

28 APR 2005

Dear SBS,

I wish to register a complaint re SBS Radio who I believe have contravened the SBS Code of Practice.

This complaint relates to a series of Broadcasts on SBS's Vietnamese Language program during mid march. The speeches were broadcast on the 9am Sydney program on AM1107 around the 20th March. I believe the speaker was a Vietnamese Australian named [redacted]. The broadcast was in English and Vietnamese enabling me to fully understand what was being said.

The speeches were addressed to Vietnamese Australians in Australia (including young Vietnamese Australians who could not speak Vietnamese) and painted a very biased view of the current Vietnamese Government. He was inciting action against a Government that is formally recognised by our own Government. The broadcasts were clearly breaches of item 2.1 in your code of practice. Your Radio station was allowing a broadcast that distorted the picture of the local Vietnamese Community and the Vietnamese people of Vietnam clearly displaying and espousing prejudice against political beliefs of these groups.

Furthermore your Vietnamese Broadcast seems to engender a very narrow view in terms of Vietnam and the Vietnamese Government that appears to held only by a very small handful of prejudiced activists in Australia.

I would not have taken the action to complain except for receiving emails from Vietnamese Community members in Australia that are standing up to the handful of militants that have kept them from enjoying their democratic rights in Australia in the past. I would ask that SBS investigate the specific complaint but also look at the Vietnamese Radio department in general to ensure that they are presenting a balanced view.

In view of an expected visit by the Vietnamese Prime Minister this year and the help that Vietnam is giving Australia in joining the important ASEAN Trade Group - I would suggest that SBS should ensure that they are not allowing a small group of activists

ursue their own interests to the detriment of our country.



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POSTED

Audience Affairs

15 June 2005

The Office of Audience Affairs at SBS has finalised its investigation into your complaint about the speeches broadcast by [redacted] on the SBS Radio Vietnamese language program around the 20th March. Your complaint has been upheld.

A transcript of the speech by [redacted] which was broadcast on 22nd March '05 was examined. That broadcast was found to have too narrowly concentrated on a single point of view which contained some prejudicial material.

As a result, SBS Radio Management will now ensure that further training is provided to the staff involved in the broadcast. The training will emphasise the requirements of the SBS Codes of Practice to ensure objectivity and impartiality of the material broadcast by SBS.

It is not the role of this Office to examine the output of an entire radio department as you have requested. Under normal circumstances, this Office examines individual complaints about specific programs. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to move to a broader review. However, as this is the first formal complaint this Office has received about the Vietnamese language program, there is no indication at this stage, that such a review is necessary.

SBS regrets any distress the broadcast on the 22nd March may have caused.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sally Begbie', is written over a horizontal line.

Sally Begbie
Audience Affairs Manager

TRANSCRIPT of the Vietnamese Program on 22 March 2005 from 37:00 min to 59:00 min.
(The italics are English in the broadcast)

Music

GRABS.

"At that time, about 23 years ago, ladies and gentlemen especially my dear young friends, I was about the age of the young people here or maybe younger, but (with) the feelings of a young person just leaving his country recently, my spirit was full of enthusiasm. At that moment I was very touched when the news came that [redacted] was caught by the communists. I remember to compose that song on the new year's night (1-1), friends have gone out to the Opera House to greet the new year but because I was so moved, I stayed at home quietly trying to finish the song so that I could sing. At that moment I was singing with a lot of feelings, singing and crying. Now I'd like to have the honour to sing the song 'The Will for My Child and My Country'. I wrote this song with strong feelings and had it dedicated to [redacted] and the heroes of the Republic of Viet Nam fighting for a free Viet Nam."

Music.

Broadcaster:

That's the musician [redacted] playing and singing his song.

Music

Broadcaster.

Good morning. The talk by [redacted] or the poet [redacted] has attracted more than 100 participants most of them are young people, it kept them for 3 hours and at the end people still lingered as if they didn't want to leave. Last week you've listened the first part of the talk when [redacted] started the story for the young people by likening the life of the Vietnamese refugee to a dead twig abandoned by the side of a track, simply because he lost his country. After that he reminded them of the exemplary sacrifice that a young fighter had made on the way home. He had used his own body to cover for [redacted] so he could be safe in the struggle for the Cause.

GRABS

"I have here a photo of a young Vietnamese man.

when I talk to you I want to cry because this is only a 29 y.o. young man like all of you.

This is a young Vietnamese 29 y.o. man like you, my children.

and I consider him as my son

I consider him as my son.

29 y.o. young man, like all of you here in this room.

