



HATE

on talk radio

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PREFACE TO NEW EDITION

In the four years since AJC's *Hate on Talk Radio* was released in 1991, it has served as a guide for community groups fighting bigotry on the airwaves and for members of the media seeking to understand the positive potential of talk radio. In fact *Talkers*, the journal of talk media, reprinted the booklet for its readers as an insert.

In Kansas City, "Radio Free America," a program of the anti-black and anti-Semitic Liberty Lobby, was pulled off WMBZ-AM after community groups, including AJC, complained.

In St Louis the local chapters of the NAACP, the Urban League, and the AJC worked together to counter two disc jockeys who regularly used racial slurs on the air (they even accused one caller of "acting like a nigger"). The disc jockeys were fired. In fact, their station filed suit against them and announced a written commitment not to allow its airwaves to be polluted by bigotry.

In many cities, community groups, while respecting the free speech rights of all, have used their own free-speech rights to condemn bigotry and the legitimacy it receives when spoken on talk radio. As people in the industry themselves admit, what drives radio is revenue; when advertisers are informed that their products are being promoted between racial slurs and hateful stereotypes, they wisely take their money elsewhere. That is their right, too.

This re-release of *Hate On Talk Radio* coincides with the efforts of the American Jewish Committee, the National Rainbow Coalition and others to draw attention to the bigotry on the Bob Grant Show, on WABC in New York. In drafting *Hate on Talk Radio* in 1991, I looked for the most outrageous examples of bigotry to put in the opening paragraphs, so the reader could see the problem quickly. The first example, not surprisingly, was from the Bob Grant show of August 23, 1989.

It should be noted, however, that the Bob Grant show is not the only program that panders to bigotry in the New York area. As outlined in the report, some of what is aired on WLIB promotes anti-Semitism and racism.

FOREWORD

Millions of people across the country listen to talk radio. Frequently, opinions heard on the airwaves are intolerant and hateful. These are not only the opinions of the callers, but also of some hosts and guests.

The American Jewish Committee targets bigotry and anti-Semitism where it matters most -in our institutions, such as universities, the mass media, and the political process. Our goal is not to censor or to censure, but to help leaders and other caring people develop better skills and structures to challenge bigotry, racism and anti-Semitism.

Kenneth S. Stem, AJC's program specialist on anti-Semitism and extremism, wrote *Hate on Talk Radio* after extensive consultation with talk-radio hosts, industry leaders, and community and human relations experts. There is a consensus that the approach advocated here – one sensitive to the needs of the industry, First Amendment freedoms, and the aspirations of the newly emerging talk media profession – is a good one. The models described in this booklet will not only build better understanding between people, they are also successful entertainment.

One indication of the value of this publication is that the talk industry's trade journal, *Talkers*, has reprinted it in toto, as a pull-out section. We hope that this publication helps the industry develop even better entertainment as it also serves the public interest.

Stephen Steinlight
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HATE ON TALK RADIO

“Is it possible,” a caller asks on WABC in New York, “that the lower intelligence of blacks, as documented by William Shockley, is responsible for the complete lack of morality in the blacks, especially toward children?”

“The Jew-commies only parade around with this Walesa to trick the Western banks into giving them money,” a spokesman for an extremist organization says on WTEL in Philadelphia, “and then they will transfer these funds to Israel or to New York.”

“It’s normal practice,” a caller on WWDB in Philadelphia explains, “for Italian people to squeeze every cent they can out of you. Underhanded dealing seems to be very prevalent among Italians.”

Day and night, across the country, hosts and callers express opinions on every topic imaginable. Some opinions, heard by millions, are entertaining and thought-provoking. Others are bigoted and hurtful. Some hosts will bait people to draw out hate. Others will give air time to neo-Nazis and Klansmen. Listen to talk radio long enough, and you too will be a target, no matter what your heritage, religion, race, sex, or sexual orientation.

Should bigoted opinions be allowed on radio? How should talk-show hosts handle ignorance and hatred? What should stations do when hateful opinions are championed by hosts? How much government regulation is there, or should there be, of the industry? What can individuals and community groups do? How important is radio, anyway?

If you think there are easy answers to these questions, you are mistaken. It is not simply a matter of a choice among, or thawing a better line between, the ideals of free speech and of respect for others. Radio is a profit-oriented industry. Controversy sells — and bigotry is controversial.

Talk radio was born in 1921 when six New England governors followed Massachusetts’s speaker of the house to WBZ-AM’s (Springfield, Massachusetts) microphone. The first talk-radio subject? Farming.

Today, there are hundreds of talk stations in markets of every size around the country.¹ There are twice as many stations that bill themselves as “talk” than there were five years ago. And “ten years from now,” predicts Michael Harrison, publisher of the new trade journal *Talkers*, “talk will be the dominant form of radio. As a matter of fact,” he explains, “I see it as being one of the only forms of radio.” If he is right — and recent trends such as the expansion of talk onto FM and cable TV suggest he might be — will bigotry become an even more welcome guest on our airwaves?

Radio and bigotry can be a dangerous mix. Hitler used radio. Stalin used radio. And an American, known for his vicious anti-Semitism, was one of the most powerful radio personalities ever: Father Charles E. Coughlin. Imagine listening to the radio in 1938, and hearing an eloquent,

vibrant personality explain why the Nazis had “levied a fine of approximately four hundred million dollars against the six hundred thousand German Jews resident in Germany.”

“In all countries Jews are in the minority,” Father Coughlin explained. “They have no nation of their own. [They are] a closely woven minority in their racial tendencies; a powerful minority in their influence; a minority endowed with an aggressiveness . . . It is the belief of the present German government [that Jews] were responsible for the economic and social ills suffered by the Fatherland.”

So why should Jews be fined? Millions of radio listeners heard Coughlin say: “Nazism was conceived as a political defense mechanism against communism. [N]ot four hundred million dollars but forty billion dollars . . . of Christian property was appropriated by [the Bolsheviks who were put in power by] the Jewish bankers. [Why] was there . . . silence on the radio and in the press? Ask the gentlemen who control the three radio chains. Ask those who dominate the destinies of the financially inspired press. Surely these Jewish gentlemen must have been ignorant of the facts . . . that Nazism is only a defense mechanism against communism.”

The reaction against Coughlin was swift. The *Detroit Times* reported that “more than one hundred telephone calls and twenty-five telegrams and letters were received by” one station alone protesting the program.

Rather than curtail his venom, Coughlin built ratings on the criticism. He painted himself as the victim of unfair attacks by an evil conspiracy designed to deprive Americans of truth — his truth.

Coughlin was a major force on radio until his opinions became no longer just anti-Semitic but also treasonous. With the American entrance into World War II against the Nazis, Coughlin lost his audience.

There is no Father Coughlin terrorizing people over the airwaves today. But there could be. The dynamics are the same. The draw of radio is not fairness or a better-thought-out opinion. People listen to radio to be entertained. Father Coughlin, despite his evil message, was riveting. Those few who took to the airwaves to decry him were not.

Talk radio is, above all else, cheap programming. A host. An engineer. A producer. And a telephone.

The beauty of radio, and its danger, is that it is instantaneous. Call-in shows are live.² Anything can be said. The host can say almost anything in return. Some say bigoted things. Or play on the caller’s bigotry. Or let callers say hateful things, without comment in return.

Clear-cut cases of bigotry will get hosts into trouble.

On January 18, 1988, Frank Turck of WBEC-FM in Pittsfield, Massachusetts began his program saying “It’s Martin Luther King Day. Let’s break out the watermelon and fried chicken.” That was the “last straw,” said the station’s program director. Turck had been warned

before about racist comments.

In 1987, Steven White, of WKRI-AM in Providence, Rhode Island, was fired for calling drug dealers “niggers” and “spics.”

In 1990, Tim Lennox of WERC-AM in Birmingham, Alabama, was suspended indefinitely. He had been upset that a colleague’s car had been vandalized, allegedly by a black male. In response, he banned black callers from his show.

Those are the “easy” cases for station management. The airing of bigotry is usually more complicated.

One morning, on WABC in New York, a caller to the Dave Dawson and Roger Skibiness program identified himself as “Lenny from Bay Ridge,” which he termed “Giuliani country” — the city was in the midst of a racially charged mayoral campaign, and Rudolph Giuliani was the white Republican candidate. As Skibiness and Dawson sat silently, Lenny picked up speed, going into a lengthy diatribe about Jews and blacks, how the Jews were backing the black Democratic candidate, David Dinkins. If Dinkins won, Lenny warned, the city would be swamped with “black welfare parasites.” When Lenny finished his attack, without interruption, the hosts simply went on to the next call.

