

Elizabeth Vera Setchell

15 March 2004

BBC Charter Review Consultation,
Dept., for Culture, Media and Sport,
2-4 Cockspur Street,
London, SW1Y 5DH.

Dear Sirs,

My views on the BBC

What I most value about the BBC is historical, wildlife, children's, gardening and financial programmes such as Working Lunch.

What I do deplore are programmes shown well before the 9 pm watershed which contain offensive material. When I saw such a programme on BBC2 on 24 February 2003 at 7.30pm my complaint was not upheld. I enclose the reply I received which annoyed me very much. Calling the BBC2 a "minority channel, clearly aimed at an adult audience" did not, in my opinion, excuse the BBC from showing such a programme so early in the evening. I should add that I do not watch programmes that clearly advertise material that I do not wish to view. My age is 75 years.

Although it seems attractive to suggest the abolition of the current licence fee, that step would surely necessitate commercial advertisements to provide the necessary revenue. I would, however, like to suggest that there are short breaks during, say, two-hour programmes for the convenience of viewers.

The BBC Governors should certainly continue to ensure that accuracy, impartiality and fair-trading are their main responsibility.

As regards ensuring that the BBC is properly accountable to the public and Parliament, I strongly feel that the public should have a much greater input and influence on the BBC. How is the Board of Governors appointed and are members of the general public (not necessarily well educated) considered as members?

I hope you get a good response from the public. Unfortunately, many viewers make good and bad comments about programmes only to their friends and, therefore, the BBC do not hear about such views.

Best wishes with the BBC Charter Review.

Yours faithfully,

E Vera Setchell





16 May 2003

FINDING: Meades Eats: *Fast Food*, BBC2, 24 February 2003, 1930-2000

The Complaint

A viewer complained about offensive content inappropriate for broadcast pre-Watershed.

The Commission's Finding

A Standards Panel watched this programme, a polemical and 'authored' piece criticising the fast food industry. It noted the particular sequence complained of, in which the presenter acquired a condom from a urinal, at which another customer was consuming food, and then presented the condom filled with sausage meat. The Panel noted the deliberate crudity of the sequence, which was, however, of a piece with the overall tone and purpose of the programme, assaulting obfuscation and euphemism in food packaging and promotion. It considered that the provision of a warning, although it might have been more clearly expressed, would have alerted viewers to content that they might find disagreeable. The Panel took the view that the sequence had not exceeded acceptable boundaries for transmission pre-Watershed in the context of a programme on a minority channel, clearly aimed at an adult audience and addressing an issue of legitimate public concern. The complaint was not upheld.

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