


Giving It New Life

“We’ve got something for you,” announced the man standing at the door of CBC Radio’s Studio F in Toronto on the evening of January 29, 1974. He was holding an injunction from two Toronto lead smelting plants against the broadcaster, *As It Happens* producer Mark Starowicz and story editor Max Allen. The companies were incensed by that night’s broadcast of *Dying of Lead* due to accusations that they bought favourable medical evidence to refute claims of lead pollution. Starowicz quickly consulted with CBC’s legal team, as *Dying of Lead* was then on the air in the Maritimes and 15 minutes from broadcast in Ontario and Quebec. Rather than pull the documentary, Starowicz deleted two segments directly related to the injunction. Thirteen minutes in, listeners heard co-host Harry Brown read the injunction. During the second deletion, an electronic beep filled the air. As a grinning Starowicz told the *Globe and Mail*, “You’ve sort of got to wing this on-air censorship. We don’t do it very often.”

That Starowicz ran a piece as contentious as *Dying of Lead* with a tongue-in-cheek response to last-minute opposition exemplified the experimentation that produced CBC’s ‘radio revolution’ of the early 1970s. Faced with increasing competition from television, radio looked for ways to stay relevant. Through new, casual methods of interviewing like telephoning guests on-air, shows like *As It Happens* were able to provide, in the words of co-host Barbara Frum, stories that “identified with the lives of real people.”

That philosophy was also key to the success of *This Country in the Morning*. Described by host Peter Gzowski as “a radio program of conversation, puzzles, games, essays, recipes, advice, music, nostalgia, contests, skits, arguments and emotions,” the show provided a warm, comforting way to ease listeners into their day. Journalism could be a two-way exchange between host and listener; “it’s everyone trying to communicate with everyone else.” To many, the show’s conversational tone created an electronic bridge that brought Canadians together.




 THIS COUNTRY 🇨🇦 IN THE
 MORNING ☀️ starts at 8 A.M.
 on CBC with Peter 🎤 Gzowski:
 people 🗣️ and contests 🎲 and
 places 📍 and music 🎵 and
 public affairs and private affairs
 and quizzes 🧠 and granola 🥣
 and news 📰 and opinions and
 things 🗨️ and...and...YOU.
 Be a part of THIS COUNTRY 🇨🇦
 every weekday morning! 🌞

CBC
RADIO

ABOVE: Barbara Frum – *As It Happens*; 1980, CBC Radio

LEFT: *This Country in the Morning* advertisement
– *Maclean's*; November 1972

FAR LEFT: Danny Finkleman, Helen Hutchinson, Peter
Gzowski – *This Country in the Morning*; 9 February 1972