Soon “Laura from Brooklyn,” was on the air. She said she was Italian, not black or Jewish, and was upset at the hosts for letting Lenny spew his bigotry unchallenged. Skibiness, in a mocking tone, yelled, “Shut up, you bigot!” then went to the next caller. Dawson and Skibiness apparently thought their method of ignoring, and then validating Lenny’s bigotry would be more entertaining than confronting it

That vignette is a microcosm of the problem of bigotry on the air. Bigotry is usually cast as opinion, not slur. How does one regulate opinion — and if opinion should not be regulated, how does one affect it?

WHAT THE GOVERNMENT DOES

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) based in Washington, D.C., licenses and regulates broadcast media.

In the early days, broadcasters tended to fear the FCC. “I remember when I was a new broadcaster in the ‘60s,” recalls Michael Harrison. “I thought if you said one word on the air, a squad car would pull up with the FCC police, and they’d throw you in jail.” Broadcasters now know that almost anything is fair game.

In 1987, the FCC adopted rules against broadcasting of any “material that depicts or describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium, sexual or excretory activities or organs.” In other words, stations could be chastised for broadcasts that “did not necessarily use the seven ‘dirty words,’” the FCC says.

“Indecent” material, as the FCC calls it, is prohibited from the air during hours that children might be listening. “Obscene” material is always prohibited.³

The FCC’s rules against obscenity,⁴ and its concern for the overexposure of children to violence on television, are different from its approach to bigotry on the air, which, in two words, is: “Hands off.”

Asked about bigotry on talk radio, the FCC supplies Mass Media Bureau Publication 8310-37, “Call-in or ‘Open Mike’ Programs,” and Mass Media Bureau Publication 8310-75, “The FCC and Freedom of Speech.” The salient point of these leaflets is: “The Commission is barred by law from trying to prevent the broadcast of any point of view.”⁵

Some critics of talk radio complain that if the FCC is going to interfere with the freedom of broadcasters to air indecent, obscene, or violent material, why should it not also regulate the airing of bigotry? Certainly, more people have been harmed by intergroup hatred than by obscene language.

The answers, beyond the legal proscription of the First Amendment against interference with expression, are compelling.

First, how would one define expressions that are to be deemed illegal? Nazi views? Sexist views? Lenny of Bay Ridge’s dislike of blacks? As difficult as it is to define obscenity, it is all the more difficult to define views that are so extreme and hurtful as to warrant suppression.

Second, even if the government could articulate some standard, would we really want the government intruding on what could be heard on the airwaves? There is, after all, a dial, and people can turn off what they find offensive. Intrusion into and regulation of opinion will also chill people from saying what they believe. Talk radio, for all its problems, is honest — callers say what they think. The shadow of “Big Brother” would harm our freedoms much more than the ramblings of a thousand bigots.

Also, simply because government may not be able to pass a law to cure a societal problem does not mean that the problem cannot be otherwise addressed. Too often, regulation is seen as the only option for achieving societal change.

Bigotry *can* be discouraged on radio. The industry, the community, and the audience can have an impact

HOW TALK RADIO WORKS

Anyone who expects that talk-radio hosts will, like journalists, regulate their opinions in the quest for fairness, balance, and objectivity doesn’t understand the medium.

Talk radio is not journalism. It makes no pretense of being fair. Talk is, first and last, entertainment. Talk is opinionated. Talk is subjective.

The key to being a good talk-show host is to have a personality that comes through like a laser, and a point of view. Howard Stern, the king of “shock,” draws an audience because people expect him to be outrageous — they want to see what limit of impropriety or bad taste he will challenge next. Rush Limbaugh, who champions extreme conservatism, has created a loyal following who can count on a strong, if on occasion excessively stated, point of view. Both are, regardless of their message, skillful entertainers.

Most talk-radio personalities today are male, conservative, and white. There are differences of opinion as to why that is so. Some, like Mike Harrison

of *Talkers*, think the conservative bent is “a reflection of the fact that the nation has developed a relatively conservative political philosophy,” although he says that he thinks “there will be liberals as well as conservatives again” on talk radio.

Bill McMahon, a consultant for important talk-radio stations around the country, agrees that the conditions exist for a better balance in the future. Interviewed in *Talkers*, he said, “One of the things that bothers me the most is when I talk to a program director, and I say to them, okay, what are you looking for, and the first thing they define is whether they want a liberal or a conservative. . . . I mean if we’re talking politics to the people we hire, it just, all of a sudden, takes over the radio station.”

A good talk-show host, for McMahon, is a “great observer of life,” and a great entertainer.⁶

These characteristics, rather than political line, help define the success of the New York-based, but nationally heard, Rush Limbaugh — today’s number one talk-show host. Rush — who takes on “Feminazis, Environmental Wackos, Humaniacs and the Art & Croissant Crowd”⁷ — is, first and foremost, an entertainer, who attacks “with half my brain tied behind my back to make it fair.” He uses production values — jingles, music, funny editing,⁸ and a clublike insider’s language — to package his self-proclaimed “pompous arrogance shtick” and his extreme conservatism.

Some see Rush as pandering to bigotry. One host said, “There are people who exploit bigotry. Sometimes I tune into Rush Limbaugh, and I just can’t believe what he’s doing.”

Mike Harrison, of *Talkers*, sees Limbaugh as a talent without any malice. “I think that Rush Limbaugh is a very complex entity who, on short notice, given a shallow listening, you could get the impression [that he dabbles in bigotry]. Rush Limbaugh is, if anything, a tongue-in-cheek satirist of those things. I believe he’s a true artist, although there is the danger that someone might misunderstand him.”

Regardless of whether Limbaugh is correctly or incorrectly perceived, he defines what makes a talk-show host a success. He has all the characteristics that make a great radio entertainer. If radio-station executives around the country try to imitate his popularity by hiring hosts who copy Limbaugh’s politics, their efforts will fail. Limbaugh is successful because he has great entertainment attributes — he is, in his own words, “wacko.” “Wacko” is neither a

conservative nor a liberal characteristic.

THE POLITICAL POTENTIAL OF TALK RADIO

Part of the problem and part of the hope, of talk radio is its political impact.

Talk-show hosts have organized successful and nearly successful campaigns to block congressional pay raises, to repeal mandatory seat-belt laws, to oppose tax increases, and to stop the imposition of tolls on roads. As part of one campaign, listeners were even asked to mail in tea bags.

Much of talk radio is local. The national issues around which some hosts organize have certainly not been among the most pressing issues of our time. Yet there is potential for ugliness here.

Rush Limbaugh,⁹ speaking in Louisiana, was asked about David Duke, the former KKK leader who still subscribes to the philosophy of National Socialism, and who was running at that time for the United States Senate. “*if you want to vote for Duke,*” he said, “you just go ahead and vote for him, and I, Rush Limbaugh, can certainly understand it,” explaining why he thought liberal Democrats had themselves to blame for Duke’s popularity.

That answer capped an evening of Limbaugh’s one-man show. His last remarks were greeted with hoots and hollers and a standing ovation.

Many people in the Louisiana community, including clergy, were concerned about Limbaugh’s all-but endorsement of a bigot’s legitimacy. Limbaugh was approached. To his credit, the next week he apologized for his statement — on the air. “He recanted,” a community leader recalls, “he went farther than I could possibly have hoped. He said ‘Duke is a racist, Duke is a Klansman, Duke is a Nazi. I don’t have any countenance for him. If I left the impression that it’s okay to vote for him, I apologize for that. I didn’t mean that at all.’”

What radio personalities say about political issues can have a tremendous impact. But there is another, perhaps greater, danger that comes not from the ad hoc, promotion-generating campaigns, but from those with a larger design for talk radio. The Liberty Lobby (which also championed a populist anti-incumbent, anti-congressional-pay-raise line), now has a foothold in talk radio, and is poised to expand its influence.

The Liberty Lobby is a right-wing, anti-Semitic organization founded by Willis Carto. It publishes the newspaper *Spotlight* (with a circulation of about 100,000), and has, as offshoots, the Populist Party (former KKK leader David Duke was its 1988 presidential candidate) and the Institute for Historical Review, which churns out journals, videos, tapes, pamphlets, and diatribes denying the existence of the Holocaust.