On the way back to Viet Nam from Australia, I came to Thailand and met this person, a young man 29 y.o. in a refugee camp. He had a beautiful lover who is Laotian. Both of them had been allowed to settle to France but on meeting me, the young man told his lady, Please go to France, I stay here to go back to my country with uncle [redacted]. On our way back when we were ambushed this 29 y.o. young man shouted to me, Uncle please

escape to continue your path, I stay here to cover for you. This young man had died for Viet Nam and for you today my children.

When I left Australia to come back to VN on 1981 I met this young man 29 y.o. like all of you here. He stayed in the refugee camp and he had a beautiful girlfriend. She was Laotian and both of them had (some permits -not clear) to go to France in order to have a new life, in order to have everything. But he said to his girlfriend that, Please go ahead, I had to go back to VN with uncle because I want to do something for the country. And on the way back to VN we were ambushed by the Communists and he said to me, Please run away, please escape let me stay back here to be a target in order for them to shoot me, but you have to run away to continue your way back to VN. This is the 29 y.o. man. like all of you.

Thanks to him, I continue to fight. Thanks to all of you here I continue to fight not for me but for the country. I don't know if I still have enough time or not.

I regret that I want to tell you more but there isn't enough time. How can I tell you all the things happened in a life of 70 years ? What can I do ? In half an hour how can I explain to you my whole life, how can I say of one's love for one's country ? How can I let you know that our country at this moment doesn't have freedom ? How can I tell you that your friends at home at this moment can't live as human beings ?

How can (I -not clear) tell you, how in 1/2 hour to let you know that every (not clear) like you young people the youth in VN they don't have any life to live, they don't have any happiness, enjoy life like a human being. How can I tell you in 1/2 hour ? I want to give you all of my life, 70 y.o. life and I want to cry."

Broadcaster:

Ensuite he mentioned the Vietnamese youth with their pure heart but a wise mind facing challenges of life.

GRABS

"There is proof for everything I say.

Everything I talk to you I have proof, I don't want to create a story, I don't want to make any propaganda because I know that you have a soft heart but you also have a clear mind. You have a soft heart in order not to deceive anybody but you have a clear mind not to be deceived by anybody.

Because the Vietnamese youth overseas, in Australia, in America, in France has a very pure heart, a very wise mind. Your heart is pure so that you never deceive anyone, and your mind wise so that no one can deceive you.

You never deceive anybody but also you never let anybody deceive you because you have a clear mind and also because you have a soft heart and I want to prove you some proof.

Here is an article in newspaper in February - 2005.

This is a news on a newspaper on February of this year."

Broadcaster:

After that read a moving newspaper article.

GRABS.

"The article as follows:

Saigon. Young girls are sold by a market of virgins. A match-making factory (its name - not clear) in Saigon whose director is [redacted] (not sure, transcribed phonetically) and his pretending Vietnamese wife were the principals, under the pretext of recruiting workers (they) have recruited and held 3,500 Vietnamese virgins in a row of one storey houses hot with alluminum roof, the girls are waiting to be sold to the Chinese in Singapore. This is a result of an investigation by The Straight Times, a 120 year old newspaper of Singapore.

The newspaper wrote that [redacted] instead of taking care of manufacturing matches, the factory has hired many persons to go to the rural areas in the south of VN recruiting Vietnamese virgins to sell to single men in Singapore... (After -not clear) a girl was brought to the factory a (not clear) took place with stringent conditions to control the quality. Matrons will check her both outside and inside, to see if there are wrinkles on her lower abdomen's skin which are the result of giving birth. Those who show wrinkles will be sent home. Then matrons will check the vagina to see if the hymen is intact, if not the girl will also be sent back. Those who pass the hymen check will be entered a longer control phase, that is the labour exploitation that they are not allowed to complain about. While they are waiting to be sold into marriage in Singapore, a mild expression of dissatisfaction would be an excuse to get fired.

Everyday the certified virgins have to work a whole strecht of 12 hours, sitting on the floor to make matches for a wage of five US dollars. However these Vietnamese virgins wouldn't complain, because working in the field or catching fish in the open air will get them about one US dollar a day. Besides their thinking is that endure till they are sold into marriage in Singapore, then their life will be definitely better than in VN.

"In (... not clear) there is another stringent condition: the girls who want to have Singaporian husbands are obliged to obey him 100%. Any sign of disobedience will have them expelled. According to the investigation of the newspaper, previously [redacted] has recruited 1,800 virgins eligible... (not clear) as brides for Singapore and has sold into marriage 300 persons, now he still has 3,500 other girls working in stringent conditions mentioned above, waiting for their virginity to be checked. The waiting list lengthens everyday. On average in each recruitment drive of 3,500 persons there are only about 300 who satisfy the criteria."

