

# the bulletin

broadcasting  
standards  
*commission*

The Broadcasting Standards Commission is the statutory body for standards and fairness in broadcasting. It is the only organisation within the regulatory framework of UK broadcasting to cover all television and radio. This includes BBC and commercial broadcasters as well as text, cable, satellite and digital services.

The Commission has three main tasks, set out in the 1996 Broadcasting Act:

- produce codes of practice relating to standards and fairness;
- consider and adjudicate on complaints;
- monitor, research and report on standards and fairness in broadcasting.

**This bulletin is the regular report of the Commission's decisions on standards and fairness complaints**

## No1

*Embargoed until*  
0001 Thursday 29 May 1997

As an independent organisation representing the interests of the consumer, the Broadcasting Standards Commission considers the portrayal of violence, sexual conduct and matters of taste and decency in television and radio programmes and advertisements. It also provides redress for people who believe they have been unfairly treated or subjected to unwarranted infringement of privacy.

### **Complaints about standards and fairness**

To consider and adjudicate on complaints the Commission has the power to:

- require recordings of broadcast material;
- call for written statements;
- hold hearings about the detail of what has been broadcast.

All the Commission's decisions are reported in this regular bulletin.

The Commission can also require broadcasters to publish summaries of its decisions either on-air or in a newspaper or magazine and report on any action they might have taken as a result of its decisions.

**Standards complaints considered before 1 April 1997 were dealt with by the Broadcasting Standards Council and Fairness complaints by the Broadcasting Complaints Commission. All complaints considered since that date were dealt with by the Broadcasting Standards Commission.**

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#### *The Commissioners*

The Lady Howe *Chairman*  
Jane Leighton *Deputy Chair*  
Danielle Barr  
Rhiannon Bevan  
David Boulton  
Dame Fiona Caldicott DBE  
Strachan Heppell CB  
Robert Kernohan OBE  
The Very Rev. John Lang  
Susan Lloyd  
Sally O'Sullivan  
Matthew Parris

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# standards

Complaints about standards (violence, sex, or issues of taste and decency such as bad language or the treatment of disasters) can be made by anyone who has seen or heard the broadcast. In reaching a decision to uphold or not uphold a complaint, the code and research into public attitudes are considered alongside the material and its context. In certain circumstances the Commission may also hold a hearing.

## Upheld complaints

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### **Network First - Silent Victim: The Untold Story of the Yorkshire Ripper**

ITV, 10 December 1996, 2240-2340

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#### *The Complaint*

Three viewers complained of the content of this documentary. They complained of the depiction of violence in the reconstruction of crimes and one additionally complained of the inappropriate use of pop music as background.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

Yorkshire Television (YTV) said that one of the purposes of this documentary was to reveal that Peter Sutcliffe had carried out many more than the twenty crimes for which he became notorious as the Yorkshire Ripper. Among the victims of the unsolved attacks were many women who had believed they were attacked by Peter Sutcliffe and wanted to have the matter resolved for their own peace of mind. YTV's re-examination of the attacks upon them, the comparisons with acknowledged Ripper attacks and the Chief Constable's explanations as to why he believed they were Ripper victims had had a profound impact on their lives.

West Yorkshire police co-operated fully and openly with the programme and passed letters on to survivors and next of kin of those who were killed. YTV met with those who wanted to take part in the programme on many occasions during research and filming.

YTV did not believe that the reconstructions were gratuitous but that most of the drama was in re-creating the circumstances of the attack, not the attack itself. Where the attack actually took place, they tended to use representations of violence, hammer attacks in silhouette, blood falling on spectacles, eye witnesses watching in horror. The scenes were made with the victim's help and co-operation who helped to ensure accuracy and they encouraged YTV to be graphic to make sure the public understood what they had suffered. YTV rejected the

use of police and press photographs on the grounds that they were too graphic and that the actual images were less acceptable.

The programme carried a warning before transmission and a helpline for those injured in violent attacks at the end and all reconstructions were clearly captioned as such.

One of the main thrusts of the programme was that Sutcliffe had been attacking women not between 1975-80 as many believed, but between 1969-80 and possibly even earlier. Pop music was used as a device to show the passing of time and YTV felt that many people would understand just how long Sutcliffe was attacking women if they could show that his reign of terror lasted all the way from Jimi Hendrix's era through Gary Numan to David Bowie. The songs themselves were never supposed to be appropriate to the events represented on screen. They hoped that the audience would respond to the music, evoking memories of a particular era, giving them a chronological yardstick by which to gauge the period.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The full Council viewed the programme and noted the complaints and the broadcaster's statement. While the programme could serve some useful public interest, it nevertheless considered that the degree of detail and the prolonged nature of the violence in the reconstructions and their repeated use went beyond acceptable limits and could have generated fear. The Council also considered the use of pop music, including some of the lyrics was inappropriate in the context of such a disturbing case. The Council therefore upheld the complaints.

#### *Upheld*

### **The Works: Death in Hollywood**

BBC2, 10 October 1996, 2000-2030

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#### *The Complaint*

A viewer complained of explicit sexual descriptions in a documentary broadcast before the Watershed.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC said the programme was part of a series on the arts and popular culture and dealt with the life and death of the successful Hollywood producer, Don Simpson. It had been transmitted as an alternative to the popular BBC1 family programme, Animal Hospital.

The programme explored how Simpson had lost control of his private life, dying eventually from a drugs overdose. It was, in effect, a morality tale about today's Hollywood. Intrinsic to it was an exploration of his motivation and his excessive life style, including his sexual habits. It had been recognised that this would raise issues of suitability for a pre-Watershed slot. Care had been taken to ensure the sequence provided only brief details in a interview broadcast well into the programme and which contained no strong language or graphic illustration.

The BBC believed the sequence was fully warranted by its context in a documentary with a serious purpose and would not have caused widespread offence. They recognised that the impact on viewers coming upon it unawares (as the complainant did) would be different. But the essentially adult references and the absence of graphic illustration would, the broadcaster thought, have gone over the heads of any children who may have been watching.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Council watched the programme, noting the sequence complained of. While it understood the serious point of the documentary and its sense of morality, it nevertheless considered that the inclusion of the sequence was misjudged in a programme going out before the Watershed. The complaint was therefore upheld.

*Upheld*

### **The End of the Year Show**

BBC1, 31 December 1996, 2300-0005

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#### *The Complaint*

Fourteen viewers complained of the content of this show which the majority watched with their families. They complained of the inclusion of bad language and sexual innuendoes including references to sex with pop stars, pregnant women and homosexuals.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

BBC Television said that the aim of the show was to present a satirical look back over the year which would offer something of interest to everyone. The BBC did not believe it contained anything which would have struck regular viewers of late-evening television as beyond the boundaries which normally apply at that time of night. However, New Year's Eve is not a normal evening and the BBC accepted that the programme did not take sufficient account of the viewers who would be unlikely to watch television so late at other times of the year. In that respect, the BBC acknowledged that some of the language and references in the lead-up to midnight were inappropriate.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Complaints Committee watched the programme. It took the view that some of the content, especially the closing ten minutes, was inappropriate for a family audience. The Committee considered that although broadcasters would not normally be expected to cater for a family audience at this time of night, New Year's Eve created special circumstances and, as was clear from the complaints, many families expected to be able to watch television together to see in the New Year. The Committee therefore recommended that the complaints should be upheld and the Council accepted that recommendation.