The Liberty Lobby, which promotes talk shows of its own, has also purchased¹⁰ the Sun Radio Network, a network affiliated with nearly 200 AM and FM stations around the country. On

any Sun-affiliated stations, or directly from a satellite, listeners can hear *Radio Free America* and *Editor's Roundtable*. The first, a call-in show that airs five nights a week, promotes guests such as “controversial engineer Fred Leuchter of Massachusetts.” According to the Liberty Lobby, “Leuchter is being attacked by Zionist groups who resent his engineering report on the alleged gas chambers at Auschwitz. Essentially, Leuchter investigated and found the allegation that millions of people were gassed to be physically impossible.” The *Editor's Roundtable*, hosted by *Spotlight* editor Vince Ryan, is a discussion program regularly reflecting the conspiratorial, anti-Semitic philosophy of the Liberty Lobby.

Even though the Liberty Lobby now owns a major stable of stations, media analysts see only a potential problem, not an immediate one. Sun has not yet become a network of far-right, anti-Semitic and racist propaganda. It still has an eclectic collection of programming, including gardening shows. Some of its hosts are Jewish. And the director of Sun disclaims any direct Liberty Lobby control. But that could change. The Liberty Lobby, in its publications, highlights its ownership of Sun. And the Liberty Lobby is named as a beneficiary of a multi-million-dollar bequest. Some of that money could be used to poison the industry even further. In fact, even without those funds or an overt exercise of political philosophy on the Sun stations, the Liberty Lobby may already have had an effect. The tea-bag fad and the “throw the rascals out” campaign, although promoted by many hosts not affiliated with the Sun network, had a familiar taste. Regular readers of *Spotlight* will find nearly identical calls-to-arms in the magazine on similar topics. And, for many years, the Liberty Lobby-associated Institute for Historical Review has targeted talk radio as a tool for disseminating Holocaust denial.

When Sun was bought by the Liberty Lobby, talk-show host Barry Farber (who had already drawn the wrath of Holocaust deniers for barring them from his show) removed his program from the network. “And it is doing better,” he says proudly. If the Liberty Lobby ever started to dictate a near neo-Nazi philosophy for its stations, it is likely that other successful hosts would also have nothing to do with the network. Talk-show hosts are entertainers, and as such they are nothing if not independent

HOW HOSTS COUNTER BIGOTRY

As potentially useful a tool as talk radio is for hateful political philosophies, it is equally capable as a tool to foster better intergroup relationships. Again, the key to using the medium is not the dictation of doctrinaire belief, but the exploitation of its entertainment value.

Good radio, like good literature and effective politics, is personal. People listen to the radio because of the personality of the host, and his or her masterful use of the medium.

“The existence of talk radio, the rise of its popularity, bodes well for the problems of racism and bigotry and anti-Semitism,” says Michael Harrison, “because for the most part, talk radio is an educational medium, and for the most part, talk radio hosts have goodwill. Ninety-five percent of the people on talk radio, from management to the talk-show hosts themselves, are people, to one degree or another, of goodwill.”

There *are* hosts who tackle bigotry head-on, rather than run from it or exploit it. Part of a successful approach is a matter of professional skill, another is a commitment against bigotry, regardless of political philosophy, and a third is personality. Hosts have to be themselves and do what's comfortable for them in confronting bigotry.

There are some easy things to do, as a general rule. "If someone calls up and says something that's a slur," says host Arnie Arneson (of WNHV-AM, in White River Junction, Vermont), "I stop them. That's the first thing I do, and I remind them that I have a problem with their perception."

"If it's overt and clear," says host Jim Althoff (of KING-AM, in Seattle, Washington), "I stop things right there. If it's something like, 'Well, those people, you know how those people are,' I'll call them on it I say, 'Well, what do you mean, "those people?"'

Mike Castello, Daynet's program director (who started in the industry as a host on *Captain America's Good Time Hour* in Iceland) sees the handling of bigotry as a matter of professionalism. "You're in control," he says, "you make the stupidity of their opinion manifest. You make them look like the biggest fool. Say, for example, someone says something hateful against blacks. 'Come on, now,' you say, 'let me hear some more. Was this taught to you in your *home*? Was this taught to you in *school*?' asked with an incredulous voice. The idea is to make them embarrassed to go on."

Barry Farber, the consummate, polished confident host, smiles at the thought of handling bigotry. "You can hear it coming," he says, "it's the cold 'I.' It's the 'I used to like Israel, but ...' You can hear the anger. You can hear it in their voice."

"I hold my temper," he says. "I say, 'Anyone intelligent enough to dial seven digits on a telephone certainly knows,' and in a calm voice I tell him the facts. That Israel is surrounded . . . I keep my temper and respond with tact. 'I don't blame you,' I say, 'You have learned from a heavily financed propaganda machine, which works to convince you . . ."

Each of these approaches differs in accordance with the personality of the hosts, but all are effective. None is an attempt to win an argument. Each is designed to hold, entertain, and educate an audience.

A usual complaint about talk-show hosts is that they let bigots go on unanswered.¹¹ None of these hosts does that. Like a Rush Limbaugh, they are in control. But each, in his or her own way, stops the bigotry, and uses it to teach tolerance, rather than to exploit it for ratings.

And the fact that each will not let bigots air their views unchallenged in and of itself keeps the bigots from calling. "Shows get a reputation after a while," says Jim Althoff. "Someone will think, 'Well, geez, so and so will not let me on with this, so why bother.'"

Arnie Arneson agrees. "I think that's really what show hosts can do. They can either accommodate that type of bigotry, or they can set the stage where that's not acceptable behavior. My listeners understand, I won't tolerate it"

ARNIE ARNESON talks about her audience as if they were family – sometimes as parents, sometimes as children. Her audience is in New Hampshire and Vermont, and it is very conservative.

“There’s an actual lot of racism on my radio when they talk about schools and education,” she says. “People talk about black, inner-city kids: ‘It’s the blacks who don’t want to learn. It’s their problem, they just choose not to learn, and I don’t want my kids to be around them.’”

Rather than cut off such calls, or let the bigotry go unanswered, Arnie treats the caller as a worthwhile human being, and the bigotry as an opportunity. Frequently, she uses herself as an example.

“I say, first of all, it’s not the blacks who don’t want to learn. You have to look at the environment that kids grow up in. I say, let me tell you why I’m a success. I’m a success because my parents believed in education. Because my parents were amazing role models, and because they made that investment, both in me and in where my dreams were. I say, if kids don’t have that kind of investment and those kinds of role models, what the hell do you expect? I say, it’s a function of environment, not a function of color. You have to keep on saying to the caller, what are you basing your opinion on? Look at why *you* are a success, and tell me that has nothing to do with where you came from and who you came from.”

Even though Arnie may be offended by a caller’s viewpoint, she is not offended by the caller. “I treat people as human beings, and with respect,” she says. “I’m consistent in what I won’t tolerate, and I understand that they may have a differing point of view on anti-Semitism, that they’re racist or sexist or whatever. I don’t accept it, but I understand it. I validate the opinion, not because it’s mine, but because it’s theirs, and then I try to change it. I look at it as a challenge. You have to let people be who they are, or you can’t be a good talk-show host. You can’t deny that they’re all these things, bigoted, racist, whatever.”

One of Arnie’s strengths is her other life — as a state legislator and as a lawyer. She has contacts on almost every issue imaginable, and pulls these experts onto her program. “I don’t assume that I am the best and brightest on every issue,” she says. “I only have the best and the brightest minds. From my background, I know where I need to look if I need information.”

Arnie, who grew up on Long Island and was the only non-Jew in her class, frequently encounters anti-Semitism, because people think she’s Jewish. When that happens, or when people diminish her because she is a woman, she lets people know that that hurts her. “People have to understand that they’re offensive when they do that. They need to know that they hurt. That’s your opportunity to begin to effect change. What I always do with my audience is say, ‘Okay, then what? What is the product you are trying to arrive at by this anti-whateveritis? What do you want to accomplish by that type of hatred?’”

One form of bigotry that comes up all the time is homophobia. “Take, for example, the issue about whether homosexuals could be foster parents,” she says. “Everyone was outraged!

My God! That would be just terrible! There's a whole series of things you don't want. You don't want blacks?

"I pointed out to them, when it comes to foster parenting, what is the issue? The issue is what kind of role model you provide. What kind of caring you provide. I used myself as an example. At one point when I was a kid, until my midtwenties, I used to hang out only with women. My mother was convinced I was a lesbian. Totally convinced. Then I started dating. I didn't get home until midnight. So I must have been a prostitute, a loose woman. Then I got married – and he wasn't good enough. But at any point from age seventeen to age thirty, if you asked my mother what kind of a parent I would be, there was never a question that I would be a wonderful parent, a fine role model for any child. So, what you have to do is point out to people 'What is it we're talking about here?' Whether it's homosexuality or bigotry or racism or whatever, you have to talk with them, probe 'What is this about?' And you have to give them experiences to show them how stupid it is."