Broadcaster:

That's an article that [redacted] was so moved and couldn't hold back her tears when trying to read to the end. Very likely the audience also shared her feelings. [redacted] wanted the young people understand throughly this story.

GRABS

"I talk to you from the translation of the news.

I have to use some English words because in the room there are a few persons who are not Vietnamese and a number of young people don't understand/lack (not clear) Vietnamese. Uncle want you, Father want you absorb that article into your blood. 3,500 young Vietnamese girls were disrobed by the Singaporeans, the Koreans to be checked if the hymen still be intact and are sold overseas. That is just one article, there are many others. Anyone who still has a conscience must cry like [redacted] reading and crying just now.

(That's only -not clear-) one spot. but you could find 3,500 Vietnamese young girls and the foreigners who came to VN they made the search, to make sure that those girls are still virgin in order to sell back to Singapore, to Taiwan, anywhere for a few hundred dollars. What kind of that life ?

Life like that, have you ever seen that scene happening in Australia ? in this humanity ? It only happens in VN under the communist regime. Have you ever thought that your younger sisters here, your daughters here, would be sold to foreigners, those because they have money would check the girls like an item for sale ?

How you think about that ? I want to cry when I read those news. Not once in a while but I read those news everyday.

And those articles help me to continue standing to work for my country till the day I die. And those articles help me to talk to you today my children.

Please there is some human being feelings. Please have some conscience in order to think back to our mother land. All of you here, like this young lawyer, he just graduated, congratulations. Maybe you don't know the (flavour ? not clear) of life, if you are not going to die almost, because you are forced (not clear) you know the (flavour ? not clear) of life like me.

When you see VN your country, the suffering the humiliation of your people, only then you can understand the happiness you have today in Australia. This happiness doesn't just occur out of the thin air, just lie on the street for you to pick up. This happiness comes about by the sweat and tears of your parents, who crossed the sea and today bring you up.

The happiness, the joy that you are enjoying now that are in your life don't not come from the sky, it is not dropped like that but it came from the sweat of your mother, from the labour of your dad in the factories. So while you enjoy the life you have to think about them. You have to think about the country, you have to think about the roots."

Broadcaster:

Then he reminded the audience that the young people should not forget the debt to the countries who cared for them but they are still Vietnamese so they should learn Vietnamese, as well as explaining to their classmates by sharing ideas.

GRABS

I want to say to you that we don't forget our debts to the Australians, to the Americans, the French and the humanity but the important thing is that not forgetting the debt means we should forget VN.

It doesn't mean like that. You have to be grateful to the country who gave you the refuge who gave you a new life, but it doesn't mean that you have to forget your roots, it doesn't mean that you have to forget your mother land. You are still Vietnamese in your blood.

Because you are still Vietnamese by blood, you must learn Vietnamese, because being able to speak two languages is always better than just one language.

You have to learn Vietnamese because bilingual is much better than to speak only one language. Right?

Another thing is to explain to your classmates where VN is, what VN is. It is the country of my parents. Why we had to leave our country.

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You have to explain to your classmates why your parents had to come here and you have to explain to them where VN is and what VN is.

So I have to say to you one thing, maybe there is not much time left but the important thing I want to tell you, please remember:

You have to learn something, first thing about knowledge.

The important thing is *knowledge*. You must know what you want to say, you must know about VN your country.

You have to know your country through books, through your parents, through the meetings, through the communication, through any function in the community.

You don't attend, join activities, you let people do as they like while you go out to have a good time so how can you know ?

You have to mix up with the Vietnamese community in order to know your identity, in order to know who you are. And the second thing.

Once you know then you must have *communication*. You have to exchange with each others, ask dad ask mum, ask your siblings, friends. *You exchange and you communicate* to understand more. And the important thing is that after you knew, exchanged, you need to have *experience*. Today I'm standing here talking with you because I have some experiences I want to share with you. Thus from *knowledge, communication and you gain some experiences for your life.*

And after you have experiences you must believe in the things you have, must believe that at this moment VN is suffering because there are proofs, must believe that communist regime is a dictatorship which doesn't bring happiness to people because there are proofs.

You have to believe not because I am talking to you but because through your research, through your experiences, through your communications through your knowledge you believe.

