



ADJUDICATION NO: 21/A/2026

NAME OF PROGRAMME: CLIP OF INTERVIEW WITH JOHN ROBBIE
ON 22ND OF MAY

DATE AND TIME OF BROADCAST: 29 MAY AT 15:05

BROADCASTER: 947

COMPLAINANT: FUCHS

COMPLAINT

Complaint that 94.7 radio broadcast a segment containing very graphic violent description.

APPLICABLE CLAUSES

Clause 3 (a) of the Free-to-Air code of conduct:

Broadcasting service licensees must not broadcast material which, judged within context:

- (a) Contains violence which does not play an integral role in developing the plot, character or theme of the material as a whole.
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ADJUDICATION

- [1] A complaint was lodged with the BCCSA against 94.7 radio station concerning a segment that allegedly contained very graphic violent content.

[2] The complaint reads as follows:

"I feel I need to report 94.7 radio station due to this incident.

On Friday 29 May @ about 5:05pm the radio station 94.7 broadcast a story of some kind that described graphic violence, burning someone alive with petrol etc.

Apart from the plainly graphic nature of the story this country has had this exact occurrence due to political and xenophobic violence in the past and broadcasting such intense violent imagery over the airwaves surely cannot be right.

Whew that's a bit but here you go:

Context: Bit tricky as I had just turned the radio on but it wasn't a news report, and I don't think discussion, it was some kind of story.

Clause contravened: Well this is interesting because the advert for you guys always mentions "explicit violence" but your actual code for violence in sections 3 and 4 only talks about "does not play a role in developing the plot" and does not "sanctions, promotes or glamorises" violence. So I'm not sure here because it is merely because the violence was so explicit and graphically detailed that I contacted you. Also since I missed the first part context is slim so I'm going to have to go with 3(A) "Broadcasting service licensees must not broadcast material which, judged within context

(a) contains violence which does not play an integral role in developing the plot, character or theme of the material as a whole;" or alternatively since the only place that mentions explicit violence is 7(1) "Watershed Period (1) Programming on television which contains scenes of explicit violence and/or sexual conduct and/or nudity and/or grossly offensive language intended for adult audiences must not be broadcast before the watershed period." and it was before the watershed period perhaps this applies but 7(1) talks about TV and this was Radio but I just cannot see how such explicit violence was necessary.

I do not believe the exclusions of section 5 apply.

Sorry perhaps you can see it better which applies."

[3] The Broadcaster responded as follows:

"Primedia's comment on this is that veteran broadcaster, Mr John Robbie was being interviewed on 947 on 22 May 2026. The interview was wide ranging and mostly touched on his broadcasting career. Mr Robbie recounted many stories or anecdotes on air. One of the stories pertained to hate mail that Mr Robbie received. This is the audio that was clipped and replayed on 29 May 2026.

It is clear to listeners at all times (whether during the actual interview or sound bite) that Mr Robbie is recounting a story: (i) he says, "this is a letter I got" and (ii) also mentions the author of the hate mail: "a concerned Christian".

Thus, in context, there is no breach of any provisions of the Code. We hope this settles the matter."

[4] The Complainant replied as follows:

“Yes, I would say of course it's clear this wasn't incitement and he was reporting the words but none the less the explicit violent imagery is in itself the problem. As it's clear this was hate mail he received then the station could itself be said to have broadcast the hate, although this is woolly.

The broadcast of explicit violent imagery into the minds of their listenership, whatever the circumstances, remains the core of my complaint.

I suspect this complaint is going to fail, in terms of the code. Therefore I would suggest the code be updated to directly cover the radio broadcast of explicit violent or sexual imagery, at any time, or in terms of a newly created radio watershed.

EVALUATION

[5] Having considered the complaint, the broadcaster's response and the context of the broadcast, I listened to the interview excerpt that was rebroadcast on 94.7 on 29 May 2026. The issue for determination is whether the broadcast of an excerpt containing a description of violent imagery within a quoted anecdote about hate mail constitutes a contravention of the Broadcasting Code, particularly in relation to the broadcast of violent content. The complainant submits that the material contains explicit and disturbing violent imagery inappropriate for radio broadcast, while the broadcaster maintains that the content formed part of a contextualised interview in which the presenter was recounting experiences of receiving hate mail.

[6] The first step is to consider the nature of the content and context. The impugned material forms part of a rebroadcast interview in which the presenter recounts receiving hate mail during his career. The violent wording appears within a quoted or recounted letter, which is referenced during the segment. The material is therefore not presented as dramatised or fictional violence, but as part of real life account describing the nature of correspondence received. In context, the excerpt forms part of a broader narrative and is not a standalone presentation of violent content.

[7] The question is how the content would reasonably be understood by an average listener. While wording contained in the letter includes violent imagery, the

broadcast clearly frames the material as part of a personal anecdote regarding hate mail received by the presenter. There is not indication that the broadcaster endorses, promotes or encourages the violent content, it is also not presented in a sensationalised manner. In these circumstances, the reasonable listener would likely interpret the excerpt as a reporting of the existence of abusive correspondence rather than an endorsement or promotion of violence.

- [8] In assessing the alleged contravention, guidance is taken from the provisions of the Broadcasting Code, which prohibit the broadcast of material that promotes or glorifies violence or which is gratuitous in nature when judged within context. In this matter, the violent wording appears within a quoted or recounted letter and serves to illustrate the nature of the hate mail being discussed. The material is not presented as entertainment or for shock value, nor does it serve as an independent editorial purpose of promoting violence, rather, it is incidental to a broader view discussion.
- [9] Furthermore, while the content may be regarded as disturbing to some listeners, the Broadcast Code requires an objective assessment of whether the broadcast amounts to prohibited content, rather than whether it causes subjective offence. The presence of violent imagery alone is not sufficient to establish a breach, the decisive consideration is whether the content is presented in a manner that promotes, glorifies or gratuitously emphasizes violence. On the presented facts, this threshold has not been crossed.
- [10] Having assessed the content in its full context, it is found that the broadcast of the rebroadcast interview excerpt does not constitute a contravention of the Broadcasting Code. The violent wording appears within a contextualised anecdote describing hate mail received by the presenter and is not presented in a manner that promotes or glorifies violence. **The complaint is therefore not upheld.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SA' with a stylized flourish.

MS SINENTLALHA MBOKWE
COMMISSIONER: BROADCASTING COMPLAINTS COMMISSION