the copy stories should have provided more insight into the reason so many viewers, and indeed the CBC itself, found the remarks to be reprehensible.

---

### **L. MORIN**

Program: CBC News Online

Mr. Morin complained that the moderators of the forums on the CBC website were censoring messages related to Don Cherry's controversial comments.

The CBC's John McQuaker stated that moderators made an effort to curb personal attacks and when users ignored warnings to abide by house rules, moderators made the decision to shut down the forums.

### **Review**

The CBC maintains and exercises editorial authority, control and responsibility for the content of all programs, including discussion forums on the web. If participants of forums were ignoring house rules, if in other words the CBC didn't have the means to exercise its editorial authority over any particular forum, I would have to say the CBC would be justified in shutting it down.

## **ADMISSIONS OF FAULT**

**SAGAL ALI**

Program: The Current, CBC Radio

Sagal Ali complained about Eric Sorensen's interview about the men detained in Toronto who were suspected of having links to terrorist organizations. "He unfairly, interchangeably talked about Muslim extremists or Arabs, even though time and time again, the lawyer of the two of the men detained stressed that none of the men are Arabs."

Jamie Purdon replied. He said it was a clear mistake and should not have happened. "You also suggest that Eric was pressing a personal point of view that these men should be held because Canadians feel vulnerable. Here I would have to disagree. I think it is just actually the opposite. Eric was actually challenging the minister about the motivation for these arrests..."

**RASHA AYOUBY**

Program: CBC News, Newsworld

Rasha Ayouby complained that a report on Newsworld from Adrienne Arsenault in Jerusalem was labeled on the screen as 'Jerusalem, Israel.' "This means that to you Jerusalem is in Israel, this is completely wrong. Jerusalem is not an Israeli city even if the Israeli government would like it to pass as one...I am a Palestinian born in Jerusalem, so Jerusalem CAN NOT BE in Israel because I am NOT ISRAELI, nor ever want to be."

Cynthia Kinch replied. "I am sure you understand the political situation as well as I do, but I understand your point. It is CBC's practice to identify Jerusalem by that name alone. Thank you for drawing this to our attention. I have sent a copy of our correspondence to the senior editors in CBC News and drawn their attention to your comments."

**ALAN BAILEY**

Program: CBC Radio News

Alan Bailey complained about reports on CBC Radio that two caregivers from a Filipino Catholic sect had apparently returned to work at the Baycrest Centre in violation of their SARS quarantine. "Unfortunately at the end of the day I only heard one report that only one individual was involved and that he or she was cleared. Then there was a report that two doctors were critically ill with SARS. I have yet to hear a follow-up report. Who committed an offence, the caregiver or the CBC?...Since the CBC spent no time clarifying the details of their bogus story which

lead the newscasts, and offered no apology, it was no surprise that the last caller to *Cross Country Check-up* on Sunday, April 20, felt free to continue to spread the slander based on hearsay coast-to coast...without any caution from the host, Rex Murphy.”

Esther Enkin replied. “With respect, the story was not ‘bogus,’ in the sense of fake or counterfeit, but it did turn out to be erroneous. And we did correct the erroneous information, but not as strongly as we might have.”

**BERT BAILEY, WAEL HADDARA, CARLOS SINCLAIR**

Program: The National

Bert Bailey, Wael Haddara and Carlos Sinclair complained about a segment of a report on *The National* on June 24, 2003, that involved Arabic translation. The Arabic-speaking woman stated, “they (the Israelis) took her mother,” and the voiceover of the translation stated that the angry Palestinian woman who was pointing at a two-year old toddler in her arms was saying that Palestinian women would continue to give birth to suicide bombers.

Don Spandier replied on behalf of Executive Producer Jonathan Whitten. Two clips were mixed up and the error was not caught right away. “The mistake was certainly unfortunate, though there was no intent to mislead...There is, however, a credibility issue here, and we corrected the mistake on last night’s *National*.”

**LINDA BELANGER**

Program: Sunday Report, CBC TV

Linda Belanger complained about an error in a report about the Balfour and Livingstone case. “When Mr. Livingston first appears on screen, the caption reads Ariel, West Bank. The reporter, Adrienne Arseneault, then proceeds to state repeatedly that Mr. Livingstone is now living in Israel. As you surely know, Ariel is an ILLEGAL SETTLEMENT in the West Bank and is not part of Israel.”

Jonathan Whitten agreed that they should have been more specific about where Mr. Livingstone was living. “We did, as you point out, make a reference on screen to Ariel being in the West Bank, which, as you know, is our practice. The problem for Adrienne was describing Mr. Livingstone’s whereabouts for the last three decades. He has in fact spent the majority of that time in Israel though he is, as you point out, now living in a settlement in the West Bank. Adrienne was simply trying to make the wider point of his connection to Israel over a long period of time.”

**HERSHL BERMAN**

Program: CBC Radio News

Hershl Berman was disappointed in Mike Hornbrook's description of the Palestinian ambush on four Israeli soldiers. "In his report he describes the three soldiers as having been executed by the Palestinians. That was an inappropriate choice of words. It could imply that they were being punished for a specific offence, and that the Palestinians used appropriate legal avenues to determine their guilt. They were ambushed. They were killed. Perhaps you can suggest that they were murdered. Or perhaps they were casualties in a war. But they were not executed."

Esther Enkin replied. Mr. Hornbrook felt that since three of the soldiers were shot from behind and at close range after they were injured this was an "execution style" killing. However, Ms. Enkin agreed that this was not a good choice of words, since it created such ambiguity. She told Mr. Berman that later in the day, after discussion with editors, they agreed it was more accurate to describe what happened, rather than use a word that is quite loaded.

**STEPHEN BISS**

Program: CBC Radio News

Stephen Biss wrote to "strongly protest the use of the term 'young offenders' to describe young persons who have not yet been found guilty at TYAC detention centre in Toronto [Toronto Youth Assessment Centre]. More adults and young persons are detained in Ontario before a finding of guilt than after. It is wrong to presume them guilty by using the pejorative term 'offender.'"

Jamie Purdon replied. He pointed out that the facility is widely referred to, including on the Ministry website, as a "young offender institution" but that this may simply be reflecting the language of the old Young Offenders Act. "Nevertheless, I appreciate your point, since the majority of those in TYAC are on remand and have not been convicted; it is misleading to refer to them as 'young offenders.' The new Youth Criminal Justice Act seems to prefer 'young persons in conflict with the law,' a rather awkward term....I think 'youth in detention' is more accurate and the term we prefer."

**IAN BLACK**

Program: Canada Now, CBC TV

Ian Black said that during *Canada Now* on Dec. 1 there was a segment about AIDS and a picture of US president George Bush was put on the screen. There was no mention of Bush or any reference to the US during the segment. "If this was a simple error, why not just say so at some point during the remaining broadcast?"



Without such a comment, one can only conclude that the crew involved is unwilling to acknowledge errors, did not notice (unlikely) or put up the picture on purpose in order to promote a negative impression of Mr. Bush in the mind of the viewer for reasons unknown.”

Cynthia Kinch replied. She apologized for the error. The picture of George Bush was intended to accompany another story. “I can assure you that there was no intent to tarnish Mr. Bush.”

**EARL BLACKLOCK**

Program: CBC Online News

Earl Blacklock complained about the use of the term ‘right wing,’ which he felt was used as a pejorative. He felt that ‘conservative’ should be used instead. In the CBC Online News overnight digest, the headline was “Right-wing groups battle gay marriages;” the summary was “Conservative family and religious organizations opposed to same-sex marriage plan to ask the Supreme Court of Canada to make these unions illegal.”

Lisa Khoo replied. “I agree with you that conservative is a more accurate term to describe your beliefs, and we will change it in the headline. But I believe the terms can sometimes still be valid to describe groups on either side of the political spectrum. I agree with you wholeheartedly that neither term should be used as a pejorative, and in reading the story I don’t think that the term was used that way. I’m sorry if it caused you offence, but I don’t agree that the offence was intentional.”

**CHARLES BOULET**

Program: The Current, CBC Radio

Charles Boulet felt that *The Current* should have used more caution when they interviewed a woman who gave explicit details on how to effect identity fraud.

Jamie Purdon replied. He suggested that a vast majority of their listeners are honest, and perhaps somewhat naive about how easy it is to get someone else’s identity. “All that being said, after listening to the interview, I do agree that we might have been more circumspect about how explicit we were in the details. I will definitely heed your advice to be very sensitive about these types of discussions in the future.”

**RANDY BROWN**

Program: Canada Now, CBC TV

Randy Brown complained about what he felt was a biased set of on-the-street interviews about same-sex marriage.

Liz Hughes replied. She thought that they had balanced their coverage of the same-sex marriage issue over time, but that he had a point about the street interviews on that day.