And after you did *believe* then you must have faith. If uncle told you but you don't believe, have no *faith* in what he said it's useless.

So you communicate, you gain experiences, you believe and you have faith.

Once you *have faith* you must determine to do something for your country. You determine to study well so your parents'll suffer less, and you must determine to be a Vietnamese.

To have a strong determination to help your parents, to help yourselves, to help the society, how about to help the country ? You have a strong determination to be a human being, to have dignity of human being.

And finally there is this thing I ask you to remember for me if you forget all what uncle has said this afternoon. Please remember for me one thing.

If you're going to forget everything that I'm talking to you today, at least please remember one thing: Courage.

Courage, courage is the most important thing for man. Napoleone said: If you lost your properties then you didn't lose anything because you'd have chances to start again, sometimes winning Lotto could buy back houses because (you) lose nothing. You might lose your honour but you also lose only half, because people might misunderstand you, they abuse, vilify, misinterpret you but giving a chance to start again you can still have your honour. But if you lose courage then you lose everything, don't want to do anything at all. Do you know who Napoleone is ?

- *Who's Napoleone, please ?*

- He's a king.
- King of what country ?
- France.
- *Good, good man.* Napoleone was a king of France.

Very good, thank you.

Napoleone used to say that if you lost your property, your house, your car you lost nothing, because there'll be some other chance that you'd buy a new house, a new car; if you lost your dignity your honour, maybe you lost only 50% because you're going to have some more chance in order to regain your honour and your dignity, because somebody might misunderstand you. But if you lost what I just said to you the courage you lose everything, because you don't have any strength to stand up again to (... again -not clear) your life."

Broadcaster.

Next he encourages young people to have courage to be human beings, to advance by having an ideal for themselves because only by taking action that one can fly high up, and only by having wishes that one can attain the ultimate goal which is to serve VN one's country.

GRABS

" Today you lose the courage to be Vietnamese because you've lost everything, because you don't have enough time to study, to do research, to care for for dad for mum for your younger siblings, and especially when you lose courage you also don't care to know where VN your country is, how it is going, (if) your people being discarded (it) is just damned shit. Is that right ?

You must have courage.

(If) you want to help VN your country to live like Australia, USA in the future then you must have the courage to be human beings. This courage means you must face the situation. Do you understand what I mean by that ? It means you must *face to face directly to the real situation in VN.*

(You) Must read newspaper, must seek understanding, and you must have *determination, courage.* That the thing I want to say to you this afternoon. I want to tell you many things but I will summarise in one last sentence before you can *exchange ideas*, have tea because it's too much sitting here listening to this old man. *Maybe I'm talking too much, right ?*

The thing I want to tell you this afternoon is:

Fly and you'll catch the wind.

Fly, my children then you will catch the wind, and the second sentence I want to send you is this:

Dream and you'll catch your goal.

Dream, have wishes and definitely you'll attain your goal. But that dream doesn't mean dreaming then falling asleep, but dreaming in order to realise the dream.

Fly, fly and you'll catch the wind.

Dream, then you'll catch your goal.

We must dream that one day for the generation of young Vietnamese they will live the life of human beings , the communist regime no longer exists. Even if I pass away, when you grow up you dream that VN must have happiness, our Vietnamese people must be proud and you must realise these dreams.

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You have to carry out, you have to realise your dream and then you'll catch the goal.

That *goal* is for you, that aim is for you, for your families, for your country, for your people.

The beautiful goal for you, for your family and for your country, for your people.

Uncle love you as my children. Everytime when I meet a young person of twentyish, thirtyish I think of my child. When I left Australia my child two year old toddling after me to the airport:

- Dad, dad. Where are you going ?

- Dad is going back to VN.

I came home only 10 years later. Today I meet you like I meet my children. I want to send you the last kite this afternoon.

Fly, fly and you'll catch the wind.

Dream, and then you'll catch your goal.

Thank you my children. *Thank you.*"

Broadcaster:

At this point the talk with _____ gave place to a Question and Answer part. Please follow this part in the next program. See you next week at the same time. Goodbye.

Music.

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The song:

My dear child, here's my will
(not clear) I'm the reactionary/make revolution
(The will) for a ruined, collapsed country
For you who is still at a tender age

My dear child I want to give you
Forever a brown skin, people in the South
To take the place of those fallen
So that our people free of shackles

My brothers, here's my will
(The will) for a country full of jails and sufferings
For a land miserable for ages
For a people called (after their ancestors) dragon god and fairy

(not clear) here's my will
I carry on my head my beloved country
I'll be back to raise my country up.