BOB RAY SANDERS (of KLIF-AM in Dallas, Texas) is one of the hottest new talk-show hosts around. Based in Dallas, Texas, he is as controversial as a talk-show host can be. His ratings are high, and he has had television cameras in his studio regularly, reporting on his show as news.

Bob Ray Sanders is one of the few black talk-show hosts on a "mainstream" – that is, a predominantly white-oriented – station. He is a lightning rod for racism in a city noted for racial polarization. Although he has had many critics, Bob Ray, at least, tries to challenge perceptions. And because he is so unusual — a black host in a polarized city the rules that would apply for a mainstream white host may not apply for him. Bob Ray cannot realistically keep bigots off the air. "I tend to let people be heard," he explains, "and a lot of it is very negative and bigoted, frankly. But I think we learn from each other by hearing each other out"

Even though people complain about this failure to cut bigoted speakers off, his approach is different from others who see themselves as indifferent listeners. Rather than let the bigotry hang there, he uses it – maybe not immediately, but in the long run. "People use talk radio as a barrier," he says, "because they can say what they want to say and still hide behind their own prejudices and still never get a chance to meet. One of the reasons I let people talk it out is that, particularly with cultures that people don't respect or understand, at least they have to listen to the opinion, or turn the radio off."

His programming is innovative, and frequently gets to the heart of prejudice. "I did a show on the 'n' word, and other words that hurt," he explains. "And I said, this time you can say it, let me know what you think about the words. We got all kinds of calls. People who were obese, who said, 'You don't know how it hurts to be called "fat,"'" so we talked about it openly."

Bob Ray's background is not radio but journalism. He came recently to talk radio from a public television and newspaper career. And even though he is his own, distinctive personality, the resources he has accumulated, like Arnie Arneson's, have added greatly to his talk show.

“The key for me,” he says, “is resources.” One day, for example, the subject was the teaching of the book *Huckleberry Finn*. A caller objected to the use of Twain in the public schools because the word “nigger” was in the book. “Luckily,” Bob Ray says, “I had the number of a woman who teaches teachers how to teach that work. I called her up immediately. She was on the show with me in ten minutes. ‘Am I wrong,’ I asked, ‘in saying that this work can be taught and can be taught sensitively?’ And there she was, doing it”

Bob Ray, as an entertainer, wants to be provocative, but dislikes the trend to use differences between people as a vehicle for outrage. Some talk shows, he believes, deal with bigotry “in a rabid way, in a nonresponsible way.” Coming from eighteen years in journalism, he sees talk radio as a challenge, as a way to speak opinions, and to give listeners a perspective they would not otherwise hear. And that perspective is not simply his own.

“The week leading up to Christmas,” he recalls, “when everyone gets into their religious mood, I did a three-part series. I found the most intelligent Muslim I know, and we talked about Islam one day. The next day, I found the most intelligent rabbi I know. And then, on the third day, I took a minister from the First Presbyterian Church, a highly regarded figure. We talked about religion, but we talked about it in the context of community and responsibility. I’ve gotten more feedback on those three shows than anything else we’ve done.”

One key of Bob Ray’s success is that those who disagree with him have been respectful. “Even though I disagree with you 90 percent of the time,” one listener wrote, “at least you are listening, and you’re causing us to listen, you’re giving back something, you’re not just out there to inflame us.”

Another success is that listeners who have been too shy to call on radio have written, asking his help in understanding prejudice. One wrote a letter explaining that he had learned, from his parents, that certain diseases were transmitted by coming into contact with things that black people had touched.

One day, after Bob Ray’s first show from a remote location (a storefront), “a guy got out of his truck and called my name and was going into his pocket, and of course, I immediately thought of John Lennon and all the other ones who had been killed. This was a guy who had driven thirty miles to get to this location because he was twenty-five years old and he had bigoted parents and he had written down eleven questions on race and prejudice and he thought I could help him understand. I spent an hour and a half talking to him. He had actually written it down.”

CAROLE HEMINGWAY (of KGIL-AM in Los Angeles), unlike Bob Ray or Arnie, is a veteran talk-radio host. She always confronts bigotry. “I never just let it hang there,” she says.

“A black man was talking about blacks serving disproportionately in the Persian Gulf War,” she says. “He started talking about blacks fighting in a war against people of color. This was unusual to hear on a predominantly white radio station. And I said, ‘Wait a minute here. Are you saying that regardless of what is in the best interests of the United States, however you feel about this war, that if black Americans are asked to fight for the best interests of the United

States, if that fight is against people of color, they shouldn't fight it?' And he said, 'Yes.' And I kept prodding him.

"One of the ways I handle calls like that is to continue to seek information. Because if I hadn't picked up on this, he never would have come out and said that. I want to know what callers are saying. Then I will pick up on the edges and then make them answer questions that might be missed in the rhetoric. That's my style. I get down to a very basic, simple bottom line. So, as I pressed this man for information based on something that sounded okay at the beginning, it came out to say, if there's a war against whites it's okay for blacks to fight in it, but if it's against people of color, it's not all right. That's just as much bigotry as if it were the other way around.

"I get a lot of anti-Semitic calls," Carole says, "and they are disguised in many ways. The *minute* somebody hears about money being sent to Israel, they call in and complain. 'Why are we sending any money to Israel? They are causing all the problems in the Mideast anyway.' So I question them to the point where their argument is ludicrous.

"Sometimes I use ridicule," she says. "Recently I got an anti-Catholic caller, from a cult group, who wanted to give out an 800 number for 'the truth.' So I asked, 'What truth are we talking about?' She said, 'God's truth.' I said, 'Oh, that's great *if* it's God's word, God is obviously going to answer at the other end of the line.' And she said, 'Well, no, God can't actually answer,' and we kept this up, entertaining the audience, until she hung up.

"I can see within twenty seconds where a person is going," she says. "You have to have extraordinary concentration when you're doing this. I do it for four hours a day. With every caller, I have a sense of that caller, a sense of where that caller is going. Usually, when they call in with an agenda, I can see it immediately. You have to give them a little room to hang themselves. When somebody hasn't gotten out what they have to say, and they get cut off, you get a sense of unfairness."

As much as Bob Ray is a lightning rod for racism, Carole, as one of the few controversial female talk-show hosts, has to deal regularly with sexism.

"One of the things that angers me, and hurts me, is that people will get all up in arms about something you will say about [other groups.] But let them say the same thing or worse about women, and nobody will notice it. And so I often will point that out. You know, this whole business of rape. 'She dressed a certain way.' And they think it's acceptable. But if they said the same thing about a victim of a gang shooting being killed because he was walking down the street wearing the wrong colors, everybody would be outraged. If somebody said, 'Well, he deserved it because he was wearing red when he should have been wearing blue in that neighborhood,' everybody would say, 'That's a dreadful thing to say. He shouldn't be shot just because of the color he's wearing, right?' Well, it's perfectly okay to say that women shouldn't be dressing provocatively. What's disguised and still acceptable is bigotry against women. Bigotry against women comes out in the really gross things that I've heard about 'feminists.'

“Rush Limbaugh, on his show, said, ‘Well, this is why women shouldn’t be in power.’ And he pointed to Margot Kidder crying in New York at the U.N., saying this is a war about testosterone. That was insulting, but he’s got a right to do that. He changed it later on, after a woman called him on it, ‘the feminists shouldn’t have power.’ I think there’s a real bigotry against women. You hear, ‘Feminists want to kill babies. . . . Feminists want to see as many abortions performed per year as possible. . . . Feminists hate men.’ Now, I don’t understand. If you said those things about blacks, a talk-show host would not be allowed to continue. Why is it that you can say this about women? I mean, its the most insidious form of discrimination I know of.

“Bigots,” Carole says, “make it on talk radio because they are colorful, and they touch the right emotional buttons.”