**BETTE BURNS**

Program: CBC Radio News, Vancouver

Bette Burns wrote: “Just prior to the 6 pm news, you had a reporter very carefully explain that the officers were charged with assault and that they did not ‘beat’ the victims. The difference was clearly understood from the interview, yet not 5 minutes later, your news report said that the officers were convicted of ‘beating.’ It is bad enough that this is careless reporting, but I think it is yet another example of CBC’s slanted editorializing of the News.”

Joan Andersen replied. “It would appear to be a matter of interpretation as to whether all or some of what happened in Stanley Park constituted a beating. Several other media sources thought it did and used the term ‘beating’ to describe what happened. Both our reporters refrained from describing the events in that manner. However, the desk editor who wrote the introduction to the second report did and upon reflection, I find this to be regrettable. Having said that, I don’t see this as a case of ‘careless reporting’ as you suggested...I think both our reporters presented fair and accurate coverage of the story that day.”

**STEVEN CHAIMBERG**

Program: CBC Online News

Steven Chaimberg complained about an Online report about the Middle East conflict.

Lisa Khoo replied. She clarified some of the copy where she thought they should have used more precise language, and told Mr. Chaimberg that she believed their reporting to be fair and balanced.

**ERIC COOMBES**

Program: CBC Radio News

Eric Coombes wrote: “Why is CBC 1 so exact in some things and derelict in others? A major winter storm heading our way and yet the forecast at 1705, Saturday was cut

off so that that nauseating monotonous female voice could chime in to tell us what the station is. Didn't you learn enough during 'Juan'?

Jamie Purdon replied. "Clearly, we made an error." He said the forecasts are pre-recorded shortly before broadcast, and at the appropriate moment inserted into the main network feed from Toronto. But the system operates on very tight tolerances. If the weather starts a few seconds late or was recorded longer than the 25 seconds allotted, it will be cut off by the station ID, which is what Jamie thought happened in this case. He said the chief technician in the Maritimes was aware of Mr. Coombes' concern and was going to check that it was an inadvertent error and not the result of a technical problem with the system.

### **JACK DAVIS**

Program: CBC Newsworld (News Crawl)

Jack Davis complained that the Newsworld crawl referred to "Israel's defense minister," using the American spelling.

Cynthia Kinch replied. It was an error. She pointed out that the scroll is written seconds -- at best minutes -- before it is seen by viewers. And there is no spell checker, as he presumed, beyond the news editor who wrote it. She sent a copy of the correspondence to those who write the scroll.

### **SUSAN DELACOURT**

Program: CBC Radio & TV News

Susan Delacourt was distressed to hear CBC TV and radio giving credit to The Globe and Mail for the story on Sheila Copps being wooed by the NDP. "As you can see by the wire story copied below, this 'scoop' was actually the work of Canadian Press - more specifically, Joan Bryden, who freelances for CP and has been covering the Liberals for almost 20 years."

CBC Radio's Dave Taylor said that Radio News did not give the Globe credit. They had their own story from Tom Parry on *World Report*. CBC TV's Keith Boag replied: "This is overboard nonsense. We seem to have made an honest but understandable mistake which we should try not to repeat, but there was nothing deliberate about it. We don't need to be lectured about 'giving credit where credit is due,' after all that is precisely what we were attempting to do. The Globe, on the other hand, did deliberately scalp CP's story and pass it off as their own..."

**MARK DUNN**

Program: As It Happens, CBC Radio

Mark Dunn, Director of Communications with Citizenship & Immigration Canada, complained about the May 19, 2003, broadcast of *As It Happens*. "...It appeared to me the show was nothing more than a one-sided infomercial for lawyer David Matas. If it's CBC policy to allow self-serving lawyers to blather on about their unfounded and sometimes narrow minded views of immigration policy, then fine. But surely a producer at the taxpayer-funded network could have picked up a phone and either called the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada or the office of Immigration Minister Denis Coderre for reaction. This did not happen and this troubles me. There are two sides to every story."

Lynn Munkley replied. "I do accept that the story would have benefited from a response from Minister Dennis Coderre. However, I do not agree with your critique of the interview as 'self-serving blather' on 'unfounded and sometimes narrow minded views about immigration policy.'"

**DAN DYCK**

Program: The National, CBC TV

Dan Dyck, Director of Communications with the Mennonite Church of Canada, complained about a report about mad cow disease. He said the reporter made reference to the farm where the diseased cow came from as being operated by a 'Mennonite' farmer. "What does the identification of one's religious or denominational affiliation have to do with this story?...Please refrain from such needless and damaging labeling and stereotyping in the future. Drawing out differences between people of various religious affiliations or ethnicities is counter-productive for society, and as I understand it, is also contrary to CBC's mandate of bringing the country together."

Jonathan Whitten replied. "You are absolutely right. Please accept our apologies. I have shared your comments with the staff of *The National*, and will make sure the point is made to all."

**RON EDWARDS**

Program: CBC Radio News

Ron Edwards said that on the 7 am radio news on Jan. 27 there was an item about Belinda Stronach. He objected to the statement that "she was going to take her 'so-called' ideas to Montreal today. Why would you editorialize on the facts by using the

words ‘so called’ in a national news broadcast...Let me make the judgements -- I just want the facts from you, especially in national news programs.”

Jamie Purdon replied. “While, with respect, I disagree that the report was in any way biased, I do agree that the report’s conclusion could have been more clearly expressed...Ms. Murray ended the report saying, ‘Stronach, someone who cannot speak French, will take her so-called campaign of ideas to Quebec later this week’....However, I agree that using the words ‘so-called’ could be misunderstood as disparaging of her policies, when there was certainly no such intent. What Ms. Murray meant, and might have said, was that Ms. Stronach will take ‘what she is calling’ her campaign of ideas to Quebec.”

**FALUN DAFA ASSOCIATION OF CANADA, DAVID TOMPKINS OF THE WORLD ORGANIZATION TO INVESTIGATE THE PERSECUTION OF FALUN GONG, MARIE BEAULIEU, VON KOUVALIER**

Program: CBC News Morning

Many people wrote to complain about a story on *CBC News Morning* on December 31, 2003, that reported that China planned to execute a man it said was a mass murderer and member of Falun Gong. They felt that information from the Chinese government concerning Falun Gong was neither factual nor credible and that CBC should not have broadcast the story. The CBC’s Cynthia Kinch said they were careful to ensure that the information in the report was clearly attributed to the Chinese government, and a follow-up story on January 7, 2004, stated that representatives of Falun Gong in Canada challenged the statements made in the original story and claimed they had been victims of continual persecution by the Chinese authorities. The Falun Dafa Association and others felt that the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners was a matter of fact and should have been stated that way in the Jan. 7 follow-up report.

Cynthia Kinch replied that, “Upon reflection, I agree with you to the extent that I think the story’s last sentence should have said, ‘They say...’ rather than ‘They claim...’ I appreciate your view that since the story comes from the Chinese government it is not credible and that CBC should not report it. However, it is a view I do not share....To select stories based only on the views or the credibility of the source...would be a truly dangerous practice for any broadcaster.”

**GERALD FOX**

Program: CBC Online News

Gerald Fox complained about what he felt were inaccuracies in the online report, “Poll shows scandal eroding Liberal support” (Feb. 17, 2004, 14:14:03).

Mary Sheppard replied. She agreed that the story would have been clearer had certain information been included.

**TREVOR FRITH**

Program: CBC Radio News

Trevor Frith complained about the use of the term “the Muskokas” on the weather forecast for Muskoka after the 1 pm news each Sunday on CBC Radio from Huntsville.

Language counselor Judy Maddren replied. “The correct usage is listed in our Language File, but as often happens, if someone thinks they know the correct term, they have no reason to check the file!” The Toronto assignment editor who liaises with the regions spoke with the station manager in Thunder Bay, where the weather report is produced. They expected the problem to be corrected.

Mr. Frith wrote a month later, saying that on Huntsville CBC someone said “and for Parry Sound and The Muskoka.” “I appreciate the effort. We will get this right yet.” Judy Maddren replied: “When your note was first forwarded to me about ‘The Muskokas’ I tracked down the source, and got a message through, emphasizing ‘Muskoka.’ We will try again. But as you say, improvement has been made -- the ‘s’ has been dropped!”

**TOM GAFFNEY**

Program: The National

Tom Gaffney complained about a report by Wendy Mesley concerning car thefts. He said that she talked about “Toronto Police detective Bill Goetz” but that on the wall behind him in the office where he was being interviewed was the crest of the Halton Regional Police. Later, the super indicated that he was with the York Regional Police. “So the viewer is left wondering: is Goetz a member of the Toronto, York or Halton police services?”

Jonathan Whitten replied. “You’re right, the piece was confusing.” The producer said that for the sake of people not from the GTA she decided to call the York police officer a Toronto police officer. Jonathan said that even calling him a Toronto area police officer would have been better. Most of the evidence for the case was at Halton headquarters (it was partially a joint investigation) and Mr. Goetz was interviewed while he happened to be there. Jonathan said that to avoid confusion it might have been better to keep the Halton crest out of the shot.