*Upheld*

### **The Prince and the Pauper**

BBC1, 8 December 1996, 1715-1745

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#### *The Complaint*

Two viewers complained of a scene in which a mother and daughter were burnt at the stake in this children's drama series without warning.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC said the original novel by Mark Twain contained strong images of repression and injustice, which he clearly meant as a vigorous antidote to a romantic view of the "olden days" and which played a key role in the moral journeys of the two boys who swapped places. In adapting the novel, it was felt important to be faithful to Twain in retaining scenes illustrating the brutality of Tudor England.

The sequence of the burning of the mother and daughter for their faith served not only to convey the horror of this cruel punishment but also to illustrate the impact on the young king, who vowed that once he was restored to the throne he would never allow such injustice to be carried out in his name.

The broadcaster argued that the scene was filmed in a way that made its point without being unnecessarily graphic. They considered it suitable for a family audience. They believed a warning was unnecessary in a series which had already established that its historical setting was a period in which many barbarities might occur.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Complaints Committee viewed the episode noting the sequence complained of. While it understood the points the BBC made in its defence, the Committee considered that in the context of a children's drama broadcast early on Sunday evening a warning should have been given. The Council accepted the recommendation to uphold this aspect of the complaint.

*Upheld*

### **Advertisement for Zantac**

ITV, 28 January 1997, 2240

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#### *The Complaint*

Two viewers were offended by the screening of this advertisement in the break of a documentary dealing with Achondroplasia.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

The Broadcast Advertising Clearance Centre said that this advertisement featured Satan ordering a meal, the constituents of which were a 'poisoned dwarf'. Being a medicine, the advertisement could not be shown adjacent to children's programming.

The scheduling of this advertisement in the Network First programme 'Born to be Small' was unfortunate but the BACC considered that in view of the small number of complaints received, it did not appear to have caused widespread offence.

The Advertising Agency responsible for the advertisement apologised for any offence caused but said that as they were not aware of the programme's contents they were unable to avoid this unfortunate link.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Standards Panel viewed the advertisement for the treatment of indigestion and took the view that its scheduling in the documentary 'Born to be Small' was unfortunate and inappropriate. It therefore decided that the complaints should be upheld on the grounds of inappropriate scheduling.

*Upheld*

### **In Bed with Madonna**

BBC2, 22 December 1996, 2330-0135

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#### *The Complaint*

A viewer complained of the use of strong language.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC said that this American rock documentary followed Madonna on tour in 1990. It was shown late at night on BBC2 and was preceded by a warning about language. The character of the film was also clearly indicated in the film guide in 'Radio Times'.

Madonna is a performer who draws large audiences around the world with an established reputation for courting controversy. The documentary was considered important as a record of her work and lifestyle. The BBC did not believe that the language would have exceeded the expectations of those familiar with her style.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The full Council viewed the film and noted the use of language ranked as the strongest in research including the word 'motherfucker'. The Council took the view that the use of this strong language can only rarely be justified. Its inclusion in this film, even though broadcast on a minority channel after the Watershed, was unwarranted. The Council upheld the complaint.

#### *Upheld*

### **The Horror of it All**

BBC2, 11 December 1996, 0910-1000

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#### *The Complaint*

Three viewers complained of the inappropriate scheduling of this series tracing the history of horror movies.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC said this was the second showing of the series. They accepted it had been inappropriate to have scheduled it before 'Playdays' and regretted any upset caused. Steps had been taken to monitor daytime documentaries more closely and a new database had been compiled to guard against programmes being placed at the wrong time.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Complaints Committee viewed the programme which it considered had been inappropriately scheduled at a time when young children would have been watching. The Council accepted the Committee's recommendation to uphold the complaints.

#### *Upheld*

### **Six Steps to Heaven**

Channel 4, 2 January 1997, 1930-2030

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#### *The Complaint*

Three viewers complained about bad language, including the use of Christian holy names and the 'F' word, before the 2100 Watershed.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

Channel 4 explained that the programme was a light-hearted look at six of the most influential dance crazes to come out of America in the past century. During the later part of the programme, which examined the development of disco, clips from the film 'Saturday Night Fever' were shown, including a scene of a Latino couple dancing during which the main character commented, "Jesus Christ, they're so fucking good."

Following this brief sequence Channel 4's Viewer Enquiries Department had received a telephone call from a viewer complaining of the bad language. The Presentation Department was notified as soon as possible and an apology to viewers was broadcast over the closing credits of the programme.

The broadcaster went on to say that the programme had originally been scheduled for a post 2100 transmission slot but had then been moved to 1930 and, due to a rare oversight in internal checking procedures, the bad language had not been removed prior to transmission of the programme. Channel 4 has since reviewed its checking procedures and has reminded all editors of the need for vigilance and care in this area.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Standards Panel watched the scene in question and concluded that the use of bad language was unacceptable for the time of broadcast. It therefore decided that the complaints should be upheld.

#### *Upheld*

**Film Challenge: Cad Cam**

Channel 4, 14 November 1996, 2145-2200

*The Complaint*

Two viewers complained of extreme violence.

*The Broadcaster's Statement*

Channel 4 said that 'Cad Cam' was a winning entry in the Lloyds Bank/Channel 4 Film Challenge, a nationwide competition to find talented young scriptwriters. 'Cad Cam' was written by a 24 year old. It was a futuristic thriller about the abuse of closed circuit camera technology by a corrupt policeman, in which one of the main characters, Colin, was framed for a series of violent crimes.

The menacing nature of the film was clearly signalled by the music soundtrack before any violence was shown. The scene complained of showed three men armed with baseball bats who smashed up a car and its occupants. This was an integral part of the film and was an attack on the corrupt police who were stalking and framing Colin. The film did not show the occupants of the car being smashed - the attack was limited to the vehicle itself. The murder scene also formed an important element in developing the sinister nature of the plot, and was primarily portrayed at a distance and as viewed by the corrupt policeman via a closed circuit hidden camera. There was no sight in this scene of a long bladed knife and no gratuitous images of the attack.

Channel 4 recognised that the film was aimed at an adult audience and scheduled it significantly after the Watershed and preceded the broadcast with an announcement signalling its adult theme.

*The BSC's Finding*

The Complaints Committee viewed the film noting the broadcaster's statement. However, it was concerned at the concentration of violence in this short film, and in particular the depiction of the knife attack in the murder scene, even though it was distanced by closed circuit television. The Committee recommended that the complaints should be upheld and the Council accepted the Committee's recommendation.

*Upheld***The Big Breakfast**

Channel 4, 13 November 1996, 0700-0900

*The Complaint*

A viewer complained of an inappropriately scheduled film clip showing simulated sex.

*The Broadcaster's Statement*

Channel 4 said that the short item featured a clip from a forthcoming film release featuring Gillian Anderson who was currently popular as Agent Scully from 'The X Files'. The item was intended to be humorous, in keeping with the programme's style. The brief clip was an early part of a sensual (but not explicit) love scene. Channel 4 said they took care only to show the early part. Ms Anderson was seen in a bra and there was a shot of a man's chest. However, Channel 4 did electronically mask (pixellate) over what would otherwise have been a glimpse of breast. In addition the caption 'Oops' was added as additional cover and to reinforce the humorous slant of the item.