Carole also believes that many Arab groups are especially proficient at getting their point across on radio. “And there’s so much more anti-Semitism since the intifada,” she says. “Perception becomes reality. They look at Israel as the bully, and the Palestinians as victims. Arabs and Arab-American groups have been very very successful at using the Palestinian issue for propaganda. They give out total misinformation. They have been very successful, because most people don’t know the facts about that area. What they think was that Palestine was once a nation that belonged to the Palestinians. The Jews came in and conquered them, and took their land, and that’s a terrible thing to do, and they should give it back. That’s really the basic understanding of the Middle East by most people. And so what happens when I get the calls that are not factual is that I stop them. I go through some history of the Middle East”

One of the things that is most disturbing to her is “black anti-Semitism. I’ve been in this business for fifteen years, and I’ve never heard it like it is now. And it seems that there is a certain group of blacks whose agenda is to bash Jews. It isn’t just bashing Israel. You know, we had this big thing here in Los Angeles where they blamed Hollywood Jews for making blacks look bad. You’ve got, particularly in part of the black community, and my personal opinion is that it comes from Farrakhan, the idea that it was Jews who brought the slaves over. They use these two names all the time. They say that they ran the slave ships, they were the ones who were selling the slaves, making the money off of selling the slaves. They *believe* it. What frightens people about bigotry is to hear the voices of these people who believe it themselves.

“One of the things that’s really crucial is that your audience can hear the bigotry. Because if *they* don’t hear it, and you hang up on somebody, then they’re on the side of the person who they see as a victim, who has been hung up on. When you hang up on somebody it’s only when the bigotry has been so apparent that at that time they also want to hang up. I think it’s very important to let the bigotry be evident.”

BARRY FARBER (heard nationally through Daynet) is one of the deans of talk radio. He has been on radio for thirty years. He is graceful, personable, and gives an aura of always being in control. Even in the seclusion of his radio booth, he never loosens his tie.

Barry is Jewish, openly so, and he, like his younger colleagues Arnie Arneson and Bob

Ray Sanders, responds to bigotry with examples from his life experience. “I’m old enough to remember signs that said ‘No Jews,” he’ll tells his listeners.. “Then there were ones that said ‘Restricted Clientele,’ and I remember asking my mother what that mean. Then they said ‘Near Churches.’ Then they took out ads in the *New York Times* that said ‘Manager — JT Mulligan.’ I make the point that it’s a great American success that we are rooting out bigotry in our society, and a caller who is expressing bigotry is trying to diminish that success.”

Barry’s strength is his persona, which combines folksiness and intelligence. If someone called complaining about Hispanic or Asian immigrants in a bigoted manner, he’d draw them out “You interest me more than I could ever interest you,” he says. “You are either an eminent expert, a scholar in this field, or perhaps you are just speaking your opinion. Why don’t you be honest. Why don’t you say what you really believe. You really don’t like so and so, do you . . . “

You have to be “good hearted” in handling bigotry, Barry says, reiterating that it is the audience that you are educating and entertaining, rather than winning an argument with a bigot “When you have a bigot you give them something to hang themselves with, softly. Sometimes, in a friendly manner I just say, ‘Sir, I am an expert on my own opinion, and in my opinion, you are a bigot”

On rare occasions, he will hang up on a caller, and continue talking, so that the audience thinks he has silenced the person. “I call it my Mussolini button,” he says.

“I never lost a battle with a bigot,” he said, “except once,” naming Richard Cotton.’¹² “Back in the 1960s,” Barry recalls, “there was the fairness doctrine, which was exceedingly unfair. We had an ADL person on, and had to give time to Cotton. That’s how crazy the fairness doctrine was. If I had someone on who attacked the SS, I not only had to give an SS person equal time, but it was incumbent on me to find an SS person.

“Anyway, I owed Cotton seventeen minutes, and thought this would be fun, so I gave him the whole show. It was a mistake.

“I’m entitled to be here,’ Cotton said. Then he went on a diatribe about how America was on the wrong side in two wars — the Civil War and World War II.

“My voice got squeaky. ‘How can you say things like that!’ I protested. I thought I destroyed Cotton with history and logic.

“Then I got a letter,” Barry recalls, “from a savvy listener. ‘Barry,’ she wrote, ‘you may think you won, but he wasn’t there to debate you, but to say ‘hate lives’ and ‘here’s my address.’ Hundreds will subscribe, and people will send him in checks for \$35.’

“She was right,” Barry says. “Manner is much more important than meaning. *if* I had Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler on the same program, and Churchill was belligerent and Hitler even-toned, the listeners would not understand. They’d say ‘Who was that?’ and ‘Wasn’t he great?’

Farber also sees bigotry on talk radio regarding Israel. “There is a general belief out there that Israel started the Six-Day War,” he says.

“I remind them that Nasser did three things. He told the UN forces to get out so that he could ‘finish off Israel, once and for all’ it was his right to ask the UN forces to leave, they were on Egyptian territory. He employed his army close to the city limits of Eilat. And he blocked the straights of Hormuz, closing international waterways. That was an act of war. But even many talk-show hosts aren’t aware of that history. I can challenge the big lies because I know the history,” he says. “A seminar for talk-show folk on this issue would be a great idea. The twenty biggest lies about Israel, and the twenty biggest lies about Jews. . . . and how to handle them most effectively on the air.”

EXTREMISTS ON RADIO

“A whole ignored part of the radio dial is the religious broadcasters,” says Carole Hemingway. “if you want to talk about bigotry, you want to talk about racism, you want to talk about sexism, you should listen to those religious shows. I’m on the executive board of the NARTSH (National Academy of Radio Talk Show Hosts). There was a big discussion at the board meeting about who is a talk-show host? Well, everyone who talks on the radio. And I said, ‘It has to be a profession. And if you are going to include every one of these ministers that gets on there and talks on the radio, that’s not a talk-show host. That’s a pastor.’”

“They sort of shrugged their shoulders. I asked, ‘Do you ever listen to them?’ To a person, they said, ‘No, every time I come across it I turn it off.’ And it’s a hugely ignored part of the radio dial.”

Religious radio is outside the mainstream. And even though most stations sponsor “inspirational” programming, some also air unadulterated hate in religious garb.”

WFAX, in Washington, for example, has programs on which the host calls for terrorism against Israel, denies the Holocaust, and says America is “poisoned by Jewish money.”

Low-power stations in Spokane, Washington, and Portland, Oregon, also sell air time to ministers whose message is not of interreligious love but hatred against Jews and, sometime, others. Some even preach “Christian Identity,” which holds that Aryans are the “true Jews,” that Jews are the offspring of Satan, and that blacks and other minorities, “mud people,” are of a different species.

Extremism and organized hate-mongers are not on the small, religious stations alone. There is a concerted effort by some right-wing hate groups to use the airwaves to spread their message. Radio gives them a platform, and grants them a measure of legitimacy. Their ideas, no matter how bizarre, gain a measure of plausibility if the presenter is poised and polished.

Barry Farber has been attacked for refusing to give such folk a forum. Bradley Smith, a spokesperson for Holocaust deniers, tries to get on the air as frequently as he can.¹³ The Holocaust, in his view, is a “hoax” Jews made up to justify the creation of the state of Israel. And Smith has distributed promotional literature to radio producers — postcards even — that smear Farber for not allowing deniers on the airwaves.

“The way this came about,” Mike Castello of Daynet recalls, “was that someone wanted to do a point-counterpoint on the Holocaust with the deniers. Barry said he would not provide them the credibility, nor would he get into a debate between fact and fiction.”

Many other hosts agree with Farber. “I have no patience with them at all,” says Jim Althoff. “This isn’t Hyde Park where every nut gets a chance on the soapbox.”

Mike Rosen, from KOA in Denver,¹⁴ disagrees. “I had Bradley Smith as a guest,” he says. “Bradley Smith is simply not somebody that you entertain civilly. I gave him some time to spin his tale. After a decent interval, he and I went at it I found it to be completely off base, so it was kind of fun going back and forth with a Bradley Smith.”

Mike Rosen might have felt that he discredited Smith, but that begs the question of whether allowing such hate on the air provides legitimacy. Everyone has the right to speak, but no host has an obligation to give every hateful, flat-earth type a forum.

If a host¹⁵ is not prepared to debunk the lies, the lies are believed. The Institute for Historical Review markets Bradley Smith tapes from shows on which he came across as more controlled, or more informative, than the host

Occasionally a caller, rather than an invited guest, brings up Holocaust denial.

“I wouldn’t get into that,” says host Don Marwell of WACV in Montgomery, Alabama. “I know which side my bread is buttered on, and there are lots of Jewish retail people in this town, and if you let somebody on the air denying the existence of the Holocaust, they’d perceive it as anti-Semitic and perceive me as being one simply because I allowed the guy on. And I don’t think my audience is concerned with that particular issue anyway.”