**BILL GOY**

Program: CBC TV News

Bill Goy complained that he had not received a response to his e-mail to Tony Burman about a weather-related story. He said CBC reported that Air Canada had run out of de-icing fluid and had shut down its North American operations. He checked and found that this was wrong. He felt that it was damaging to Air Canada.

Tony Burman replied. They did make an error about the de-icing fluid, and corrected it. (It was the airport that ran out of de-icing fluid).

**STUART GRAHAM**

Program: CBC News: Sunday

Stuart Graham received a request from *CBC News: Sunday* to appear on air to present a twenty second excerpt of an e-mail that he had sent in response to the previous week's show. He declined as he didn't feel that his opinion could be squeezed into a twenty second soundbite. He asked that if it couldn't be presented in its entirety no part of it be presented. He was informed that although the program would not use his e-mail, there is a disclaimer on the CBC website that "essentially makes my communication with the CBC the CBC's intellectual property. I certainly object to this. However, what bothers me the most is that this disclaimer is nowhere in evidence during the course of the broadcast that I witnessed nor, at the very least, is its existence on the CBC website referred to when feedback is solicited from the audience and the show's contact information is presented." He said if he had known that his intellectual property was going to be appropriated, he would have thought twice about contacting the program.

Tony Burman replied. "Sending a letter to the editor of a newspaper implies that you want it to be printed. Similarly, I think there is a reasonable expectation in sending a letter to the electronic media...that it will be used on the program. Nevertheless, I agree with you that that expectation should be clear and apparent." He pointed out that there are disclaimers on the *CBC News: Sunday* Feedback page and on the Contact Us page. But he noted that it is also possible to write directly to the program without seeing the disclaimer. He thought that information should be immediately clear to anyone who sends their comments to CBC programs and said he had taken steps to see that that was done.

**J. GRINDLER**

Program: Out Front, CBC Radio

J. Grindler complained about the Nov. 25 edition of *Out Front*. “Just as the kids came in for lunch and heard the words ‘cat shit’ on the radio, and we were discussing it, we heard ‘get the fuck outa here’ before the radio could be shut off! What are you trying to prove using language like that at this time of the day? Clean this up, before it becomes the norm.”

Lynda Shorten replied. She explained the reasons for using the language but acknowledged that “in hindsight, I feel we were wrong not to air some kind of language warning, and...I would and will do so in the future.”

### **RON HAGGART**

Program: The National, CBC TV

Ron Haggart complained about the June 23 viewer response segment concerning an earlier story on hydroponic marijuana growing in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. “In coming out of the piece, Peter Mansbridge said this had been a response to an earlier story from **Calgary**.” He said he watched the 10 pm *National* to see if the error was corrected, but it wasn’t. He said this “violated a basic rule of journalism -- if you can’t get the little things right, no one is going to believe you on the big things...”

Jonathan Whitten replied. He agreed that the choice of the little ‘snippet’ prior to the Your Turn was not the best choice. The report was actually about grow operations in Calgary. A small portion of the item looked at the situation in the Vancouver area, and that, “unfortunately, was the bit the editor decided to pull.”

### **TOM HARRIS**

Program: CBC Online News

Tom Harris wanted to know who wrote a particular article on the CBC website so that he could “help them better understand the actual physics involved...Statements such as ‘the government lists dozens of ways to slow down climate change’ are absurd...”

Mary Sheppard replied. “I asked my staff to check the story and indeed you are correct. I regret that this error slipped through our editing process.”

### **MICHAEL HARWOOD**

Program: The Current, CBC Radio



Michael Harwood complained about a comment made by Anna Maria Tremonti on the June 5 broadcast of *The Current*. He said her statement was “an egregious example of inaccurate reporting, and also betrays Ms. Tremonti’s anti-American bias as it relates to the American intervention in Iraq. Ms. Tremonti would have the listener believe that Mr. Wolfowitz [US Deputy Defense Secretary] admitted the United States invaded Iraq as a matter of economic necessity, because the U.S. needed Iraq’s oil. Further, Ms. Tremonti indicates that North Korea was spared because it did not possess oil reserves and was therefore not an attractive target.”

Jamie Purdon replied. “I believe you have a legitimate point, that we did in fact address this morning on *The Current*...Dismissing the argument that oil was a factor in the Iraq equation is probably not prudent, but I would agree that we did not give the comments the proper context, and implied that the Deputy Defense Secretary stated it was a primary factor.”

#### **CHRISTOPHER HAZOU**

Program: The National, CBC TV

Christopher Hazou complained about Adrienne Arsenault’s report on June 19, 2003, in which he said she used the term ‘targeted killings’ to describe Israeli assassinations, a phrase he said was “invented by the Israeli government for the express purpose of disguising the fact that these ‘targeted killings’ are actually assassinations, which are illegal according to international law.”

Jonathan Whitten said he agreed with Mr. Hazou’s point but said that as a practice, unless they are referring to, or translating, a government statement, they don’t use the phrase targeted killings. Mr. Hazou insisted that Ms. Arsenault quite clearly used the phrase and was not “referring to, or translating, a government statement.” Mr. Whitten replied: “Yes, I think you are correct about Thursday night. It was wrong, and I’ll try to make sure it doesn’t happen again.”

#### **CHRISTOPHER HAZOU**

Program: Sunday Report, CBC TV

Christopher Hazou complained about Adrienne Arsenault’s report on Sunday, Oct. 26, in which she stated that three Israeli soldiers had been murdered in the settlement of Netzarim. “I would like to know how and why a professional journalist would use the word ‘murder’ to describe the killing of soldiers of an army that has been illegally occupying--according to the UN and the overwhelming majority of the world--another people for nearly four decades....”

Jonathan Whitten replied. “You are absolutely right that murder is not the appropriate term in this case, and I apologize on behalf of our news desk and on behalf of Adrienne for not spotting it.”

**BILL HOPKINS**

Program: CBC Online News

Bill Hopkins complained about an online report with the headline, “Bono to clean out his filthy mouth.” Irish rocker Bono had promised not to curse if he won a Golden Globe award. Mr. Hopkins wrote: “Excuse me, but who appointed the CBC as guardian of our morality? I find it disturbing that the CBC would stoop to ‘labeling’ the stylemakers of our generation. I do not agree with the use of profanity on TV, but I think the CBC would be better off calling the RCMP’s invasion of an Ontario reporter’s home and office as ‘filthy,’ not the innocent remarks of a contemporary social commentator. The article was well written, and does not attempt to slam Bono as ‘filthy.’ Whomever assigned the headline needs a talking to...”

Mary Sheppard replied. She agreed that the headline was inappropriate and should not have been used.

**NICOLAS IBARRA**

Program: Newsworld Morning

Nicolas Ibarra complained about a news report about the upcoming Pan American games in the Dominican Republic on *Newsworld Morning*, in which the English translation of an interview in Spanish was inaccurate.

Cynthia Kinch replied. “With respect, I think you are exaggerating in saying that ‘nothing’ was translated correctly, although to be sure there were some differences. I should mention that the translation was done under some deadline pressure by a local translator in the Dominican Republic...Of course, translations may vary somewhat, but while the English translation used conveyed the substance of the priest’s comments, I agree that it might have more accurately reflected what he said in Spanish.”

**DANIEL ISAACS**

Program: The Early Edition, CBC Radio Vancouver

Daniel Isaacs complained about some features on the Vancouver morning radio program that he felt were “slanted in favour of the legalization of marijuana.”

Joan Andersen replied. “Considering our coverage as a whole, I believe we were balanced and unbiased in our approach. However, if you had only listened to the 7 to 8 hour of *The Early Edition* on that Tuesday, I can see that you would think otherwise....In retrospect, it would have been better if we had been able to present contrasting views on that particular morning between 7 and 8, but it’s not always possible to reach our goal of being balanced when it comes to a specific time period.”

**PAUL JAMIESON**

Program: The National, CBC TV

Paul Jamieson complained about a graphic that provided the following details: “Since September 2000, more than 150 militants have been killed in Israeli raids (Source: Palestinian medical officials). Since September 2000, more than 460 people have been killed in suicide bombings in Israel (Source: Human Rights Watch).” Mr. Jamieson said that “while these statistics may be accurate they reflect different situations, and it is highly irresponsible to associate civilian deaths with combat deaths...”

Jonathan Whitten replied. “When the graphic ran, it was clear, for many of the reasons you outline in your note, that this was a comparison of apples and oranges. It was therefore immediately pulled, and did not appear in later editions of the program...On behalf of the program, please accept my apologies.”