Channel 4 said that rather than simulating a sex act, the couple, who were in a passionate embrace, were clothed from the waist down in the brief extract transmitted and that there was no representation of sexual intercourse. Channel 4 did not believe the item would have conveyed an unsuitable message to a child.

*The BSC's Finding*

The Complaints Committee viewed the extract and noted the broadcaster's statement. However it took the view that the clip, even though pixellated, was not appropriate for the time of broadcast. The Council accepted the Committee's recommendation that the complaint should be upheld.

*Upheld*

### **Shooting Stars**

BBC2, 1 January 1997, 2040-2120

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#### *The Complaint*

One viewer complained of offence to religious believers caused by the levitation of a tea towel depicting an image of the Turin Shroud. Two other viewers complained of bad taste and obscenities.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC explained that the series was very successful with older teenagers and young adults who responded to a style of comedy which was boisterous and sometimes juvenile, but essentially good humoured. The presentation of "cat poo" and the parody of "Christmas is coming", including the line "But not as fat as your mother, who remains a fat cow", were very much of this order.

Similarly, the "Turin Shroud tea towel" was a version of a slapstick routine featured during the series, which involved levitating a piece of material. There was no intention on the part of the programme-makers to cause offence to Christian believers.

The BBC went on to say that they were unaware of anyone in the programme giving voice to obscenities. They did not believe the humour in the programme was of the kind to cause widespread offence.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Council viewed the programme noting the items complained of. It did not consider that obscenities had been spoken, nor did they think that most of the humour, which would not have been to everyone's taste, went beyond acceptable boundaries for an adult entertainment series. However, it was concerned by the sequence involving the "Turin Shroud tea towel" and thought, on balance, that it was capable of causing offence to believers. That aspect of the complaint was therefore upheld.

#### *Upheld in part*

### **The Frank Skinner Show**

BBC1, 2 January 1997, 2215-2245

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#### *The Complaint*

A viewer complained about violence towards animals and an insensitive joke.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC explained that this late-night comedy show consisted mainly of lighthearted conversation between the host and celebrity guests, interspersed with an occasional song or sketch. 'Chuck out your Chimps' was a musical skit on the IKEA 'Chuck out your Chintz' television advertisement, the humour turning on the obvious play on words. While most of the sketch, involving animals which were clearly dummies, was acceptable, the inclusion of the sequence in which a shot of a live chimp was followed by a shot of a woman wielding a baseball bat and then being bathed in blood, was unwarranted.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Complaints Committee watched the programme. It took the view that a joke about depression would not have caused widespread offence but the musical skit 'Chuck out your Chimps' went beyond the boundaries of acceptability. The Council accepted the Committee's recommendation that this aspect of the complaint should be upheld.

#### *Upheld in part*

**Shopping**

Channel 4, 19 December 1996, 2200-2345

*The Complaint*

A viewer complained of bad language and violence in a film which he also considered would encourage crime.

*The Broadcaster's Statement*

Channel 4 said the film was a powerful and tense tale of two rival ram-raiding gangs, set against a background of urban decay - a surreal and anarchic ghetto in which the police struggled to maintain any semblance of law and order. The life of the gangs was bleak and gritty. The music of the film and its language reflected many aspects of contemporary youth culture. Those elements, together with the violence, were not represented in the film gratuitously. They were what the film was about and contributed significantly to its powerful impact.

The broadcaster continued that it was firmly of the view that the film had a clear message. The roughness and brutality of the characters' lives and the circumstances in which one of the gang leaders died could not be perceived as an encouragement to emulate their actions. The Channel regretted any offence to the complainant, but they had scheduled the film well after the Watershed because of its content and did not believe it was offensive to public feeling generally.

*The BSC's Finding*

The Complaints Committee watched the film and was troubled by the intensity of the violence which it considered unduly graphic and unpleasant. The world presented in the film was unattractive and brutal, which was reflected in the language used. The Committee did not believe that the film encouraged imitation nor that the language went beyond acceptable boundaries for an adult film broadcast well after the Watershed. But the Council accepted the Committee's recommendation to uphold that aspect of the complaint which related to violence.

*Upheld in part***Soldier, Solider**

ITV, 3 December 1996, 2100-2200

*The Complaint*

Two viewers complained of violent battle scenes, including the torture of an imprisoned soldier.

*The Broadcaster's Statement*

Carlton Television said that the programme was preceded by a warning alerting viewers to the horrors of war. The broadcaster said that this was an occasion on which rarely, as in real life, the fictional regiment were engaged in a shooting war, and was clearly presented as such.

The broadcaster continued that 'Soldier, Solider' was an established series which had always tried to achieve a high degree of realism. As it was clearly influenced by the Falklands war, Carlton did not think that the battle and torture scenes would have exceeded many viewers' expectations of a realistic war film. The scenes themselves were shot and edited with discretion and taken together formed the smaller part of the drama, in which the overall intention - as in all episodes - was to engage the audience's interest in the personalities and stories of the principal characters.

*The BSC's Finding*

The Standards Panel watched the episode and noted the broadcaster's statement. It took the view that the battle scenes including the bomb injuries suffered by the Colonel, did not go beyond acceptable limits for a post-Watershed drama. However, it was concerned at the scenes portraying the torture of a captured soldier. It took the view that the scenes were too explicit and prolonged. It therefore decided that the complaints concerning these scenes should be upheld.

*Upheld in part*

# Not Upheld complaints

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## No Child of Mine

ITV, 25 February 1997, 2240-0015

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### *The Complaint*

Thirteen viewers complained about various aspects of this drama-documentary. The majority complained about the sexual content of the programme, which they felt too graphic or harrowing. Others were concerned about the use of a child actress to play the central role.

### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

Meridian Television said the drama-documentary about child sexual abuse was based entirely on fact. But in telling the story of the abuse of one child they were not prepared to bring about the abuse of another, namely the child playing the part. A careful search had been made with drama schools and child acting agencies.

The parents of the children under consideration had been sent the script to establish to their satisfaction that their children understood the material. A number withdrew at that stage. But the broadcaster insisted that they had not been prepared to cast a child who was not mature enough to handle the part. Maturity did not seem to relate directly to age.

At all times the child actress chosen was accompanied by a chaperone or her mother. There was no nudity or explicitness in the film of any kind. It had been transmitted well after the Watershed, had been preceded by a clear warning and much publicity, and supported by a help line.

### *The BSC's Finding*

The Standards Committee viewed the film, noting its serious intention. The Committee believed that the topic of child sexual abuse was an important one which the film had attempted to address responsibly. The sexual scenes had been implied rather than shown. It had sometimes been harrowing to view but the depiction had been justified by the gravity of the issue. The Committee was satisfied that the film had been appropriately scheduled and properly signposted. It was also persuaded that the broadcaster had been responsible in its selection and treatment of the child actress. Overall, it did not uphold the complaints.

*Not Upheld*

## Tommy Boyd Show

Talk Radio UK, 14 January 1997, 1400-1600

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### *The Complaint*

Two listeners complained of a discussion of homosexuality during this phone-in programme.

### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

In an unsolicited statement Talk Radio UK said that the debate in this programme, which looked at the value of experience in opinion formation, was raised in a week which saw criticism of the homophobia generated by revelations in the media about an MP. This was not a programme aimed at children as school hours made it inaccessible to them. Talk Radio UK did not believe that the way in which homosexuality was debated would have truly offended. In fact one caller said that debating the issue had made her face up to the prejudices which had helped form her opinion of same-gender sex. Talk Radio UK considered the programme to be thought-provoking in questioning the way people formed their opinions.