A more forthright refusal to discuss the topic comes from Jim Atihoff. “I just blow them off. I don’t want to get into that I don’t want to hear that, that’s a lot of nonsense, and good bye. I just blow them right off. Although, I don’t get a lot of calls like that People know they’re not going to get an opportunity to air that kind of thing out”

Carole Hemingway says the same thing. “There are certain limits to what is going to be heard on my program. Not lies. If it comes up, I say, ‘We don’t have any basis to talk,’ and explain to my audience why.”

Farber, who has had to bear the brunt of this particular ugliness, has a comfortable, sophisticated approach.

“There are a lot of falsehoods around,’ I say. ‘You’ve brought up one falsehood that is most hurtful tone.”

“Sometimes, in order to ‘prove’ the Holocaust,” he says, “I talk facts. But I use only non-Jewish sources. In fact, I use Nazi sources exclusively. I quote Nazis like Eichmann: ‘The Czechs threw us their Jews like sour beer.’ I quote Klaus Barbie saying, in effect, if only they had forgotten about the Jews, and turned more of their effort to winning the war, they could have won.

“I quote only Nazi sources,” Farber repeats. “If I started quoting Elie Wiesel, it wouldn’t make the point. When I quote only Nazi sources, what can they say? Once someone said, ‘In a nation of 70 million, there had to be some traitors!’”

BLACK STATIONS

Few aspects of American society seem more segregated than talk radio. Even though minorities are part of the “mainstream” listening audience, most major cities, and many smaller ones, have at least one black-oriented station with a predominately black audience.

Given the insensitive and stereotypical statements about blacks that are sometimes heard on many mainstream stations,¹⁶ it is not surprising that there is a place on the radio dial where, one would think, a less hostile dialogue would take place. Yet, two surveys¹⁷ commissioned in the 1980s for the American Jewish Committee found frequent instances of racial and religious bias on black as well as mainstream stations. One black-oriented station, in thirty hours in 1981, broadcast 145 “negative assertions” about whites to only eight positive ones. In a five-week period in 1989, assertions about whites on black stations monitored in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago were 91 percent negative, only 9 percent positive.¹⁸

Much of what is heard is Afrocentric — going beyond an appreciation of black culture and the frequently overlooked black contribution to American society, to another form of bigotry, claims of black superiority. Radicals with anti-white, anti-Semitic, and anti-United States messages are frequently heard. In 1989, when WLIB in New York aired constant attacks on David Dinkins as an alleged “tool of the white establishment,” Percy Sutton, the station’s owner, promised to “close down WLIB before I see it used by blacks to attack blacks.”

“It’s sort of like a family discussion that people are eavesdropping on,” says Michael Harrison of *Talkers*. To a large extent he’s right. The black stations do have the character of a town meeting and community forum more so than many mainstream stations. A topic concerning the black community that might prompt an intolerant and bigoted treatment on a predominantly white-oriented station¹⁹ will, at least, be more likely to be treated with respect and understanding on a black-oriented one.

MICHAEL HARRIS (not to be confused with Michael Harrison) has been a talk-show host on a black station in Houston for over ten years. Unlike many of his white colleagues, he sees himself not only as an entertainer but as a person who has a mission to improve a community. Unlike many of his white colleagues, he works in the radio version of a battle zone.

When FM took over the music listeners from AM, three or four black-oriented talk stations were born in Houston. Now there is only one. For this Harris blames “radical people, a lot of vengeful and hateful people, with a racist and antiestablishment feeling that’s almost like a venom. They ran a lot of these programs off the air. A lot of stations took them off, and started playing music again.”

In Houston, and in many parts of the country, black radicalism dominates talk radio and is responsible for much of the bigotry and anti-Semitism that is heard.

“A part of the Muslim movement in the community,” Harris says, “is extremely pro-black, pro-black Arab, because some of those Arabs are of African ancestry. And extremely anti-Jewish. So one of the philosophies that they teach is that the present-day Jew, whether he is American, Israeli, or whatever, is not a real Jew. They are not the same people that we talk about in the Bible, because most of them appear to be Caucasian. So it became popular to talk about today’s Jews as the ‘so-called’ Jews. And that black people are the true Jews.”²⁰

Unlike many black stations where such remarks are left unanswered, or affirmed by the hosts, Harris “took them head-on. I fought it very strongly. But it’s something in the black community, that if you defend white people, no matter whether they are right or not, a lot of other black people are going to be offended by it”

His defense would draw “some angry, mean-sounding person jumping on me about defending the present-day Jew.” Because callers who challenged the bigots were regularly called “Uncle Toms” or “house Negroes” by the radicals, “few people were willing to get into the fray. It would be me alone against certain people.

“As a black person,” Harris says, “I give some of the history and philosophy that has been taught in the black community. It’s a black philosophy that all life comes from us anyway. And so, if we’re all descendants of the same people, then, what difference does it make if it’s a Caucasian, or if it’s an Asian, or whatever.”

Harris no longer takes these radical callers on that directly. “My boss just told me, ‘What you are doing by talking with them, and arguing with them, is that you are giving them what they want, because they’re not changing, and you’re giving them more time, and you’re angering other folk.’”

In the mainstream world of talk radio, the host’s personality defines and drives the program. On many black talk-radio stations, the host is almost held hostage to vocal people with a dogmatic, hateful agenda.

“If a white person is on with someone and they’re going on like a Rush Limbaugh, he’s allowed to be a personality,” laments Harris, “allowed to be a right-winger, or whatever. And he can champion this and can champion that. But as a black person, when the only people that you are challenging are black people, then they want to label you as either a radical, a militant, that label, or the other, the house Negro or the Uncle Tom. It’s a no-win situation for us. We’re not allowed to be conservative or liberal or moderate. You’re just black. And if you’re black, you’re going to be a militant — a black, or an Uncle Tom, the white man’s boy. You’re not given an opportunity to be one of the many different types of personalities. Since you’re black, your listeners tend to think that you have some sort of obligation to the community, to whatever the loudest scream is, you’re supposed to go along with it. You’re not supposed to ever analyze anything.”

The view that the black station should serve the “interests of the black community” as the radicals define it has several results that institutionalize bigotry. Many hosts “play along with the program” rather than challenge the bigots. And as fearful as it must be for a black person to call up several mainstream programs in the hope of rational discussion about issues effecting the black community, white callers are likewise intimidated from calling black stations.

“I had a white man call me one day,” recalls Harris, “one of my first white callers, years ago, and I should have said something then, but again, you get intimidated. He called up and shared some ideas with me, and some guy called in a few minutes later, and asked, ‘What was that white man doing calling this show? They have shows, several shows, let them call their shows. They have their shows. This is a black show, and we don’t need them calling in.’ Then, other folk who felt that some way, saying, ‘Yeah! We don’t need to hear them telling us what they think. We know what they think. They run everything.’”

Harris has received death threats. He has been picketed. “Somebody is trying to spread hatred, and they want it to grow, they want black folk to hate everybody,” Harris says. But he continues to program against bigotry, and for dialogue, knowing that he is doing a service to the large part of his audience that is too intimidated to call up.

“Since we were getting so much anti-Jewish stuff from the Farrakhans of the world,” Harris says, “I wanted the American Jewish Committee to be able to come on and to talk about some of these issues.” The program, now a monthly feature, works well with most of Harris’s audience, but draws regular attacks from the radicals. People who never asked for a program of their own, now ask for one, saying, “We want a program like the Jews.” “It’s sickening,” Harris says, “it’s revolting. I’ve been doing this program with them for about a year. And for 9 years I was doing the program, and didn’t have any Jewish guests on. Nobody ever said I want a program like somebody else, they simply said, ‘I want a program.’ And then this man was in there saying we had those Jews down there mis-educating the people. And he wants a program for the Farrakhan folk. I said, hey, these people are not preaching Judaism. You’re not having anti-Farrakhan comments coming up all the time. They were brought in here to respond to some questions that were constantly being raised about black and Jewish relations.”

Harris, who has worked on mainstream stations, listens to his white counterparts “with a bit of envy. I’m earning my combat pay,” he says. “I think about it quite often. But the bottom line is, you don’t let bigots push you around. I think about white folk who had to fight against their own people, bigots who thought that the Negroes had their own place. Some people died in that struggle. And I would be less than a man if I were not willing to take on the challenge, and I’m not going to let anybody run me away.”