**ROBERT JEFFERSON**

Program: Newsworld International

Robert Jefferson complained about an incident on Newsworld International. The host introduced an item, but a previous report ran instead, in its entirety. Mr. Jefferson said the host “didn't even bother to apologize for the error. It seems that neither he nor his producers were even aware of the error...Now, this is not an isolated incident, I see such incidents happen quite often on Newsworld...”

Arnold Amber replied. There were technical problems, and it was impossible for the anchor to be put back on air to apologize for the error.

**PETER JOANNOU**

Program: CBC Radio & TV News

Peter Joannou wanted to know why on Nov. 27 “your network was so happy to revel in the glory of hearing that a Saskatchewan Alliance MP had some anti-gay remarks,

whereas today I get absolutely no mention of David Kilgour (Liberal) and his anti-gay remarks?”

Tony Burman replied. He agreed that it was unfair to cover one but not the other. “While, arguably, Mr. Kilgour’s comments did not have the same potential significance, we did not cover them to the extent we should have, either. To be fair, we did carry the story on some editions of CBC Radio’s hourly news and as a brief copy story on *Sunday Report*; nevertheless, we did not give the story the coverage it warranted on any of our networks or CBC News Online. However, the reason had nothing to do with a CBC ‘agenda’ as you feared...Regrettably, in this case, our news gathering system failed. It did not work efficiently enough in bringing the story -- and its importance -- to the attention of the editors and producers preparing news programs. We should have done better.”

### **DOUG JOHNSON**

Program: Canada Now, CBC TV

Doug Johnson complained about what he felt was bias in a report on the Saskatchewan segment of *Canada Now*. He said a reporter described some flyers as hate literature but that near the end of the report a policeman revealed that the flyers did not meet the legal definition of hate literature. “First of all, since no crime was committed, I don’t understand what made this newsworthy. Secondly, words like ‘hate literature’ have a legal definition and their improper use in this report would seem to be for the purpose of leading the viewer to an emotional conclusion.”

Tim May, Edmonton Bureau Chief replied. “Your concerns about the language used in the item are valid. There is one reference to ‘hate propaganda’ and another to ‘hate literature’ and I agree with your assertion that both are inappropriate given the legal definitions of these phrases....I have spoken to the reporter involved and her immediate supervisor and made it clear this item was erroneous and did not meet the standards of CBC News. I offer you my apologies for this mistake and thank you again for bringing this matter to our attention.”

### **MATHEW KANNER**

Program: CBC Online News

Mathew Kanner enjoyed a story on Online News titled “Trading Saddam’s fate on the futures markets,” written by CBC News Online staff. However, he said he then enjoyed it on CNN’s site. He wanted to know where it came from.

Mary Sheppard replied. She said the story was Associated Press wire copy, posted without edit by a new staff member and erroneously attributed to CBC staff. The article was removed from the site.

**JEFFERY KELLY**

Program: CBC Online News (New Brunswick)

Jeffery Kelly wrote that “On more than one occasion I have had reservations of how the CBC New Brunswick website handles political stories. I get a distinct sense of partisanship through the headlines I read, not to mention discrepancies between headline and the factual content of the stories.” He was particularly concerned about reporting of the New Brunswick election campaign.

Mike Linder replied. “After reviewing the article, I agree the headline does not match the content of the story. The headline you suggest would in fact have been a better choice. In reviewing your concern with staff, I don’t believe the headline was motivated by a partisan agenda. I found the story itself to be balanced and accurate -- and in fact provides the information you cite to draw attention to the problem with the headline. I believe the headline on the July 6th story was an attempt at providing context that was not successful, and regret it was chosen.”

**DR. ALBERT KIRSCHEN**

Program: CBC Radio News

Dr. Albert Kirshen complained about “an OUTRAGEOUS turn of phrase” used on the 7 am radio news on Oct. 20, 2003. “When discussing the deaths of 3 Israeli soldiers the announcer stated that they were ‘executed’! I fail to see any justification for this term, usually applied to convicted murderers.”

Esther Enkin replied. She said that one version of Mike Hornbrook’s story made it clearer than the other why he chose the word. “He says that three of the soldiers were shot from behind and at close range after they were injured. He felt this was an ‘execution style’ killing.” Later in the day, after discussion with editors they agreed it was more accurate to describe what happened, rather than use a word that is quite loaded.

**W.J. KLASSEN**

Program: The Current, CBC Radio

W.J. Klassen, President of Friends of the Yukon Wildlife Preserve, felt that information provided in *The Current’s* program about the issue of allowing

individuals to own Yukon wildlife was one-sided and unfair to the individuals personally involved in wildlife ownership and the wildlife ownership debate. "It did not accurately portray the several aspects of the issue."

Andy Clarke, Executive Producer, News & Current Affairs, CBC Radio Ottawa, replied. (He was acting executive producer of *The Current* when the item ran.) "Our intention was to find guests who could debate whether the so-called privatization of wildlife was a good idea. But, as you heard, the debate turned into what ended up being a rather one-sided discussion. Perhaps we should have seen that coming, given the guests selected, but in our pre-interviewing, we thought there might be a way to navigate through the issues in a way that would be fair and balanced. I agree that didn't really happen..."

### **FERG KYLE**

Program: Radio & TV News & Current Affairs

Ferg Kyle submitted several "infuriating errors" in language usage, including: "Febewary -- a month born in the United States and propagated by major networks....Meet with, Talk with -- an attempt to rewrite English grammar to placate wild-eyed officianos of the flower child era; Situation -- a word used instead of the proper term -- Condition..."

Language counselor Judy Maddren replied. She said he was right and she would raise the issues in her weekly messages.

### **ROSEMARY LALONDE**

Program: Sounds Like Canada, CBC Radio

Rosemary Lalonde said she was disappointed that "Sheila Rogers had three panel members discussing same-sex 'marriage' all from the same point of view, that is, they were all very much in favour of same-sex 'marriage.' What will you do to rectify this?"

Anne Penman replied. "I agree with you that the panel did not reflect what Canadians statistically believe on the subject and that we did not do a good job on that day of fairly reflecting public opinion. Other CBC radio shows tackled this issue in September from a wide range of perspectives. Two weeks ago we revisited the issues around sexuality and the church with two interviews about homosexuality and the Anglican Church. This time, we presented both points of view on the subject through the stories of parishioners..."

**DOREEN LALOR**

Program: CBC Radio News

Doreen Lalor wrote: “I thought the news was supposed to be objective. ‘David Orchard and his loyal followers’ do not make mischief in the PC Party. We have been effective and we have followed the rules...”

Susanne Reber replied. “...CBC Parliamentary reporter Susan Murray said that Mr. Orchard did not appear happy that current Conservative Party leader, Peter MacKay, despite his pledge not to do so, was talking with the Canadian Alliance about merging the two parties. She concluded her report by saying that if the merger went ahead, ‘Mr. Orchard could again mobilize his loyal supporters...and he can also make mischief by suggesting to voters that you can’t trust the word of Peter MacKay.’ You felt that the words ‘make mischief’ were unfair to Mr. Orchard. I know that Ms. Murray had no intention of slighting Mr. Orchard or implying that he was anything but serious in his opposition. Nevertheless, I agree that the report would have been clearer had she used different words.”

**JERROLD LANDAU**

Program: CBC Online News

Jerrold Landau had some concerns about an online report about the Middle East peace ‘roadmap.’ “These concerns refer to the latter part of the report, referring to Israel’s ‘mixed messages.’ First of all, the issue of the destruction of the mosque has nothing whatsoever to do with the peace process...Furthermore, regarding the issue of Jewish groups being allowed to visit the Temple Mount. Don’t you think it would have been worthwhile to point out that the site is holy to both Jews and Moslems...I ask that you do your best to present the news as is, and not try to read in mixed messages where there are none.”

Lisa Khoo replied. She clarified some of the copy where she thought they should have used more precise language.

**TIM LEMIEUX**

Program: The National, CBC TV

Tim Lemieux noticed that *The National* referred to Richard Myers as the “Chair” of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. “That is not his title. He is the ChairMAN of the Joint Chiefs. I realize that the CBC has a fondness for ‘gender neutral’ language, but in this case it’s simply incorrect reporting. It isn’t up to the politically correct editors to decide what other people’s titles should be. Should you not be reporting what they actually call themselves?”

Jonathan Whitten replied, saying *The National* would refer to that position as “chairman” in future.

**ALLAN LEVINE**

Program: CBC Radio (various programs)

Allan Levine had several complaints/observations related to the conflict in the Middle East. (1) On a late-night re-broadcast “dealing with a garden or some such, a particular bedding plant came from ‘Palestine,’ which is unacceptable. Palestine was a British Mandate, and the place is called Israel. Palestinians stole their name from the original Palestinians, who were Jews...” (2) In a re-broadcast on *Richardson’s Roundup*, Elinor Wachtel interviewed a scholar who referred to “a number of Islamic rebellions/movements, including ‘OCCUPIED PALESTINE,’ and Elinor Wachtel, who is presumably Jewish, should have ceased sucking up to the scholar and explained at that time that the name of the country is Israel.”

