

KINSELLA: Jewish journalist faces discipline at CBC after documenting pro-Palestine protest

CBC has pulled a veteran journalist off-air - and hit him with disciplinary action - simply because he filmed a protest taking place outside a Jewish religious service earlier this week.

By Warren Kinsella | Toronto Sun

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CBC has pulled a veteran journalist off-air - and hit him with disciplinary action - simply because he filmed a protest taking place outside a Jewish religious service earlier this week.

Neil Herland is an award-winning senior CBC journalist and producer with three decades' of experience reporting news across North America.

He is also a Jew.

A few days ago, CBC management quietly pulled Herland off the air - because he had documented a newsworthy event. One they apparently didn't want documented.

On Monday evening, Herland was walking to a Yom Kippur service near where he lives in Toronto. The synagogue service was being held at the Meridian Centre at Yonge and Sheppard Sts. in Toronto by The Song Shul, because a large number of congregants were expected.

Upon arriving, Herland and the other Jewish attendees saw about two dozen protestors blocking the entrance to the synagogue service, waving Palestinian flags and yelling epithets and abuse. The mob yelled "free Palestine" and "Zionist alert" when Jewish congregants came near.

Herland started filming.

One man, wearing a mask, repeatedly yelled "You're going to Hell" using a bullhorn pointed at Herland and others. Another man screamed "baby killer." Elsewhere, a woman was called an "ugly Jewish bitch" - and, when the cantor at the service went outside and smiled at a protester, another yelled: "The Jew smiles while he kills babies in Gaza."

A Toronto Police officer told the cantor to stop "antagonizing" the protestors.

Herland posted his video clip on social media, and it has been watched more than three million times around the world.

In his post on his personal X account, Herland writes: "I'm a journalist. And I happen to be Jewish. On Yom Kippur I went to a synagogue service in Toronto and was met by protesters trying to taunt and intimidate me from entering the building."

He continues: "My late father was an Austrian Jew who survived the Holocaust in Romania. And came to Canada as a refugee. This year I got an Austrian passport, in case Canada becomes unsafe for me as a Jew. I fear that moment is approaching, here in Canada and elsewhere. Jewish Canadians are living in a parallel world. Where police stand guard with guns outside synagogues. And Jewish schools, religious sites and businesses are targeted with bullets. And most Canadians have no awareness or understanding."

Neil Herland's X post

I'm a journalist. And I happen to be Jewish. On Yom Kippur I went to a synagogue service in Toronto and was met by protesters trying to taunt and intimidate me from entering the building. 1/5

[View Neil Herland's original X thread](#)

After Herland posted that, CBC reacted with fury and swiftly pulled the broadcast veteran off-air, informing him he would be investigated. On Thursday afternoon, a first disciplinary hearing was held with Herland and his lawyer.

CBC refuses to say who complained

For its part, CBC refuses to say who complained, why, or why they agreed to go after Herland.

Herland has also declined comment, on advice from his lawyer.

It is known, however, that "Canadian for Justice and Peace and the Middle East" - an organization that expresses hatred for the Jewish state and, just a week ago, permitted a post on its Instagram account likening the Star of David to a swastika - mounted a campaign against Herland and made a what it called "a formal complaint" about him.

CBC refused to say if CJPME's complaint led to Herland being silenced.

CBC's actions seem unfair, say CBC veterans who spoke anonymously, because their journalists are explicitly permitted to write about "lived experiences," just as Herland did. Following the tragic 2021 mass-murder of a Muslim family in London, Ont. - and after a Muslim CBC journalist gave her personal opinion about the terror attack on a national broadcast - CBC's Ombudsman decreed that no rules were broken.

"We will reinforce that lived experience and being a part of any one community does not constitute a conflict of interest when covering those communities. We will remind all that we value lived experience and community connections in our journalists because it helps us to broaden and deepen our journalism."

Double standard for Muslim and Jewish journalists at CBC?

So why do Muslim journalists' "lived experience ... broaden and deepen" CBC journalism, and Jewish journalists' "lived experience" do not?

Chuck Thompson, CBC's official spokesman, refused to respond, saying, "We don't comment on internal meetings or HR matters."

The CBC's attack on Herland's career comes in the wake of several other controversies that have been documented by this writer and newspaper. Most recently, there was our story revealing that CBC was refusing to call 9/11 "terrorism" - which led to critical headlines around the world, and condemnations from everyone from the federal Minister responsible for CBC to the Director of the FBI.

Before that, there were revelations about the creation of a secret internal group - as one CBC journalist told me - that pushed out hateful and one-sided depictions of Israel at CBC. Before that, CBC's videographer in Gaza was revealed by the Toronto Sun to have accused Israel of genocidal massacres online - and for which he received no discipline. Instead, he was celebrated on the anniversary of the Oct. 7, 2023 massacre.

Thompson refused to comment on the disciplinary proceeding against Neil Herland that took place on Thursday afternoon. He also refused to comment on meetings CBC management has held with Jewish journalists who tabled evidence of antisemitism at the taxpayer-supported broadcaster - even though he was reportedly present for at least one of those meetings.

Aliza Spiro, one of the leaders of the Song Shul synagogue, wrote an open letter that was sent to CBC stating that "holding Palestinian flags, the protesters had bullhorns and were shouting antisemitic slurs at our people. It was incredibly frightening, and many of our members were too scared and intimidated to get out of their cars, simply going home and missing the final powerful service of Yom Kippur night."

She concluded: "Neil Herland's video recording accurately documented the siege outside our synagogue on this day. His tweets were journalistically accurate, as well as a much-appreciated public service to Canadians. Our country needs more people to similarly shine a light on the terrorizing issue of antisemitism. Our people are scared, and not enough is being done about it."

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