

end anchor at CFCF-TV, a CTV affiliate in Montreal.

However, the station's parent company had invested money in Citytv, and executives encouraged Martineau to consider the idea.

"They were going to change the whole look and dynamics of the station, and put more money into it," Martineau says.

Martineau met with Znaimer, who convinced him that the scrappy little station had an exciting future. He's been the anchor of Citytv's flagship news show, *CityPulse*, ever since.

It was true that the station was run loose and wild.

"In the early days, pieces wouldn't be reviewed by a producer before they aired," says Peter Gross, a *CityPulse* reporter who is infamous for his offbeat segments. "I would just hand in my tape and it would go straight to air."

Gross was discovered when he was working as a taxi driver. While there are conflicting stories about how that happened, the legend is that Gross charmed Znaimer during a taxi ride so much that by the time he dropped him off at the station, Znaimer offered him a reporting job at Citytv.

One memorable report from Citytv's zanier early days was Gross' gambling coverage at the horse track. At the end of the piece, he turned around and walked away from the camera—completely naked, illustrating that he had lost more than his shirt.

Gross recalls Znaimer's response to the report: "He said in apparent seriousness, 'I suppose you thought that was funny?' I said, 'Yes, I did.' And he said with a warm smile, 'So did I.'"

The story (there are hundreds more) is archetypal Znaimer.

"It was almost as if you got a reward for going too far. He wanted to push the limits of television," Gross says.

Znaimer believes the flaws of the would-be TV personalities were their strengths. He points to Erica Ehm, the first female video jockey hired by *MuchMusic* whose early on-air days were rocky.

"Everybody watching could imagine that they could be as good," Znaimer says. "We would get letters from viewers, and a typical

letter would be: 'My name is Cindy Sue and I am from such and such high school,' and she would go on and complain about Erica. And there would always be the same last line: 'If she can do it, then why can't I?'"

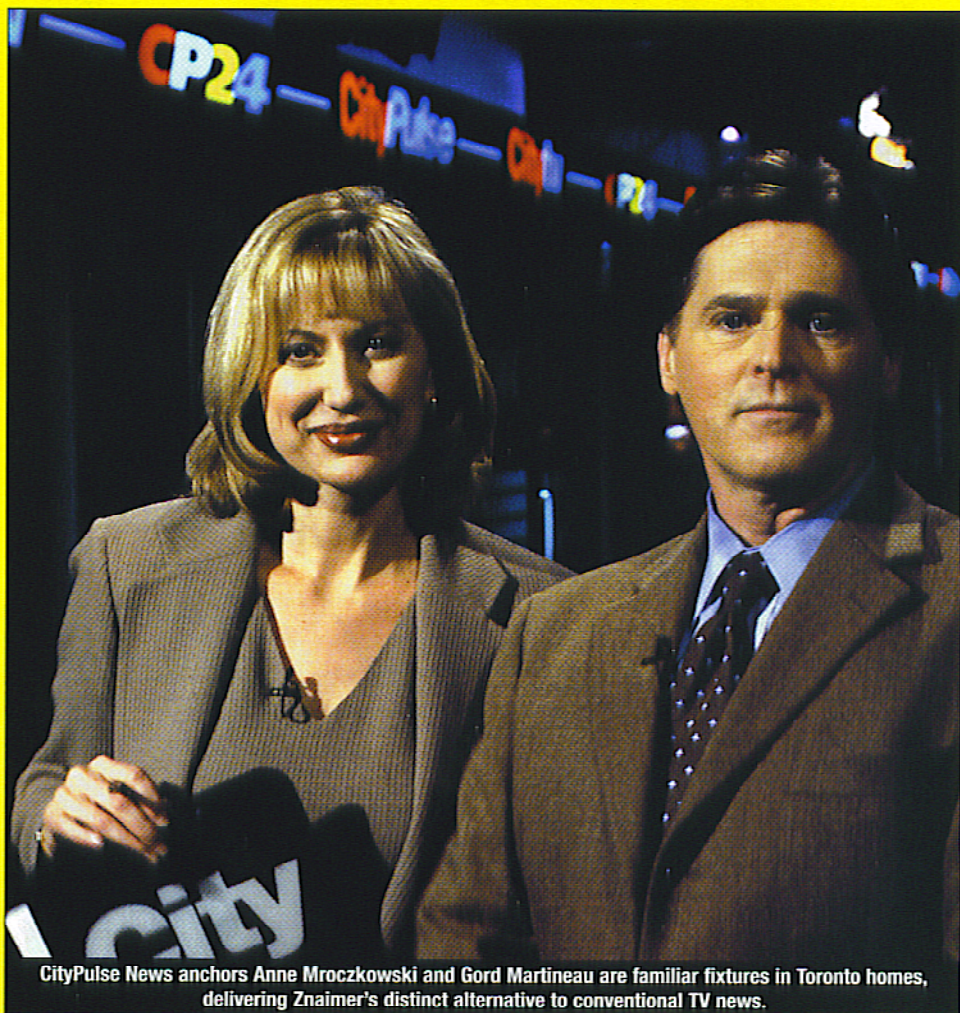
Ehm found her way in front of the camera after a stint answering phones at the *New Music*, a *Rolling Stone*-style magazine program that pre-dated *MuchMusic*.

She was put on-air after Znaimer saw a

Citytv, and God forbid your name is Smith, then you better change it to Bachicaroopi," Znaimer says with a smile. "Word was I was prejudiced against blondes, but I was trying to make a big point."

His point was to put some diversity into the homogeneous TV domain of the 1970s.

Of course, diversity in Znaimer's world isn't just about race. David Onley, now host of *HomePage*, a technology show on CP24, is



CityPulse News anchors Anne Mroczkowski and Gord Martineau are familiar fixtures in Toronto homes, delivering Znaimer's distinct alternative to conventional TV news.

demo reel she created with the help of John Roberts, now the senior White House correspondent for *CBS News*.

Despite her rough beginnings, she got better — with a lot of hard work.

"He chooses these unlikely people, and at the beginning people say, 'What was he thinking?' Then after a while, they see the results and call him a genius," Ehm says.

Znaimer earned a reputation around the station for his hiring policies. "There were some jokes going around that if you want a job at

case in point. At the age of three, Onley contracted polio, and has since used leg braces and a cane.

In 1984, Znaimer needed a new *CityPulse* weatherman so he called Onley, who was a radio announcer at the time. Their conversation led to a job offer.

Initially, Onley was shown on-camera from the waist up, but after two months, Znaimer put a stop to that. He walked into a newsroom meeting and told employees: "I have been watching the news and every time I see

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