Esther Enkin replied. She was unable to address his first point because he did not provide the time or date of what he heard. Concerning his second point, she wrote: “Mr. Winchester (author of ‘Krakatoa’) may well have inadvertently combined two concepts: The Occupied Territories and Palestine. I agree that the interviewer should have sought clarification here, but since this was a subordinate idea, she opted to allow Mr. Winchester to express his thought about Islamic militancy uninterrupted. Nevertheless, I appreciate your point that he should have been clearer.”

**HOWARD LIEBMAN**

Program: CBC Online News

Howard Liebman complained that “Your on-line article ‘Gaza Raid Kills 14’ is yet another example of the CBC’s partial Mid East reporting which fails to meet the CBC’s own journalistic standards and is woefully short of international journalistic norms.”

Mary Sheppard replied. She agreed that rather than “occupying forces” it would have been better to describe them as “Israeli forces” or -- as he suggested -- the “Israeli Army” or “IDF.”

**JOHN LOCH**

Program: The Current, CBC Radio



John Loch complained about the lead-in to *The Current* on Feb. 6, 2004. “The announcer indicated that one positive consequence of the possible cooling of temperatures in Europe would be not having to see ‘thousands of Germans’ wearing their Speedos. Can you imagine the consequences to that announcer, *The Current* and the CBC if he had said Iranians, Egyptians, Québécois, aboriginals, European women, Black Europeans, European gays, (insert any minority you wish to mention), etc. etc.? What duplicity, how hypocritical, how typically ‘politically correct.’ How shameful. Move over Don Cherry, we’ve now got biased/discriminatory comments emanating from actual CBC employees. Where’s the Human Rights Commissioner, the Official Languages Commissioner, the CBC Ombudsman?”

Pam Bertrand replied. “I realize that satire is a matter of taste and one’s appreciation of the humour or irony involved is a subjective matter. However, it is always important to avoid ‘the cheap shot’ in regard to a specific group, gender, race or culture.” She found the commentary regarding bathing attire to be fair game. “However, in linking Germans to a negative comment about Speedos, we have obviously crossed the line in your view, and I’m confident that you are not alone in this opinion. In retrospect I think we could have made the same point without the use of a specific nationality. We need to be more alert to the negative impression that can be conveyed in mixing satirical material with comments about a particular nationality.”

#### **CRAIG MARTIN**

Program: The National, CBC TV

Craig Martin complained about a report on *The National* on May 29, 2003, about the missile defence system being created by the U.S. and whether or not Canada should participate. “During this program I was stunned when the news anchor actually stated that not one of the missile defense tests to date have been successful, this is an absolute and outright mistake. There have been several tests of the missile defense system and some of those tests most certainly were successful.”

Jonathan Whitten replied. He said the producer’s feeling was “that the system as it ultimately must perform (with multi-decoy killing capability etc.) has not yet been proven. However, the way the piece was written did not convey those subtleties. As such, it did make a statement that was misleading. After a number of failures, the system, in a very controlled setting, had indeed had some successful intercepts. During last night’s program, we issued a correction and made that point.”

#### **KEVIN McDONALD**

Program: The National, CBC TV

Kevin McDonald took issue with the use of the words 'huge,' 'big' and 'large' to describe anti-war demonstrations held across Canada. "Even if 31,000 demonstrated on one day of protests -- a number not reached by your, CP or independent newspaper or television counts -- that would only be 1/100th of the population. That is not even remotely 'huge' crowds..."

Jonathan Whitten replied, saying he felt comfortable in defending the use of the word 'huge' as an adjective defined simply as 'of exceedingly large size.' "On the issue of our earlier piece on demonstrations in Canada, perhaps we could have been clearer in the piece. It was not assigned as a look at that day's demonstrations, with an attempt to gauge their exact sizes, so any comparison with what was written in the newspapers the next day is not entirely relevant. The piece was a feature look at the demonstrations that had taken place in both Canada and the U.S. up to that point in the conflict, and an attempt to find out if these were veteran anti-war demonstrators, or people who were new to the scene. In illustrating the piece, Natalie Clancy pointed out that there had been huge demonstrations in Canada. Perhaps large would have been a more appropriate word, but I'm still comfortable that some of the demonstrations, and certainly the ones Natalie showed, could be termed as 'huge.' I will however, on your behalf, take a more careful look at the employment of that particular term in the future."

#### **WALLY MORAN**

Program: CBC Online News

Wally Moran said that CBC News Online made a serious error in a report about rallies held by supporters and opponents of same-sex marriage. The report said "They want Ottawa to reject Bill C-250, which would redefine the definition of marriage to include same-sex couples." He said that Bill C-250 has nothing to do with same-sex marriage, but that under the proposed bill "any public commentary equating same sex marriage as harmful or wrong or perverted, will...be a criminal act..."

Mary Sheppard agreed that their description of Bill C-250 was in error. The bill was intended to amend one of the hate propaganda sections of the Criminal Code, making it a criminal act to "advocate genocide" of an "identifiable group." If passed, it would include sexual orientation in the definition of identifiable group along with colour, race, religion and ethnic origin.

#### **PETER NADLER**

Program: CBC Online News

Peter Nadler complained about an online report, “14 killed in Gaza refugee camp battle.” He noted that CBC says it doesn’t wish to attach a politically charged label to any group and take sides in the conflict. He felt that the report was the “utmost in CBC hypocrisy” in that the article referred to the IDF as “occupying forces.”

Mary Sheppard replied. “I agree, the story would have better described them as “Israeli forces.”

### **GLEN NESS**

Program: Metro Morning, CBC Radio Toronto

Glen Ness complained about the use of the term “whitey” on *Metro Morning*.

Susan Marjetti explained that the reporter had used the word in an effort to describe the appeal of a very spicy dish she had tasted on the listeners’ behalf the night before. She agreed that it was an inappropriate description and shared her views with the programmers.

### **DERYK NORTON**

Program: Sunday Report, CBC TV

Deryk Norton complained about a report from Iraq on Sept. 7 that showed a clip of demonstrating Iraqi males who complained that they had not been paid for several months. He said this was used as an example of Iraqi citizen unrest and opposition to the US presence in Iraq. “Other news channels showed film of the same demonstration but they also mentioned that the demonstrators were former employees of Saddam Hussein’s palaces. I suggest that the CBC reporter deliberately omitted this fact in order to slant his report in the direction of the usual CBC anti-Americanism.”

Jonathan Whitten replied at length. Concerning the charge of anti-Americanism, he said he could only hope that viewers understand that “it is our job to look at world events with a critical eye, and to try and provide a balanced picture of what is happening.” Concerning the particular report, they did get it wrong. They took a voice track from a freelance reporter in Baghdad and matched it with pictures provided by a news agency. The desk editor in Toronto wasn’t clear to the reporter about who the people in the demonstration were, though that information was available in the paperwork that accompanied the feed. The script, in turn, did not reflect that important information.

**GABRIEL PATRICH**

Program: CBC Radio News

Gabriel Patrich complained about a report on *World Report* concerning the killing by Israel of Sheik Yassin. He said he was described as a quadriplegic and as a spiritual leader. “Not once is it mentioned that he was the mastermind and direct responsible for the assassination of children on their way to school...”

Jamie Purdon replied. Mr. Patrich was right that correspondent Michael McAuliffe described Sheik Yassin as the “spiritual leader of Hamas” and that this did not follow the usual practice of attribution (for example, “Palestinians say he was a spiritual leader”). “That said, I do not think the story left any doubt that Hamas was responsible for suicide bombings...”

**SCOTT PIATKOWSKI**

Program: Viewpoint, CBC Online News

Scott Piatkowski complained about Larry Zolf's *Viewpoint* column about NDP leader Jack Layton. “In addition to these clear errors, Zolf repeatedly makes sweeping generalizations without backing them up.”

Mary Sheppard replied. She said that there were two inadvertent errors in the column and that they had posted a note to that effect under Corrections and Clarifications. “To be sure, Mr. Zolf's is one point of view. But it is not the only one. The CBC has an obligation under the federal Broadcasting Act to offer a range of views on matters of public interest and concern. And I believe we are doing that.”

**FAIZUL RAHIM**

Program: CBC Radio News

Faizul Rahim complained that in a report on *World Report* on March 2, 2004, CBC Radio used the word ‘Jihad’ to refer to those who murdered a large number of Shiites in Iraq. “This word was inappropriately used on World News and as a consequence conjures up impressions of Islam as a terrorist religion....The word ‘Jihad’ literally means to struggle or strive or to work for something with determination...”

Jamie Purdon replied. “I agree with you that ‘Jihad’ is a far more complex concept with deeply layered historical and religious meaning not adequately reflected in this context where ‘retaliation’ may have been a more appropriate word.”