### *The BSC's Finding*

The Complaints Committee listened to the programme and noted an open and occasionally frank discussion about homosexuality. It noted that the most detailed comments about homosexual sexual relationships came from callers to the programme but took the view that these did not go beyond acceptable boundaries for broadcasting on a speech-based station aimed at adults. The Council accepted the Committee's recommendation that the complaints should not be upheld.

*Not Upheld*

**Married with Children**

Sky One, 28 January 1997, 1830-1900

*The Complaint*

A viewer considered that the sexual references in this programme made it inappropriate for broadcasting when children were likely to be among the audience.

*The Broadcaster's Statement*

BSkyB said that the shows were carefully viewed and edited where necessary for the time of transmission. The sexual humour was in the tradition of 'Carry On Films' and the sexual vocabulary was perhaps no more than was common in pop culture. The sexual references in this edition were minimal and mild.

*The BSC's Finding*

The Standards Panel took the view that the level of innuendo in this episode had not exceeded that commonly found in many other comedies popular with older children. It therefore decided not to uphold the complaint.

*Not Upheld***Thelma and Louise**

BBC1, 3 January 1997, 2220-0025

*The Complaint*

A viewer complained of the use of bad language including Christian holy names in this film.

*The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC said that this highly acclaimed and popular female road movie was first shown on BBC TV two years ago, when the film was left uncut, since it was designed for a late evening audience on BBC2.

This second showing was intended for a wider BBC1 audience and the words likely to have caused the greatest offence were edited out. To have omitted all strong language, however, would have been to strip the film of its authenticity. Given the context - two women on the run from the law, a certain amount of strong language was, in the BBC's view, justified and likely to have been within the expectations of a post-Watershed audience.

*The BSC's Finding*

The Complaints Committee viewed the film and noted the inclusion of some bad language, the majority of which was used in moments of stress. The Committee took the view that in the context of this film, starting almost one and a half hours after the Watershed, the language was unlikely to have caused widespread offence. The Council accepted the recommendation that the complaint should not be upheld.

*Not Upheld***Advertisement for Alka Seltzer**

ITV, December 1997

*The Complaint*

Six viewers complained about a joke implying cannibalism.

*The Broadcaster's Statement*

The Broadcast Advertising Clearance Centre said they had approved the advertisement to be shown outside children's programming. They felt that the humorous treatment would detract from any real offence being caused to the viewing audience.

*The BSC's Finding*

The Council viewed the advertisement in which two seamen were depicted afloat at sea. The scene then cut to just one survivor with a voice-over saying: "For when you have eaten something disagreeable." The Council took the view that although the advertisement dealt with a taboo, the joke was in the tradition of using off beat humour to advertise a product. The Council accepted the recommendation not to uphold the complaints.

*Not Upheld***Chris Evans Summer Roadshow Tour**

BBC Radio 1 FM, 25 December 1996, 1130-1330

*The Complaint*

A listener complained about a comment made by the presenter.

*The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC said that Chris Evans' style of spontaneous humour was much enjoyed by regular listeners to his Radio 1 Breakfast Show, which was particularly popular with young people aged between 15 and 25. There were occasions when he overstepped the mark, but it did not believe this was one of them.

In the context of the holiday atmosphere and party spirit which characterised the Radio 1 Roadshow, the particular remarks complained of should have been seen as juvenile bravado rather than endorsements of, or exhortations to, irresponsible behaviour. The broadcaster believed it unlikely that the comments would have been taken seriously or literally.

*The BSC's Finding*

The Complaints Committee acknowledged that the comment may not have been to the taste of some among the audience. It took the view, however, that, in the context of the programme, the juvenile humour was unlikely to have exceeded the expectations of many listeners. The Council accepted the Committee's recommendation not to uphold the complaint.

*Not Upheld*

### Love on a Branch Line

BBC2, 31 December 1996, 1545-16.35

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#### *The Complaint*

A viewer complained about full nudity before the Watershed.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC said it was a repeat of the second episode of a four-part comedy drama, broadcast on BBC2 as an alternative to children's programmes on BBC1. In the summer of 1957, a gauche civil servant, Jasper Pye, arrived at a stately home where a statistical office was billeted. His task was to advise on whether this totally useless unit should be disbanded. The humour of the series was consistently light and playful, turning mainly on the man from the ministry's reactions to people and situations for which his sheltered background had left him utterly unprepared.

In this episode, his host's uninhibited daughter Belinda, tried to break down Pye's timidity. A pre-transmission announcement warned that the action was "a bit saucy at times". First, Lady Belinda posed in the nude for Pye to paint her portrait, but there was no full-frontal nudity. She then ran through the gardens, but was seen only in long-shot.

The broadcaster believed this tactfully-depicted nakedness was essential to the story and was not, in the context of an entirely good-natured comedy, beyond the bounds of what is generally acceptable before the Watershed on BBC2.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Complaints Committee noted the scenes but concluded that the content had not exceeded the boundaries of acceptability for a minority channel, and was unlikely to have caused widespread offence amongst the BBC2 audience. The Council accepted the Committee's recommendation that the complaint should not be upheld.

#### *Not Upheld*

### TFI Friday

Channel 4, 31 January 1997, 1800-1900

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#### *The Complaint*

Two viewers complained that a woman behaved in a sexually suggestive manner with a cigar, accompanied by music which had religious significance. One of the viewers additionally complained that the programme's title was offensive.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

Channel 4 said that this was an established series known for its fast-paced presentation of various off-beat elements, alongside the more conventional interviews and music performances. The prevailing atmosphere was light-hearted fun, with a touch of the irreverent and the unusual.

The short extract complained of was in the first episode of TFI Friday to be broadcast following the announcement of Michael Grade's resignation as Chief Executive of Channel 4. The presenter, Chris Evans, satirising his own media image of being egotistical, announced that he was the new, self-proclaimed head of Channel 4. He was dressed in a suit and wearing red braces and red socks, and introduced himself to the studio audience to Handel's Hallelujah Chorus. The music was intended as a gentle, ironic play on Chris Evans' sense of self-importance. Although sung by a choir, none of the words were clearly discernible except 'hallelujah'. Chris Evans then stated that his appointment would confer the benefit of an attractive female secretary, who joined him at his desk. She was dressed in a suit and was glamorously made up. The secretary then pulled a cigar of the type smoked by Michael Grade from her blouse and proceeded to light it for Chris.

Channel 4 confirmed that the full title of the programme is 'Thank Four It's Friday'.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Complaints Committee watched the programme and took the view that the intention of the satirical sketch was not to cause offence to religious sensibilities, but was self-mocking and light-hearted in tone in keeping with the well-known irreverent style of the programme. The Council accepted the Committee's recommendation that the complaints should not be upheld.

#### *Not Upheld*

### **The Stand-Up Show**

BBC1, 21 December 1996, 2340-0015

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#### *The Complaint*

A viewer complained about explicit remarks by a comedian concerning heterosexual and homosexual activity.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC explained that this third series of 'The Stand-Up Show' aimed to act as a showcase for young club comedians and help develop fresh talent. It was transmitted in a late-night slot and had established a reputation for presenting alternative and new comedy. The nature of the material was made clear in pre-publicity and was further signalled in the opening sequence, which incorporated extracts from the performances.

