

2017-50: Dudley Cordell vs Toronto Star

June 28, 2017 - *For immediate release*

The National NewsMedia Council has dismissed a complaint from Dudley Cordell alleging that an opinion column in the Toronto Star promoted vigilante behaviour.

The complainant quoted the June 2 2017 statement by columnist Rosie DiManno that Karla Homolka “should be hounded for the rest of her miserable life”, and argued that the tone, combined with details provided by the media about whereabouts of Homolka and her family, puts her in danger. He stated that the columnist crossed a threshold and should be reprimanded.

The news media organization responded by citing the wide latitude of opinion writers to express strong points of view. It detailed the columnist’s extensive background with the subject matter and the role of the sex offender registry. It said a reasonable interpretation of the statement in question, which presents the word ‘should’ in italics, is that Homolka should not be allowed to escape her past, and that her whereabouts should be public knowledge for the sake of public safety.

The paper also addressed the complainant’s statement that it “does not, in my experience, respond to complaints”, saying it has responded “at least once in the past” and noting that many of the emails submitted are not identified with a name.