**GLEN RIDGWAY**

Program: CBC Newsworld

Glen Ridgway complained about a report on Newsworld on April 23, 2003, about criminal charges against former employees of Walkerton's water system. He said the newsreader said that "some people felt that 'others' should have been charged. As this comment was being made, the news broadcast aired some video of former Premier Mike Harris alighting from his motor vehicle." He said that the implication was that Mike Harris should have been charged, and that this was "clearly false and slanderous and sleazy."

Mark Bulgutch replied. "...I agree that we did some things poorly. We really shouldn't have spoken in such general terms about 'some people' who said 'others' should have been charged. Our practice is to be as precise as possible in our reporting. In this case, we should have quoted real people who expressed the opinion we reported. But there was nothing wrong with the facts. Real people did express that opinion...."

**DOMINIQUE RITTER**

Program: Daybreak website (Montreal)

Dominique Ritter complained about "a fault-ridden report that aired on *The Online Press Review* on Nov. 28, the numerous typos that appear on the website, the internet links that do not work, and the fact that, in the last week and a half, no one has bothered to correct these errors."

Patricia Pleszczynska replied. There were problems with the server and the reporter had to post her item several times. She used Spellcheck several times but forgot to use it the last time she tried to post.

Ms. Ritter thanked Patricia for her reply. "Let me be clear: I have no objection to using humour in reporting; what I object to is the content of her report that had no bearing on the subject...It was lousy journalism." Patricia thanked her and said, "Point taken."

**STEPHEN ROSS**

Program: CBC Radio News

Stephen Ross said he gets frustrated "with the unequal coverage across the country. If something affects an area near Toronto it is big news. Elsewhere, less so. The power failures this weekend are yet another example. The power outages in Ontario have been a main story on the news for two days now -- affecting several 10's of

thousands of customers. At the same time the power outages in New Brunswick -- affecting over 25,000 homes and businesses yesterday, have not been mentioned on the national newscasts at all..."

Jamie Purdon replied. "While the Ontario storm affected more people for a longer time, the New Brunswick story -- as you pointed out -- had a proportionally greater impact. I agree with you that we should have covered it." He also thanked him for pointing out the distinction between 'customers' and 'people' without power.

### **TERENCE ROWELL**

Program: Newsworld Today

Terence Rowell said he listened to Adrienne Arsenault use the words "evil trickster" and "hateful" in describing the Palestinian-mother suicide bomber. "If the CBC had used words such as this to describe an Israeli extra-judicial killing of Palestinians, or a gunship-based rocket attack on a refugee camp...the CBC would have been under immediate attack and the reporter would no doubt have been highly censured....While I am obviously very sympathetic to the Palestinian people, I believe I can recognize bias in reporting (whether based in commission or omission)." He continued to watch Newsworld as he was writing and noticed that two subsequent versions of Adrienne's report did not contain the "evil trickster" or "hateful" comments. He was interested in knowing how reportage evolves.

Cynthia Kinch replied. "While Ms. Arsenault did use those words, with respect, I disagree with your assessment that the report was biased." Concerning Adrienne's use of the word 'hateful' she said: "In the context of the report, in which throughout she has attributed the views she expressed as being those of the Israeli soldiers, I think it is clear that it is the soldiers who consider the act to be hateful. Certainly, that is the attribution Ms. Arsenault intended, although I think it might have been expressed more clearly." She explained how stories are handled differently throughout the day.

### **GUS SAVOIE**

Program: CBC Online News

Mr. Savoie said he enjoyed CBC News "for being one of the better sources of information in the world" but was disturbed to find an online report about Liza Minelli's separation.

Mary Sheppard wrote to Mr. Savoie. "The story was news in that it just broke. However, I do agree with you that we shouldn't have written it; that it is not the kind

of news we do. We do arts news but not entertainment unless we can find a Canadian angle. This story did not meet this criteria.”

**KELLEY SHERWOOD**

Program: Metro Morning, CBC Radio Toronto

Kelley Sherwood said that Andy Barrie mentioned that every poll he had seen showed around 80% of Canadians opposed to the war in Iraq. “However, I was able to find two very recent polls that a growing number of Canadians (at least in English Canada) are concerned about our government’s decision not to back our historical allies and a majority would have supported our government’s decision to go to war. Is this an example of poor fact checking or yet another demonstration of the CBC’s blatant anti-American bias?”

Susan Marjetti replied. She said that Andy Barrie “recalled a number that was misleading” and that “In any event, the purpose of the question Mr. Barrie put to Mr. and Mrs. Patterson was simply to gauge their reaction to their son fighting in a war that a lot of Canadians and the Canadian government did not support. So although the number was wrong, I think the point of the question remained.”

**HARVEY STARK**

Program: Sunday Report, CBC TV

Harvey Stark wrote: “Once again the CBC displays its tireless predictable leftist bias when reporting on the Conservative Party and Stephen Harper. The gratuitous statement that the ‘party is fragile’ on the 21st evening newscast is opinion better suited for an editorial and has no place as part of an objective newscast...”

Jonathan Whitten replied. He agreed that a better word than fragile could have been used, but took exception to Mr. Stark’s painting of *Sunday Report* as a mouthpiece for the government. “To that accusation, I would remind you that a few seconds after the ‘fragile but united’ statement, Eric says that ‘for the first time in years, the opposition seems to have the momentum.’”

**HOWARD STEIN**

Program: CBC Radio News

Howard Stein wrote: “The reporter this morning on CBC Radio’s *World Report* stated that the fence proposed between Israel and the West Bank is an electrified fence. According to the Israeli Foreign Minister’s Office, it is not: ‘It is not a militarized barrier -- using an electrified fence or minefields -- as in other conflict

zones.’ Because of such inaccuracies, many people get the feeling that the CBC is biased against Israel.”

Jamie Purdon replied. “I agree with you that it would be clearer to say ‘electronic fencing.’” (It will be able to pinpoint the location of any disturbance along its length.)

**JOANNE THIBAUT**

Program: Canada Now, CBC TV

Joanne Thibault complained about inappropriate behaviour on the part of a CBC Manitoba sports reporter. When a young baseball player mentioned during an interview with Mike Beauregard that he appreciated being able to book a massage after his game, Beauregard interjected with the question, “With a girl?” Ms. Thibault said, “Beauregard imposed his own sexual overtones into the interview...” and “also put the player in the uncomfortable position of being implicated in Beauregard’s sexual innuendo.”

Christian Côté, Deputy Bureau Chief, CBC TV Manitoba, replied. “I agree the comment was inappropriate, and in hindsight, better judgment should have prevailed. I can assure you appropriate measures have been taken to ensure this does not happen in future.”

**DAVID VAN BLARCOM**

Program: CBC Radio News

David Van Blarcom was “disappointed that CBC Radio chose to headline a 6:00 a.m. news story this morning that the Anglican diocese was closing a church because it refused to bless same sex unions. The story that followed made clear that this was not the case, but CBC had chosen to take the yellow journalistic low road of trying to stir up listeners with an inflammatory headline, which it knew to be false.”

Jamie Purdon replied. He agreed that the headline could have been clearer.

**OZREN VUKOBRAT**

Program: Connections, CBC Radio

Ozren Vukobrat complained about a Radio Australia documentary about immigration that ran as part of CBC Radio’s *Connections* series about immigration. He felt that the program contained some serious factual mistakes. “This type of ‘embedded’ and hard-to-explain-to-ordinary-people spin not only fails to bring reconciliation to all



affected, but quite contrary, enflames and engulfs the conflict, as it is being perceived as a deliberate act of political propaganda on behalf of one party.”

Jennifer McGuire replied. “The documentary could have been clearer in placing the area and setting out the political situation.”

**PAUL WARREN**

Program: CBC News: Sunday, CBC TV

Paul Warren complained about host Evan Solomon’s comment on November 2, 2003, that “we (the viewers) should not forget that after the BC NDP had sworn that their last budget was balanced, it was subsequently revealed that they had in fact concealed a \$5 billion deficit. As someone who was involved in the preparations of the 2000/01 and 2001/02 BC budgets, and has taken an interest in the recent fiscal history of that province I know this to be a serious misrepresentation of the facts, and believe that it should be publicly acknowledged as such by ‘Sunday’ at the earliest possible opportunity.”

Stuart Coxe replied: “Evan spoke to Paul Warren and issued an on air apology.”

**JOHN WILSON**

Program: Canada Now, CBC TV

John Wilson was disappointed with the part of the Dec. 16 edition of *Canada Now* that dealt with Ontario Power Generation’s financial status. “Monica’s interview with Energy Probe head Tom Adams certainly wasn’t news. Without producing any information or evidence, Tom accused OPG of manipulating electricity market prices for political reasons....Your viewers deserve better than unsubstantiated accusations. At the very least there should have been an opposing view.”