The broadcaster went on to say that the remarks complained about were made by a gay comedian whose material sometimes challenged popular notions of taste and decency. But that type of humour was generally popular with a younger adult audience which, by and large, did not regard references to sex or homosexuality as taboo. Although the remarks clearly raised questions of taste, the BBC believed that their relationship to the serious issue of whether homosexuality should be regarded as 'unnatural' and the manner of their delivery would have combined to rob them of offence for the great majority of the programme's audience.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Complaints Committee noted the remarks, within the context of the programme, and took the view that, in a well-established series, broadcast late at night, they would not have taken the majority of the audience by surprise. The Council accepted the recommendation that the complaint should not be upheld.

#### *Not Upheld*

### **The Champions**

BBC2, 8 January 1997, 1410-1500

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#### *The Complaint*

A viewer complained of excessive violence in this programme which he felt was unsuitable for broadcast at this time of day.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC said that this was a 1960's science fiction programme, which employed storylines typical of the genre. The violence contained within the programme was highly stylised, resembling 'comic book' stunts. Although the programme had followed Children's BBC, it had been separated by a cookery programme trail and announcement.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Complaints Committee viewed the programme, noting the scenes of violence. While the Committee recognised that the programme was highly stylised and typical of its genre, they were concerned about its scheduling immediately following Children's BBC. However, on balance the Committee recommended that the complaint should not be upheld. The Council accepted this recommendation, but wished to draw broadcasters' attention to the importance of careful consideration in the scheduling of programmes, particularly those either side of children's programming.

#### *Not Upheld*

### **Space Precinct**

BBC2, 2 December 1996, 1800-1845

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#### *The Complaint*

A viewer complained about violent scenes.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC said that this was the first programme in a repeat run of a science-fiction police series, set in the 21st Century. After it had been shown in 1995, the BBC accepted that a sequence, in which a man had been strapped into a car and killed as the vehicle had been driven into a wall, had been too intense and prolonged. For this repeat transmission, these scenes had been heavily edited, with 37 seconds removed from the original version. What remained was only necessary to establish the character and capabilities of the villain as well as further the plot.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Standards Panel noted that this edition of the series had been edited before re-transmission. It took the view that the remaining incidents had not exceeded those frequently found in science-fiction series of this type. The Panel decided that the complaint should not be upheld.

*Not Upheld*

### **GMR Talk**

BBC Greater Manchester Radio, 16 January 1997, 0900-1300

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#### *The Complaint*

A listener complained of an unnecessary reference to a sanitary product.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC said that Allan Beswick was well-known to listeners for his down-to-earth manner and forthright views. He was commenting on the fact that many people no longer bought meat from their local butcher, but in pre-packed form, with as little as possible to remind consumers of the animal from which it comes. His passing reference to the absorbent pad on which the pre-prepared cut of meat rests as being similar to a sanitary towel, although of questionable taste, was also apt and humorous, and not, in the BBC's view, unacceptable in this well-established daytime radio programme, which has a predominantly adult audience.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Standards Panel listened to the item and took the view that it was unlikely to have caused widespread offence. It therefore decided that the complaint should not be upheld.

*Not Upheld*

### **Advertisement for Allied Dunbar**

ITV and C4, January and February 1997

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#### *The Complaint*

Ten viewers complained about the portrayal of the Grim Reaper in this advertisement which they considered to be frightening for children.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

The Broadcast Advertising Clearance Centre said that the advertisement addressed the sensitive subject of death, in relation to life insurance, and featured the Grim Reaper confronting an over-worked executive on a commuter train.

The BACC considered the treatment, whilst lighthearted, to be potentially upsetting to younger viewers and therefore its transmissions were restricted to post 1930.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Standards Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the scheduling restriction. It took the view that the Grim Reaper and some of the other characters were presented in a stylised manner and were therefore unlikely to be frightening for the post 1930 audience. The Panel decided that the complaints should not be upheld.

*Not Upheld*

### **Noel's House Party**

BBC1, 4 January 1997, 1855-1950

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#### *The Complaint*

Three viewers complained about the use of Christian holy names in a song.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC said that the song 'Master of the House', which comes from the musical 'Les Misérables', had been edited for strong language. But the words 'Jesus' and 'God Almighty' were left untouched as it was thought they had purpose and were justified by the context of the song. The BBC went on to say that there had been no intention to cause offence.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Council listened to the song and noted the language used. The Council concluded that, given the context in which the words were used, on balance, it would have been unlikely to have exceeded the expectations of the majority of the audience, but again urged broadcasters to be sensitive to the impact of these words for Christian believers. The complaints were not upheld.

*Not Upheld*

**The Hawk**

BBC2, 11 January 1997, 2130-2255

*The Complaint*

A viewer complained of the inclusion of a scene in which a man vomited.

*The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC said that this was an adult thriller broadcast after the Watershed. The drama involved the gradual unmasking of the man responsible for a series of brutal rapes and murders. The scene complained of occurred twenty-five minutes into the plot, at a point where viewers were struggling to reconcile a woman's suspicions about her husband with the apparently loving husband and father they had so far been led to believe him to be. The couple had gone out with friends to dinner; he got drunk, lost his self-control and vomited. This striking evidence of excessive behaviour heightened the tension and introduced nagging doubts about his apparent good character.

*The BSC's Finding*

The Complaints Committee viewed the drama and noted the scene complained of. It acknowledged that the scene was unpleasant but took the view that in the context of this adult drama, the brief scene did not go beyond acceptable limits. The Council accepted the recommendation that the complaint should not be upheld.

*Not Upheld***Ruby Wax Meets...**

BBC1, 3 February 1997, 2210-2240

*The Complaint*

Five viewers complained about a discussion of, and attempts to illustrate, favourite sexual positions.

*The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC said that this well established show asked some of the most famous people in the world about their private lives. Pamela Anderson attracted worldwide media attention as a sex symbol.

Ms Wax first interviewed Ms Anderson a year previously and in this, their second meeting, they addressed each other more like old friends. 'Radio Times' gave a clear indication that the show would contain 'babies, love and sex' and the 'Today's Choices' section warned: Ruby Wax works in mysterious ways and nothing is as cosily innocent as it appears. Pre-transmission trails for the programme contained clips of Ruby and Pamela

**Drop Dead Fred**

Channel 4, 24 December 1996, 1845-2030

*The Complaint*

A viewer complained that the bad language in this film was inappropriate for a film broadcast early on Christmas Eve.

*The Broadcaster's Statement*

Channel 4 said that this was a surreal comedy about a young woman whose childhood imaginary friend came back into her disastrous adult life, causing mounting farcical chaos as he tried to help her sort out her problems. The film did contain some expletives, mostly mild ones, but such language was not prevalent throughout the film. When deciding to schedule the film, both the context of the language and the strength of the words were taken into account. It was considered that, without exception, the language complained of was used to humorous effect and tended to be common language used in the everyday rhythms of speech.

*The BSC's Finding*

The Standards Panel noted that the film featured a British comedian well-known for his anarchic and irreverent style of humour. On balance, the Panel took the view that the sporadic use of bad language was unlikely to have exceeded the expectations of many among the audience for this film. It therefore decided not to uphold the complaint.

*Not Upheld*

discussing sex. The BBC believed the vast majority of the audience would have been in no doubt about the likely content of the programme, which was scheduled well after the 2100 Watershed.

