

Cliff caught in BCCSA crossfire

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5FM's drive time DJ, Gareth Cliff, was found in contravention of the code protecting religious freedom by the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA), in respect of an interview he purported to conduct with "Jesus" on his show on the afternoon of 10 March 2004.

No further sanction was imposed on Cliff or the SABC's 5FM music radio station, as it was deemed that the station had taken appropriate action by suspending Cliff for two days, and because Cliff had apologized on air subsequently.

Commenting on the judgment, 5FM programme manager, Nick Grubb said: "The ruling against 5fm is not that the interview should not have been broadcast, but rather that it should not have been broadcast at that time of day, exposing it to a wide and varied audience."

The BCCSA tribunal's judgement was in response to allegations of blasphemy and hate speech brought against 5FM. As the BCCSA's code does not cover blasphemy, the judgement was on hate speech, for which the SABC was found not guilty.

The interview was a pre-recorded sketch with Cliff interviewing himself as 'Jesus' and discussing the controversial motion picture "The Passion of The Christ".

Editorial contact

Total Exposure on behalf of 5FM

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