Liz Hughes replied. “I believe you make a good point...Since this interview aired we have not done a piece on the finances of Ontario Power Generation. When we do, and I am sure we will, we’ll endeavour to include the balance of opinion you seek.”

**GORDON WISEMAN**

Program: The Current, CBC Radio

Gordon Wiseman complained about “the gratuitous anti-Americanism which is rampant on CBC, an example of which appeared this morning on the introduction to *The Current*....Today, ‘the Voice’ introducing *The Current* chose to attack U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney. ‘Dick Cheney -- compassionate?’ he asks rhetorically with

disdain. The attack is without context, substance and on the level of name calling...Engage me intellectually but resorting to sarcasm and name calling is insulting to the listener as it is to the intended object of derision.”

Pam Bertrand replied. “Was this one of our best, cleverest, and most finely crafted satires? No, I would suggest it was not. For various reasons this satire was altered at the last minute. We were not particularly happy with it and we share some of your concerns regarding the possibility that it could be seen as ‘gratuitous anti-Americanism.’ We can do better than this and I think we usually do.”

**ROBERT WITZKE**

Program: CBC Radio News

Robert Witzke complained that a radio report about Jamal Akkal stated “Israel is well known for its robust interrogation techniques.” He said that “at no time during the reporting of the case of Maher Arar and his allegations of torture in Syrian jails did I hear a similar phrase intoned by a reporter on the CBC such as ‘Syria is well-known for its robust interrogation techniques.’ Shame on CBC for this sloppy and unfair standard.”

Jamie Purdon replied. “To be fair, I think there is a significant difference between the two countries. While for years Israel’s General Security Service routinely practiced torture during interrogations, in September 1999, that country’s High Court of Justice ended the legal sanctioning of torture...On the other hand, there is widespread evidence of routine torture, ill treatment and political killings in Syria...Nevertheless, I appreciate your point. It is CBC News practice to describe what happened as accurately as possible, and when possible to avoid using emotional words or words that could be misunderstood.”

**TIM WOOLSTENCROFT**

Program: Witness, CBC TV

Tim Woolstencroft of The Strategic Counsel wrote to express his concern about the re-airing of a *Witness* program about polling and market research on Dec, 9, 2003, on the Documentary Channel. “The program aired on this evening was the original version containing the use of secret cameras by focus group respondents who entered the premises of Gregg, Kelly, Sullivan and Woolstencroft: The Strategic Counsel and attended focus groups conducted on these premises.” The CBC Ombudsman had conducted a review of their original complaint and “a ruling was issued that this program used inappropriate techniques for the nature of the story. We understood that the producers were to remedy these issues and the original version was not to be re-aired. In fact, when this program was subsequently re-aired on the main CBC

channel, the revised *Witness* program did not feature these inappropriate elements. We were satisfied with the resolution. We are now concerned that the original version was in fact re-aired last night on the Documentary channel, causing significant damage to the reputation of our company.”

Jerry McIntosh, Director of Documentaries, CBC News, replied. “I wish to apologize to you, your company and to the Documentary Channel for this lapse in our standards. Please be sure that this error was inadvertent and there was no intention to repeat a program that the Ombudsman had determined violated CBC’s journalistic policy...We have tightened up our procedures to ensure that this type of error won’t happen again.”

**GERALD WORTMAN**

Program: CBC Online News

Gerald Wortman complained about inaccuracies in a map at the bottom of the page about Saddam Hussein’s capture.

Mary Sheppard thanked Mr. Wortman for pointing out the error. “Our designer made the change today. We use a mapping software and your letter reminds us that we must double-check everything.”

**JULIAN ZUCKERBROT**

Program: CBC Radio News

Julian Zuckerbrot wrote: “Did I not hear right or did CBC Radio News depart from its usual practice immediately following the bombings in Madrid and use the word ‘terrorist’ (Toronto newscast, 2:00 p.m.) Why this deviation from your policy? ...”

Esther Enkin replied. “The first story in that newscast [at 1 pm, not 2 pm] referred to a ‘double suicide bombing’ in Ashdod; the second, a report from the CBC’s Laura Lynch, referred to ‘train bombings’ in Madrid; the third, a copy story read by a CBC newsreader, concerned precautions taken by VIA Rail in Canada and referred to a ‘terrorist attack’ in Spain. It should not have.” She said that the term should be used in CBC news programming only when attributed.

## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix I

### REVIEW OF MR. VIGGO LEWIS'S COMPLAINT

July 30, 2003

Dear Mr. Lewis:

I write to share with you my review of your complaint that CBC Radio, and particularly Metro Morning and its host, Andy Barrie, is guilty of left-wing bias.

I would like to begin by thanking you for taking the time and the trouble to monitor CBC programming for 14 days in November of 2002. You documented your complaint with several specific examples and, while it took far too long for CBC Radio to address your concerns, I note that you acknowledged that the response you eventually received from CBC management was both comprehensive and, as you put it, "not totally dismissive." Nevertheless, you remain dissatisfied with CBC Radio's information programming and feel strongly "that people like I, who elect the many conservative governments and parties in this country, do not have our views adequately represented on our publicly owned radio."

I respect your views. That is why I wanted to meet with you to hear you out in person, and to encourage you to document your views about Metro Morning with specific examples, especially since we were unable to deal with some of your earlier complaints either to your or to my satisfaction. That is why I shared your detailed critique with the CBC's most senior programmers and corporate managers. And that is why, as part of this review, I decided to listen to all 21 Metro Morning programs broadcast in November, 2002, a total of almost 60 hours of programming.

At issue here is what constitutes appropriate balance in CBC's information programming. On this occasion, and on other occasions when you have monitored CBC Radio's programming, you have come to the view that:

"...CBC Radio airs thousands of stories about the segment of the economy that is the recipient of the goods and services which our economy produces, and the plight of the recipients, with the constant theme that they never have enough, but virtually nothing about the segment of the economy that produces these same goods and services...Where are the business stories? Why do you choose not to air business stories, but instead give us this constant diet of the plight of the disadvantaged in Canada?"

While I agree that there is merit to some of your specific complaints about what you heard on Metro Morning, I also find myself in disagreement with your contention

that CBC Radio, and particularly Metro Morning, generally ignores business stories. You described the program's business columnist, Micheal Hlinka, as "a very fine business commentator, but...five minutes a day???" In fact I found that during the month of November this program gave generous voice to the business community. In the period under review, host Andy Barrie interviewed just under two dozen company presidents, vice-presidents, chief executive officers, chief financial officers and owners of small businesses. All but two of these interviews were conducted outside the context of the program's business column. (By the way, in this same period I did not find there to be "a constant diet" of interviews about the homeless and about aboriginal people. By my count Mr. Barrie did six interviews about the homeless and two interviews about aboriginals).

At times interviews about business matters tended to provide a counter-point to interviews about social concerns. On Nov. 5, e.g., while we heard Jack Layton speak about the need for more affordable housing, we also heard Ian Howcroft, the Ontario Vice-President of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, speak about the need for more privatization, more quickly, of the sources of electricity. At times interviews with business executives responded to issues raised in previous programs. On Nov. 26, e.g., Shane Smith, Senior Vice-President of Wardrop Engineering, responded to concerns raised the previous day by two foreign-trained engineers who were having difficulty getting licensed to work in Ontario. ("Science is universal but technology is local and so the regulatory environment is local."). And at times, as you have noted, there was imbalance. On Nov. 6, we heard Floyd Hamilton, owner of Floyd and Rita's Antiques, speak about the end of his lease and the possible demise of Harbourfront's antique market, but we didn't hear the property owner's point of view. And on Nov. 8, we heard Dan McIntyre of the Federation of Metro Tenants Associations accuse landlords of ripping off tenants ("Most landlords take it all.") but we didn't hear the landlords' side of the story.

As you know, under CBC journalism policy, programs dealing with matters of public interest on which differing views are held must supplement the exposition of one point of view with an equitable treatment of other relevant points of view. And while on occasion Metro Morning could have done a better job, I found that generally this program did treat the business community equitably during the period under review. In fact, I found this locally produced program to be much better balanced than its network-produced feature, Commentary. On the basis of listening to the 21 editions of Commentary produced in November, 2002, I think your critique has genuine merit. I share your view that this excellent feature of CBC Radio's morning programming could afford to be more sensitive to the views of Canada's small c conservatives.

Your other main complaint was about host Andy Barrie and what you described as his "taking advantage of his position to present his own biased left-wing views for which he is widely recognized." You documented your case against Mr. Barrie almost

entirely by citing examples drawn from his spirited exchanges with the business columnist Michael Hlinka. As the CBC's Jane Chalmers has pointed out, these two performers regularly assume conflicting points of view during this feature. In other words, this is something of a shtick, a theatrical routine with Mr. Hlinka cast in the role of champion of the marketplace and Mr. Barrie cast in the role of the sceptic, the contrarian, the small l liberal. As Ms. Chalmers says, "It is a way of offering differing — and opposed — points of view on controversial subjects." You have cited some of these exchanges to argue that Mr. Barrie has "contempt for the free marketplace."