*The BSC's Finding*

The Standards Panel viewed the programme and noted the sequence complained of. It considered that in the context of this programme, well-known for its outlandish presenter and her prying questions, the interview with Pamela Anderson, which had received extensive attention in the press before broadcast, did not go beyond acceptable limits for broadcasting well after the Watershed. The Panel therefore decided that the complaints should not be upheld.

*Not Upheld*

### **Cuts**

ITV, 31 December 1996, 2030-2200

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#### *The Complaint*

A viewer complained about explicit sexual scenes in this programme, one of which was broadcast before the 2100 Watershed.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

Yorkshire Television explained that 'Cuts' was a single film adapted from a novel about the world of television which had received high critical acclaim. The scenes in question were entirely comic in nature, both in sound and vision. There was no explicit material included and no graphic representation of sexual behaviour.

The broadcaster believed that the programme was well within guidelines for its transmission time, including the first half-hour which conformed to family viewing policy.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Standards Panel watched a recording of the film, a spoof of television dramas. A recurrent "joke" throughout the programme was the filming of waving fields of corn to portray sexual encounters. All the actual sexual activity was of very short duration with no nudity. The final scene complained of involved a dramatic "death" from a heart attack after sexual intercourse. However, the Panel believed that this would not have caused widespread offence and recommended that this aspect of the complaint should not be upheld. The pre-Watershed scene lasted for 5-6 seconds, reflecting the hero's fantasy of a sexual encounter. A naked couple were seen in bed embracing. Only arms and shoulders could be seen and the scene was integral to the portrayal of the hero's character. In view of its humorous nature, its short duration and its integral contribution to the story, the Panel took the view that this aspect of the complaint also should not be upheld.

#### *Not Upheld*

### **Middle English, The Tyger, the Rose and the Pleasure Dome**

Channel 4, 9 January 1997, 0930-0945

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#### *The Complaint*

Two viewers complained of the portrayal of violence against a badger which they considered to be inappropriately scheduled.

#### *The Broadcaster's Statement*

Channel 4 Television said that this schools programme on pre-20th century poetry was the first in a series covering the development of poetry across the ages. The programmes were designed to illustrate the reading of various poems in ways which would set the literary works in their historical and/or cultural context. The poem complained of was 'The Badger' by John Clare (1793-1864). Villagers, assisted by dogs, found, trapped and then assaulted and killed badgers, seemingly without thought for the pain and suffering of the animals. The poem described both the actions of the villagers and their dogs, and the reactions of the badger.

The purpose of the reconstruction was to show the cruelty involved in what was a common and accepted activity in previous centuries, thereby highlighting the contrast with the present day where such activities are considered socially unacceptable. It was intended that the item should become a point of debate on the treatment of animals. The reconstruction of the assault was filmed using what at times was clearly a dummy badger. The period costumes made it clear to viewers that this was not a contemporary event.

#### *The BSC's Finding*

The Standards Panel watched the programme and noted the broadcaster's statement. It took the view that the scenes complained of, while harrowing, did not go beyond acceptable limits in the context of a schools programme intended to provoke discussion and which would have been previewed by teachers. The Panel therefore decided that the complaints should not be upheld.

#### *Not Upheld*

**God's Country**

BBC Radio 4, 20 January 1997, 1400-1500

*The Complaint*

Three listeners complained about this episode. Two complained of the use of Christian holy names whilst a third complained of the inclusion of an explicit sexual conversation.

*The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC said that God's Country dealt with the period of adolescent trauma and anxiety. It was a series set in Newcastle. 'The Sorrows of Sandra', the episode complained of, dealt with a family's bereavement. The 14-year daughter claimed to have 'come to terms' with the death of her father. She attempted to demonstrate this by the use of adult language and knowing references, and told her mother, with whom she had a tense and argumentative relationship, that she was pregnant. In fact she was a virgin. But when her brother questioned her about it she responded with some detail and bravado.

The BBC did not believe the language and descriptions of sex were in any sense gratuitous. They thought it unlikely to encourage under age sex, in part because it conveyed the empty nature of this kind of relationship and the serious consequences - such as pregnancy - which could result from it. The BBC said that very few children listen to Radio 4 at this time and even fewer during term time when this programme was transmitted.

*The BSC's Finding*

The Standards Panel listened to a recording of the play. It acknowledged the offence that can be caused to some by the unthinking use of profanity but took the view that in the context of this drama its use by Sandra and her brother were unlikely to have caused widespread offence. The Panel also considered that the sexual details were not inappropriately scheduled nor likely to encourage underage sex. It therefore decided that the complaints should not be upheld.

*Not Upheld***The Big Story**

ITV, 5 December 1996, 1930-2000

*The Complaint*

A viewer complained about the use of an horrific image of the victim of a car crash.

*The Broadcaster's Statement*

Carlton Television explained that this episode of the current affairs series looked at the phenomenon of widespread and diverse interest in car crashes and was shown during the week when there was controversy surrounding the UK release of the feature film 'Crash'.

Still photographs of the victim of a car crash were shown and the victim, who survived, participated in the programme. The programme questioned from the outset the propriety of films which served up crashes involving ordinary people as mass entertainment. The programme also made clear the youthful interest in car crashes, whether at the stock car race circuit, in video arcades, or with home video games. The broadcaster believed that the programme illuminated the interest in the phenomenon of accidents as entertainment but also reminded viewers of the reality of car crashes.

*The BSC's Finding*

The full Council watched a recording of this programme. It noted that, although there had been no pre-transmission announcement alerting viewers to the content of the programme, immediately before the image of the crash victim was shown the audience was told that she had received horrific injuries. The image was held for a long time but the Council believed that, although shocking, within the context of the programme the use of this image was justified in showing the audience the reality of the effects of a car crash. The Council therefore agreed that the complaint should not be upheld.

*Not Upheld*

**Byker Grove**

BBC1, 14 November 1996, 1710-1735

*The Complaint*

Two viewers complained of the depictions of violence in this programme.

*The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC said the portrayal of a racist attack was the climax to a storyline about the attitudes of regular Byker Grove characters to the arrival in their midst of a young Asian. In its view, the BBC thought the incident was portrayed in a way which would have been convincing to older children, without being unsuitable for younger children who may have been watching.

The broadcaster continued that the storylines in this long established series were developed in close consultation with teachers and others who work with teenage children. Many teachers used the series to initiate classroom discussion of issues which children of that age might be wrestling with for the first time.

*The BSC's Finding*

The Complaints Committee watched the episode and took the view that the portrayal of violence did not go beyond acceptable limits in a programme aimed at older children. The Council accepted the Committee's recommendation not to uphold the complaints.

*Not Upheld*

**The League Against Tedium**

BBC Radio 1 FM, 15 January 1997, 2100-2200

*The Complaint*

A listener complained of the Satanic presentation of this programme and an offensive comment about women.

*The Broadcaster's Statement*

The BBC said that this was the first of a new experimental comedy series broadcast at 2100 and targeted at a young adult audience. It was promoted as providing 'stereo nonsense' - an unconventional mixture that played with words, sounds and music and took listeners into a fantasy world. It delighted in setting cliches in surprising contexts. Different 'sketches' adopted different styles but the BBC did not accept the description of the presentation as 'Satanic'. The BBC did not believe that in the context of this anarchic comedy programme, that the words were either offensive or derogatory. This was a programme catering for listeners with a taste for the absurd.