WHAT THE INDUSTRY CAN DO

Talk to most college presidents about the need to confront outbreaks of bigotry on campus, and you will have a receptive audience. Disruptions tear campuses apart, scare away prospective students, and challenge the university’s self-perceptions.

There are no parallel institutional biases to play upon in the world of talk radio. Radio is not journalism, it is entertainment, and, in Carole Hemingway’s words, “bigots make it because they are colorful and touch the right emotional buttons.” In a medium of words, powerful images draw listeners, and listeners’ ratings. “This is an industry driven by ratings,” Arnie Arneson says, “and the owners want to make sure they have people who buy time.”

Talk radio does not create the societal bigotry some hosts play upon, although it does perpetuate it. The perceived differences between people are easy material from which to create strong word pictures. There is no inherent reason that those hosts who paint positive pictures should be any less successful than those who paint negative ones. Even though there is no strong, perceived institutional self-interest in countering bigotry, the people in talk radio are, for the most part, of goodwill. The Arnie Arnesons and Carole Hemingways and Bob Ray Sanders and Barry Farbers and the Michael Harris are all different, one from the other. Sometimes, each will blunder — they are all human. But each is entertaining, and each is committed to using his or her entertainment skills to improve human relations. Stations, program directors, community groups, and the larger media should pay more attention to these folk, and the successful, money-making models they are creating.

One thread common to many of the successful programs is that the host does not think he or she is the possessor of all knowledge. Bob Ray Sanders, coming from a journalism background, and Arnie Arneson, from a lawmaker background, each has access to a tremendous network of articulate, intelligent, informed people who can be brought onto any program in an instant, if need be. Having experts available on subjects reduces the misinformation and stereotyping likely to occur. Knowledgeable guests also make interesting and provocative radio.

Having quality guests who are capable of taking on bigoted callers also makes a better program. Some guests who have been attacked by bigots tend to become angry if the host does not intercede. Although no guest should be left defenseless, it is more powerful radio if the host doesn't have to come to the rescue.

Another improvement in many stations would be more effective screening of calls. Stations today range from those where the host takes a call "cold," to those who know one or more facts about a caller, either flashed on a computer screen or scribbled on a legal pad and held to the glass audio booth. Name. Sex. Where calling from (and local affiliate, if on a network). And topic. Many producers ask the caller, "What's your question?" That way, the host can be assured that the caller is on the topic, unless the caller is trying to get on by subterfuge, which rarely happens. Asking what the question is also makes for smoother radio, since many callers are nervous. If they articulate their concern or anger or frustration or information into a sentence before getting on the air, awkward moments are avoided. And, of course, incoherent or drunken callers are avoided.

Screening can also weed out "regular" callers, who are an accepted part of talk radio, but who, if too often on the air, give the program an appearance of clubbiness. Most successful talk shows screen callers.²¹ Screening makes for more successful, less bigoted radio.

One of the biggest hopes for reduction in "hate radio," however, is in the hands of the hosts themselves.

Entertainers in talk media are just now forming their own community. With the number of talk stations doubling in the last five years, with talk now on FM, with talk on cable, and even on network television, talk media is just beginning to define itself "There is no establishment yet in talk radio," says Michael Harrison, "because it's going through such a rebirth right now that it's like the big bang. It hasn't condensed into galaxies and solar systems yet. It's still just nebulas."

One thing that is clear about the industry, however, is that there is tremendous peer pressure. Every talk host and program director know what every colleague is doing. Harrison even calls it a "cult," where successful models are quickly copied.

If the vast majority of talk-show hosts who don't pander to hatred want to make themselves more successful, they too will promote and copy those who use bigotry and diversity as opportunities to craft constructive and entertaining programming — those who bring together people from different backgrounds and make them talk to each other as respectful human beings eager to discover and dialogue.

One likely part of the new "establishment" is the National Academy of Radio Talk Show Hosts (NARTSH). Even though it is new, NARTSH is a growing "nonprofit professional organization dedicated to preserving and promoting talk radio as a dynamic source of information on key issues of

the day.” It is through NARTSH that talk-show hosts keep informed of what others are doing, and, at NARTSH annual conventions, attend workshops and seminars on all aspects of their industry. So far, one aspect has not been studied — bigotry on the air.

No one in talk radio is going to advocate dividing the industry between those who challenge bigotry and those who abuse it for ratings. But, with the help of outside human-relations groups, NARTSH should sponsor seminars on how to counter bigoted callers on the air, how to answer those with a hateful political agenda, and how to debunk the propagandists who use radio to spread lies about others.

Talk media considers itself a profession. It should teach its practitioners better ways of entertaining. And since much entertainment comes from interaction with callers on issues of bigotry, training is not simply a matter of social responsibility but of professionalism.

Talk-radio hosts *are* studying the art of their craft Mark Williams, a host on WPRO-AM, in Providence, Rhode Island, wrote an article for *Talkers*, detailing how another host “died” on the air. On January 15, 1991, the day George Bush had given Saddam Hussein as a deadline to get out of Kuwait, the host’s opening guest was “an author who had written a satirical book on how to successfully cheat on your wife. Right away,” Williams wrote, “our host [had] broken talk rule number one: stay in touch with your audience and their concerns?”

Among the host’s other sins was to treat his guest — whose book was satirical — seriously, as if he were the author of a “how to” book. When that didn’t go over well, he left the guest, and asked for callers. No one called in. The host had never said what his name was and, worse, had never mentioned the station’s phone number. The host became angry at his audience for not calling in.

The host’s rambling returned to the Middle East, with, as Williams wrote, “references to Arab skin color, mocking of Arab accent, and questions about the validity of their admission into the human race. A polite, rational caller finally object[ed] to the racial overtones of his comments (this [was] also Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday) and [was] attacked. . . . [The host listed] his vocabulary of acceptable racial slurs, ‘hell, I’m a wop!’

“The caller was dispatched without fanfare only to be gutted in absentia after the break for calling the host a racist (the caller hadn’t), then the show ended. ‘Time for news, and Ron the Jew is next’”

Williams then detailed an instructive “list of offenses” from this show. “Play the hits,” he admonished. “Play to the listeners, not the telephones,” he cautioned. He listed rules of good broadcasting. These were designed to help a host “gather as many bodies as possible to [the] dial and hold them for as long [as possible so that the] sales force can go out and bring back the dollars.”

One rule not mentioned, but which should have been included: avoid pandering to bigotry.

WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO ABOUT HATE ON THE RADIO

KZZI-AM, in West Jordan, Utah, sells programming time to various groups. In July 1987, it sold an hour to Dwight McCarthy for a political talk show entitled *The Counter Marxist Hour*. That November, McCarthy changed the program’s name to *The Aryan Nations Hour*, and spewed forth a

white-supremacist point of view.

The station owner, John Hinton, refused to pull the show. Even though there was no paid advertising on the *Aryan Nations Hour*, local advertisers withdrew their support from the rest of the station's schedule. Hinton said his life had been threatened, and \$1800 worth of radio equipment destroyed by vandals. McCarthy (who had also allegedly received death threats) finally agreed to cancel his show, complaining about the "liberal-Marxist-homosexual-Zionist" coalition.

"All I was doing," station owner Hinton said, "was offering a forum for freedom of choice of different topics. But because I honored a legal contract, I was nearly put out of business. That proves to me there's no freedom of speech in this country."

Regardless of whether Hinton's accusation of alleged terror tactics by the Jewish Defense League was correct, the lesson of KZZI is simple: for those owners who will not respond to moral complaints about hatred on the air, an attack on revenue will succeed. "If you can't hit them in the pocketbooks," says Carole Hemingway, "it's hard to hit them."

Owners, as a rule, want profit without aggravation. At some stations, letters of complaint may be viewed as evidence that people are listening. Nonetheless, insiders say listeners and community groups should write and call station managers. "It is so effective," says Carole Hemingway. Owners and managers "try to appease people who are making trouble," she says.

In 1987, on WGST, in Atlanta, host Ed Tyll called U.S. Representative John Lewis a "moron," and said that the Congressman, who is black, "sounded like Buckwheat out of the 'Little Rascals.'" Tyll, who had a reputation for outrage, was suspended for one week by the station and ordered to apologize.

Black groups (including the NAACP, SCLC, and Concerned black Clergy) along with elected officials and representatives of the American Jewish Committee and the Atlanta black-Jewish Coalition met with the station management to argue that a longer suspension was warranted. The meeting turned from polite to contentious when the station management pointed to a list of programs on which Tyll had black guests, suggesting that these programs were a direct service project to black Atlantans. "These programs were not a 'service,'" the group protested, "but good business," since half of the listening audience in Atlanta was black.