However, after listening to a month's worth of programming I would have to say that I find Mr. Barrie's views about the marketplace to be more complex than your characterization would lead us to believe. Take his handling of what I would describe as the biggest single news story of this period, the Ontario government's decision to cap the price of electricity. On Nov. 5, in discussing the Ontario government's decision to put an end to the public monopoly over generation of electricity, host Barrie noted that this monopoly had left the people of Ontario bearing the burden of "a huge, huge, enormous, monstrous public debt." He went on to say, "We were living in a fool's paradise. We were paying an unnaturally low amount of money for electricity because we were not really including the full cost of that debt into every kilowatt we bought." On Nov. 12, the day after the Ontario government capped electricity rates at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour, Mr. Barrie said, "To be fair, someone could argue that every government — whether a Liberal government, an NDP government or a previous Conservative government — has always for two generations insulated the people of Ontario from the real cost of electricity. What Ernie Eves did yesterday is no better or no worse than any government has done before." These comments do not strike me as evidence this program host has "contempt for the free marketplace," or that he "takes advantage of his position to present his own biased left-wing views". On the contrary. They strike me as evidence that while host Barrie can be tough and confrontational in his interviews with government officials ("Has your government done anything right with energy deregulation since Day 1?"), he does not yield to bias or prejudice. These comments are evidence he's fair-minded.

As I told you during our meeting, I am not a heavy consumer of radio programming in the morning, when I prefer to spend my time reading newspapers. But I thought I would share with you the comments of someone who does consider himself to be an expert on morning radio, someone who happens to have pretty good conservative credentials. In his column in *The Toronto Sun* on Dec. 20, 2002, Peter Worthington wrote that "Andy Barrie is without doubt the best, most incisive, fair and persistent interviewer on radio. Most of us assume he's a lefty (as a Vietnam war deserter, how could he be anything else?) but God bless him, whoever he's questioning doesn't get away with much."

In conclusion, while there is merit to some of your specific complaints, I do not share your view that Metro Morning and its host violate CBC journalism policy by promoting some sort of left-wing agenda. In my review of the 21 Metro Morning programs, I found there to be much better balance in this program's selection of subjects for discussion, in its choice of interviewees and in the conduct of its host than your critique suggests. That said, I think it important for public broadcasters to pay careful attention to your complaint that CBC Radio does not adequately reflect your views and the views of your fellow small c conservative Canadians. There is no mathematical formula for balance in information programming. While CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices imposes upon public broadcasters the need to ensure that the widest possible range of views is expressed, the policy book also instructs journalists that "proper account must also be taken of the weight of opinion which holds these views and its significance or potential significance." In other words, CBC journalism policy recognizes that all views on any given subject, in any given community, are not equal; that some views weigh more heavily than others and therefore deserve more prominence than others.

Striking the right balance — determining the exact weight of various views and treating them equitably — becomes an issue of fine editorial judgment. As CBC's policy manual notes, the range of views and the weight of opinion are ever changing; programmers must therefore attempt to reflect these dynamics. In an ideal world all of us would feel that our views are adequately represented by the public broadcaster; in reality many of us — hopefully not too many — do not. Not surprisingly, there is often disagreement about proper balance, among listeners and viewers and even among public broadcasters, where program balance is, and should be, a never-ending debate. Your complaint reflects the tensions that can arise between the public broadcaster and the citizens the CBC was created to serve. But your critique also contributes to this necessary debate about how best to reflect and reveal reality properly. Thank you for your contribution. May the dialogue continue.

Yours truly,

David Bazay  
Ombudsman



## Appendix II

2003-2004

### NUMBER OF COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

	INFORMATION PROGRAMMING	GENERAL PROGRAMMING	TOTAL
2003-2004	1590	326 (+239 Cherry)	2155
2002-2003	1273	376	1649
2001-2002	582	442	1024
2000-2001	597	537	1134
1999-2000	702	362	1064
1998-1999	462	422	884
1997-1998	348	356	704
1996-1997	216	227	443
1995-1996	221	65	286

### COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT INFORMATION PROGRAMMING BY MEDIA

MEDIA	
TV	975
Radio	223
Radio & TV	76
Newsworld	182
cbc.ca	114
Various (various other combinations or information not provided by complainant)	20
TOTAL	1590

## **MANDATE OF THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN**

### **I. PRINCIPLES**

The CBC is fully committed to maintaining accuracy, integrity and fairness in its journalism.

As a Canadian institution and a press undertaking, the CBC is committed to compliance with a number of principles. Foremost among those is our commitment to scrupulously abide by the journalistic code of ethics formulated in our own handbook of journalistic standards and practices which stresses lack of bias in reporting. We are committed to providing information that is factual, accurate and comprehensive. Balanced viewpoints must be presented through on-the-air discussions. As it is for other public and private journalistic undertakings, credibility in the eyes of the general population is our most valuable asset and must be protected.

The Ombudsman is completely independent of CBC program staff and management, reporting directly to the President of CBC and, through the President, to the Corporation's Board of Directors.

### **II. MANDATE**

#### **1. Audience complaints and comments**

- a) The Ombudsman acts as an appeal authority for complainants who are dissatisfied with responses from CBC program staff or management.
- b) The Ombudsman generally intervenes only when a correspondent deems a response from a representative of the Corporation unsatisfactory and so informs the Office of the Ombudsman. However, the Ombudsman may also intervene when the Corporation fails to respond to a complaint within a reasonable time.
- c) The Ombudsman determines whether the journalistic process or the broadcast involved in the complaint did, in fact, violate the Corporation's journalistic policies and standards. The gathering of facts is a non judicial process and the Ombudsman does not examine the civil liability of the Corporation or its journalists. The Ombudsman informs the complainant, and the staff and management concerned, of his/her finding.

- d) As necessary, the Ombudsman identifies major public concerns as gleaned from complaints received by his/her Office and advises CBC management and journalists accordingly. The Ombudsman may undertake periodic studies on overall coverage of specific issues when he/she feels that the number of public complaints indicates that there may be a problem.
- e) On occasion, the Ombudsman may convey to a wider audience, either within the CBC or among the general public, particular cases of concern or consequence to others than the complainant alone.
- f) The Ombudsman establishes a central registry of complaints and comments regarding information programs, and alerts journalists and managers, on a regular basis, to issues that are causing public concern.
- g) The Ombudsman prepares and presents an annual report to the President and the Board of Directors of the Corporation summarising how unsatisfied complaints were dealt with and reviewing the main issues handled by the Office of the Ombudsman in the previous year. The report includes mention of the actions, if any, taken by management as a result of the Ombudsman's findings, provided such disclosure does not contravene applicable laws, regulations or collective agreements. The annual report, or a summary thereof, is made public.
- h) The Office of the Ombudsman reports annually on how each media component has met the CBC standard of service for the expeditious handling of complaints.

## **2. Compliance with journalistic policy**

- a) The Office of the Ombudsman is responsible for evaluating compliance with journalistic policies in all programs under its jurisdiction. It is assisted in this role by independent advice panels. Panel members are chosen by the Ombudsman; their mandate is to assess individual or groups of programs over a period of time, or the overall coverage of a particular issue by many programs, and report their findings to the Ombudsman.
- b) The evaluation measures the programs' performance in respecting the three fundamental principles of CBC journalism, Accuracy, Integrity and Fairness.
- c) The Ombudsman aims to have all information programming reviewed over a five-year period. The Office reports annually.

### **III. JURISDICTION**

The jurisdiction of the Office of the Ombudsman covers all information programs on Radio, Television and the Internet. These programs include News and all aspects of Public Affairs (political, economic and social) as well as journalistic activities in agriculture, arts, music, religion, science, sports and variety. Complaints involving entertainment programming are generally beyond the Ombudsman's mandate and should be addressed directly to the programs concerned.

### **IV. APPOINTMENT**

- a) When filling the Ombudsman's position, the CBC openly seeks candidates from outside as well as inside the Corporation.
- b) After appropriate consultation, the President and CEO establishes a selection committee of four. Two members, including the committee chair, must be from the public. The other committee members are chosen, one among CBC management, the other among its working journalists. Members representing the Corporation and journalists jointly select the committee chair among the two representatives of the public.
- c) The selection committee examines applications and selects a candidate to be recommended for appointment by the President and CEO.
- d) The Ombudsman's appointment is for a term of five years. This term may be extended for no more than five additional years. The Ombudsman's contract cannot be terminated except for dereliction of duty or gross misconduct.
- e) The outgoing Ombudsman may not occupy any other position at the CBC for a period of two years following the end of his/her term but can, at the discretion of the incoming Ombudsman, be contracted to work for the Office of the Ombudsman.