*The BSC's Finding*

The Standards Panel listened to the programme and noted the comment complained of. It did not believe that the presentation of the programme was intended to be Satanic and took the view that the programme's clearly bizarre nature was likely to have robbed it of offence for the majority of viewers. The Panel therefore decided that the complaint should not be upheld.

*Not Upheld*

The complaints summarised below were not upheld and no statement was required from the broadcaster. Complaints may not be upheld because the content was considered likely to be within the expectations of the audience for the type of programme; or the programme was appropriately labelled or scheduled, or the content was deemed acceptable within the context in which it was broadcast.

CN 6859.3	<b>Advertisement for Levi 501</b>				
3 complaints	Sexual imagery	C4	Feb 97		Sex
CN 6858	<b>Last Chance Lottery</b>				
1 complaint	Cruelty to animals	C4	23.2.97	1830-1930	Violence
CN 6851	<b>Eurotrash</b>				
1 complaint	Pornographic scenes	C4	1.3.97	2200-2230	Sex
CN 6844	<b>The Girlie Show</b>				
1 complaint	Bad language	C4	15.2.97	0120-0150	Taste
CN 6842	<b>Trail for Mrs Merton Show</b>				
1 complaint	Sexual innuendo	BBC1	24.2.97	1734	Sex
CN 6841	<b>Trail: Perfect State</b>				
1 complaint	Tasteless comment	BBC1	26.2.97	2013	Taste

CN 6837	<b>Ed McBain's 87th Precinct</b>					
1 complaint	Encouraging violent behaviour	C4	25.2.97	2200-2340	Violence	
CN 6836	<b>Timewatch: Love Story</b>					
1 complaint	Discussion of lesbian relationship	BBC2	25.2.97	2100-2150	Taste	
CN 6831	<b>Last Chance Lottery</b>					
1 complaint	Cruelty to animals	C4	22.2.97	2100-2200	Violence	
CN 6823	<b>Star Trek: The Next Generation</b>					
1 complaint	Scheduling of frightening scenes	BBC2	12.2.97	1800-1845	Taste	
CN 6813	<b>Allan Beswick Show</b>					
1 complaint	Crude comments	BBC GMR	19.2.97	0900-1300	Taste	
CN 6807.4	<b>The Baker Line</b>					
4 complaints	Rude treatment of callers	BBC R5L	19.2.97	2000-2300	Taste	
CN 6803	<b>The Village</b>					
1 complaint	Use of Christian holy names	BBC2	19.2.97	1730-1755	Taste	
CN 6789.2	<b>Ad: Scotland Against Drugs</b>					
2 complaints	Violence against woman	Grampian	16.2.97	2145	Violence	
CN 6774	<b>You Bet</b>					
1 complaint	Cruelty to animals	ITV	15.2.97	1815-1915	Violence	
CN 6766.2	<b>Common as Muck</b>					
2 complaints	Bad language including Christian holy names	BBC1	12.2.97	2130-2230	Taste	
CN 6752	<b>Trouble at the Top: Nightmare at Canary Wharf 2 - Kelvin's Revenge</b>					
1 complaint	Bad language	BBC2	2.1.97	2150-2230	Taste	
CN 6739	<b>Ken Bruce</b>					
1 complaint	Tasteless joke about arson	BBC R2	6.2.97	0930-1130	Taste	
CN 6738	<b>Kilroy</b>					
1 complaint	Racist remarks	BBC1	4.2.97	0945-1030	Taste	
CN 6734.2	<b>Harry Enfield and Chums</b>					
2 complaints	Violence and racism	BBC1	4.2.97	2130-2200	Violence and Taste	
CN 6731	<b>Harry Enfield and Chums</b>					
1 complaint	Vulgar sketches	BBC1	28.1.97	2130-2200	Taste	
CN 6729	<b>Without Warning: The James Brady Story</b>					
1 complaint	Bad language	C4	4.2.97	2200-2340	Taste	
CN 6727	<b>Red Base One Four</b>					
1 complaint	Bad language in documentary	C4	8.12.96	2100-2200	Taste	
CN 6726.3	<b>The Long Johns</b>					
3 complaints	Offensive comments	C4	30.1.97	2145-2200	Taste	
CN 6706	<b>Wham Bam Strawberry Jam!</b>					
1 complaint	Spitting and vulgar words	BBC1	30.1.97	1555-1610	Taste	
CN 6498.2	<b>National Theatre of Brent in the Greatest Story Ever Told</b>					
2 complaints	Offence to religious sensitivities	BBC R4	16.12.96	1945-2100	Taste	

## Complaints concerning standards

CN 6704	<b>Hale and Pace</b>					
1 complaint	Violence in comedy sketches	ITV	26.1.97	2200-2230	Violence	
CN 6694	<b>The Smell of Reeves and Mortimer</b>					
1 complaint	Crude comedy sketch	BBC2	19.1.97	2150-2220	Taste	
CN 6693	<b>Common as Muck</b>					
1 complaint	Bad language	BBC1	29.1.97	2130-2225	Taste	
CN 6691	<b>Top of the Pops</b>					
1 complaint	Sexually explicit lyrics	BBC1	25.1.97	0025-0055	Sex	
CN 6690	<b>Top of the Pops</b>					
1 complaint	Sexually explicit lyrics	BBC1	24.1.97	1930-2000	Sex	
CN 6674	<b>Ivanhoe</b>					
1 complaint	Cruelty to animals	BBC1	26.1.97	2120-2215	Violence	
CN 6673	<b>The Girlie Show</b>					
1 complaint	Scenes from bondage club	C4	25.1.97	0110-0145	Sex	
CN 6671	<b>Under Siege</b>					
1 complaint	Use of Christian holy names	BBC1	24.1.97	2130-2310	Taste	
CN 6670	<b>The Girlie Show</b>					
1 complaint	Scenes from bondage club	C4	24.1.97	2305-2335	Sex	
CN 6665	<b>The Bill</b>					
1 complaint	Depiction of dead woman	ITV	16.1.97	2000-2030	Taste	
CN 6662	<b>Soho Stories</b>					
1 complaint	Scenes of male stripper	BBC2	18.11.96	2315-0000	Sex	
CN 6657.2	<b>Dispatches: Soccer's Foul Play</b>					
2 complaints	Language and sexual content	C4	23.1.97	2100-2200	Sex and Taste	
CN 6655	<b>South East News</b>					
1 complaint	Mental health issues	BBC1	21.1.97	1830-1900	Taste	
CN 6654	<b>The Mary Millington Story</b>					
1 complaint	Inappropriate use of religious music	C4	16.1.97	2200-2305	Taste	
CN 6649	<b>Harry Enfield and Chums</b>					
1 complaint	Tasteless stereotypes	BBC1	7.1.97	2130-2200	Taste	
CN 6643.3	<b>Harry Enfield and Chums</b>					
3 complaints	Cruelty to animals & tasteless remarks	BBC1	14.1.97	2130-2200	Taste	
CN 6640	<b>The Place of the Dead</b>					
1 complaint	Bad language	ITV	18.1.97	2100-2300	Taste	
CN 6638	<b>Common as Muck</b>					
1 complaint	Bad language	BBC1	15.1.97	2130-2225	Taste	
CN 6635	<b>Trail: Brothers and Sisters</b>					
1 complaint	Sexual comment	BBC2	2.1.97	1800	Taste	
CN 6634	<b>Trail: The Wingless Bird</b>					
1 complaint	Scheduling of bloody scene	Meridian	8.1.97	1830	Violence	

CN 6631	<b>The Frank Skinner Show</b>					
1 complaint	Tasteless joke	BBC1	16.1.97	2220-2250	Taste	
CN 6615.2	<b>Common as Muck</b>					
2 complaints	Bad language and sexual aids	BBC1	8.1.97	2130-2225	Taste and Sex	
CN 6609	<b>Red Base One Four</b>					
1 complaint	Bad language in documentary	C4	1.12.96	2100-2200	Taste	
CN 6608	<b>Red Base One Four</b>					
1 complaint	Bad language in documentary	C4	24.11.96	2100-2200	Taste	
CN 6579.10	<b>Monarchy - The Nation Decides</b>					
10 complaints	Issues of taste and decency - some outside remit	ITV	7.1.97	2030-	Taste	
CN 6577	<b>Family Fortunes</b>					
1 complaint	Mimicry of Chinese accent	ITV	4.1.97	2015-2045	Taste	
CN 6570	<b>Eye Spy</b>					
1 complaint	Use of CCTV without permission	Carlton	3.1.97	2030-2100	Taste	
CN 6566	<b>The Big Breakfast</b>					
1 complaint	Sexual references	C4	3.1.97	0800-1000	Sex	
CN 6542	<b>The Big Breakfast</b>					
1 complaint	Sexual references	C4	24.12.96	0800-1000	Sex	
CN 6516	<b>Romancing the Stone</b>					
1 complaint	Nudity and bad language	ITV	21.12.96	2045-2245	Taste	
CN 6496	<b>Community Projects News</b>					
1 complaint	Inappropriate scheduling	Granada TV	10.12.96	1759	Taste	
CN 6474	<b>Last of the Summer Wine</b>					
1 complaint	Violent stories of war experiences	BBC1	8.12.96	1845-1915	Violence	
CN 6465	<b>Jim Davidson's Generation Game</b>					
1 complaint	Provocative dancing	BBC1	7.12.96	1755-1855	Sex	
CN 6429	<b>Dallas Doll</b>					
1 complaint	Sexual scenes	BBC2	16.11.96	2130-2310	Sex	
CN 6403.7	<b>The British Comedy Awards</b>					
7 complaints	Bad language and tasteless jokes	ITV	30.11.96	2045-2300	Taste	
CN 6395	<b>Emmerdale</b>					
1 complaint	Adultery	ITV	28.11.96	1900-1930	Sex and Taste	
CN 6322	<b>Grandstand</b>					
1 complaint	Bad language	BBC1	16.11.96	1215-1725	Taste	

# fairness

Complaints about fairness (unjust or unfair treatment or the unwarranted infringement of privacy) can only be made by those people directly affected by the broadcast. In considering the facts of the case, the Commissioners always study written exchanges of evidence and may hold a hearing with both the complainant and the broadcasters present.

Copies of full adjudications are available from The Broadcasting Standards Commission, 7 The Sanctuary, London SW1P 3JS. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

## Complaint from Mr Peck - Crime Beat, 11 March 1996

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In the week before 11 March 1996, BBC1 broadcast trailers for an episode of Crime Beat. These showed Mr Peck holding a knife, then being led away by police officers. On 11 March, the programme was shown, including this excerpt, but with Mr Peck's face masked. The excerpt was accompanied by commentary explaining that a closed circuit television (CCTV) camera operator had spotted a man carrying a knife, and that the Council had alerted a police patrol. Police officers then described how they had disarmed this man. The BBC subsequently apologised to Mr Peck for not masking his face in the trailers.

Mr Peck complained that the trailers and programme had unwarrantably infringed his privacy. He had been filmed on CCTV after having attempted suicide, and this footage had been broadcast without his knowledge or consent. He said that the item had been unfair, since the programme concerned criminal activity, but he had not been charged with a crime.

The Commission noted the BBC's apology for not disguising Mr Peck's face in the trailers, but considered that his face was also inadequately masked in the programme. The effect had been to publicise without reasonable justification an episode which Mr Peck had not wanted publicised, and this was an unwarranted infringement of his privacy. Whilst the Commission did not consider that it was evident from the excerpt that Mr Peck had attempted suicide, viewers could have thought that he had been acting criminally, which was unfair to him.

*Upheld*

## Complaint from Mr Romeo Izzo - The London Programme, 4 October 1996

The Broadcasting Standards Commission has upheld one part of a complaint from Mr Romeo Izzo about an edition of the current affairs programme The London Programme, entitled Only Bricks and Mortar, which was broadcast on London Weekend Television on 4 October 1996. The programme which reported on fraud in the repossessed London property market gave the address and showed film of Mr Izzo's house in Lewisham. Mr Izzo complained to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission (now the Broadcasting Standards Commission) that he had been treated unfairly and unjustly in the programme, and that his privacy had been unwarrantably infringed.

The Commission noted that Mr Izzo had not appeared on screen or been named in the programme, and accepted that the brief shot of his house, including its address, helped validate the case the programme was making in exposing fraud. Taking the shot of the house in isolation, the Commission did not find that, on balance, Mr Izzo's privacy was unwarrantably infringed.

As to Mr Izzo's complaint of unfairness, the Commission accepted that the programme dealt with a matter of public interest and that the programme-makers had no intention of implicating Mr Izzo in the frauds they were exposing. However, the Commission found that viewers could have thought that Mr Izzo had bought the house as part of the irregular deals on which the programme reported. This misconception could easily have been avoided by the inclusion in the commentary of a sentence explaining that the current owner, Romeo Izzo, knew nothing of, and gained no benefit from, the fraud. The programme-makers' failure to anticipate the problem and include such a disclaimer meant that, while performing a signal service to the victims of the fraud, they were unfair to an innocent party.

Accordingly, while rejecting the complaint of unwarranted infringement of privacy, the Commission found that, the programme was unfair and unjust to Mr Izzo.

*Upheld in part*

## Not Upheld complaints

Broadcast	Programme	Date of complaint/Complainant	Nature of complaint
11.12.95 BBC1	<b>Panorama</b>	26.3.96 Camelot Group plc	Unjust or unfair treatment
24.4.95 Westcountry TV	<b>A Matter of Time</b>	28.8.95 Mr & Mrs Webber	Unwarranted infringement of privacy
26.4.95 C4	<b>Trial &amp; Error</b>	28.8.95 Mr & Mrs Webber	Unwarranted infringement of privacy
27.3.96 BBC1	<b>Midlands Today</b>	10.5.96 Mr R Brennan on behalf of Coal Contractors Limited	Unjust or unfair treatment
5.3.96 Meridian	<b>Serve You Right</b>	30.5.96 Dr Cyrus Malekout on his own behalf and on behalf of EDS	Unjust or unfair treatment and unwarranted infringement of privacy
9.4.95 BBC1	<b>The Money Programme</b>	29.9.95 Mr Graham Langford	Unjust or unfair treatment
19.1.96 BBC1	<b>Esther</b>	7.2.96 Ms Ruby Fowles	Unjust or unfair treatment
17.5.96 HTV	<b>Wales This Week</b>	22.5.96 Mr Clive Worth	Unjust or unfair treatment and unwarranted infringement of privacy

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