Protestors marched in front of the station. The station extended Tyll's suspension indefinitely. Then, the next week, he was allowed back on the air, and apologized.

Regardless of whether one approves of pickets, what worked in Atlanta was that a coalition of groups was willing to meet radio management to voice displeasure. The letters written to the station by the group are part of the FCC file that the station is obliged to keep, and that can become part of the review process during relicensing time. The organized pressure told the station that there was displeasure in the community — and displeasure can lead to fewer listeners, and advertisers who would rather spend their money elsewhere.

But what made the model of community action in Atlanta most successful was that it represented not only the group that was most directly victimized by Tyll but the community at large. Atlantans, not just black Atlantans, were hurt by bigotry on the air. The station's initial response was predicated on the thought that the rest of the community would not care. That Jews and elected officials

and others joined together to make an issue out of Tyll's remarks showed the station otherwise.

Of course, Tyll's use of "slime," as a cartoonist at the *Atlanta Constitution* termed it, did not end. Three months later, he referred to some of the groups that had met with the station management as "liars and deceivers . . . more dangerous than the fascists in Italy in the 1930s."

He and WGST parted ways. More than two years later, Tyll turned up on WLUP in Chicago. There, he was invited to participate on a panel that focused on how radio should "handle various extremists, ethnic and racial slurs, obscenities and other sensitive issues."

"Instead of sticking to the topic," Robert Feder of the *Chicago Suit Tunes* reported, "Tyll attacked fellow panelists and audience members for daring to question whether talk-show hosts may be guided by any standard of decency and good taste. . . . Assuming the role of the obnoxious, shrill character he plays on the air, Tyll scribbled the words 'Sieg Heil' on his notepad and portrayed himself as a First Amendment martyr."

Another panelist, Tom Tradup, the general manager of another station, told the audience of Tyll's Atlanta suspension. "Not hiring Ed Tyll was the smartest move I ever made," he said. "Someone ought to check that guy's Rorschach test"

The Tyll experience highlights what communities should and should not do about bigotry on the air.

The Atlanta model worked because it was a community wide effort. The Chicago forum, designed to focus attention on a serious issue, failed because it invited an exploiter of bigotry to participate, who, predictably, saw an opportunity to market himself instead of to answer serious questions. Community groups, rather than provide further opportunities for the Ed Tylls of this world, should hold seminars with hosts and industry officials who are sensitive to the dangers of hatred on the airwaves, and who see good programming possibilities in positive treatment of issues of diversity. The press should be invited. A dialogue created.

One difficulty in community response to bigotry on the air is that it is so difficult and time-consuming to document An Ed Tyll with a racist remark about a congressman, already reported in the media, is one thing. The more common dynamics is that of a host who spews forth less noticeable hatred on a regular basis.

Consider Barry Lambert, for example. He was a host on an early morning program on KKEY in Portland, Oregon, in 1985. A self-proclaimed admirer of Joseph McCarthy, Lambert advocated "kicking out" all the "Shiite" (presumably meaning Iranian) students in the United States, and all those who were "undocumented." His special venom, however, was reserved for Jews.

Sometimes using code names for Jews²², sometimes speaking directly, Lambert engaged in gross, overt anti-Semitism.²³

A group of concerned people decided to "do something" about Mr. Lambert First, programs were regularly recorded, and the offensive passages transcribed. Then the station was investigated. Its owners were identified, its ad base monitored, and its signal investigated. Friends in the radio industry were asked what they knew about the station, its reputation, its place in the market

What emerged was a picture that made action difficult KKEY, an all-talk station, had a 5000-watt signal, which meant that it had a weak range, perhaps fifty miles. Its license allowed only daylight broadcasts. Its ads were predominately endorsements read by hosts rather than prerecorded advertisements from major companies. Its ad rates were only \$30 to \$40 per minute, which was considered low for the market. It had a low audience share, near the bottom of the Portland market, and its reputation among broadcasters in the area was as a “joke.”

Few people were listening to Lambert. He was also the type that would rejoice in the attention if he learned that a group of citizens — including Jews — were targeting him. Some people felt that by publicly bringing attention to Lambert, the purpose would be defeated. Unknown to most Oregonians, he might become a curiosity and attract a larger following. A sophisticated approach, balancing the risks and the benefits, was needed.

A local broadcasting association, the Oregon Broadcasters’ Association, was said to be concerned with the danger of bigots on talk shows. And even though the FCC was unlikely to “do anything,” the group was encouraged to consider a complaint, with copies to the Oregon congressional delegation. At license renewal time, the thought was, the documented complaint could be used as part of an opposition to the station’s relicensing application.

The decision was made to bring together an interreligious, interethnic group, to approach the station owner, to voice concerns, and deliver the transcripts as evidence.

While participants in the group were being selected, Barry Lambert apparently became ill. Then he left the air. The meeting, now moot, was called off. But the model was held onto by those concerned.

If stations are small, and the bigotry is heard by few, the decision of what to do becomes harder, but in no case should the bigotry be ignored. It would be a good practice for community groups to encourage members of committees to monitor the airwaves from time to time. What is said on the air impacts people, just as what is written in the newspaper does. Communities are always aware of the latter, but frequently overlook the former, because what is said on radio disappears after it is said.

Community groups might work with local universities and colleges, as well as broadcast associations such as NARTSH and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), to analyze what is being presented on the airwaves.

But monitoring and responding to hate on the radio is not all that communities can or should do. As long as only those who are outrageous and insensitive get attention, talk radio will not become the positive community force it can become.

While a hate monger on the radio can galvanize people to take action and channel their anger and concern into positive, prejudice-reducing steps, groups need not wait until the “bad” model appears.

Communities should seek out and promote the good people. “I think groups should give awards and support those who do a good job,” says Michael Harrison. “I think giving credit where credit is due will encourage others to seek that kind of credit” And owners whose hosts receive community awards, with attendant publicity, will be more likely to promote the entertaining people who promote intergroup understanding, rather than those who make careers insulting people based on their differences.

Community and human relations groups can also become resources for the talk radio industry. They can provide information, publications, access to well-spoken and informed people, and seminars on important topics.

And, of course, people should call in.²⁴ The hosts who are trying to combat ignorance and intergroup hatred too frequently feel alone, having to fend off prejudiced callers. Too often it is the woman talk-show host that has to defend women, and Jewish talk-show hosts having to defend Jews — and there are very few black talk-show hosts to defend blacks, to give the examples of how prejudice has hurt them as human beings, stories that not only educate but make for interesting talk radio.

Many hosts decry the fact that the “good people,” who are listening, frequently don’t call in. “We need help!” many of the hosts say. They deserve help. All people have a responsibility to confront bigotry against anyone, wherever they encounter it

There is much to encourage on talk radio.

HOW TO COUNTER HATE ON TALK RADIO

WHAT THE INDUSTRY CAN DO:

- ** Owners of stations should take seriously their responsibility to serve the public interest. They should seek out and promote talk-radio talents who use their entertainment skills to improve human relations.
- ** Hosts should not see themselves as the possessors of all knowledge. If the show's format allows for guests, high-quality people should be available to plug in by phone. Owners should consider hiring hosts who have attached themselves to a network of experts — including journalists and lawyers.
- ** Stations should screen calls.
- ** Hosts should study their craft, and see the effective handling of bigotry as a matter of professionalism.
- ** Professional associations, such as NARTSH, should offer seminars and workshops that provide hosts with information, ideas, and skills needed to handle bigotry and bigoted propaganda as opportunities for positive, entertaining and educational programming.
- ** Professional associations should work with community groups and universities to study how bigotry is handled in the talk medium.

WHAT INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES CAN DO:

- ** Hosts and stations that handle bigotry well should be recognized by the community through awards and other public acknowledgments.
- ** Community groups should monitor local stations, either in coalition with other groups or in cooperation with universities.
- ** Stations should be challenged and approached when bigotry is not handled well on the air. Affected groups should not go to the station alone — they should come with as broad a coalition as possible. In extreme case, if moral incantations fail, actions designed to make the point that pandering to bigotry will harm the station's revenue should be considered.
- ** Community groups should also write letters to the station, documenting what the station is doing well, and what it doing poorly regarding bigotry. Copies of the letters should also be sent to the FCC.
- ** Community groups should also hold forums to discuss bigotry in the talk media. Talk-show hosts, program directors, station owners and managers should be invited to participate. A dialogue between the industry and the community should be created.
- ** Community organizations should become resources for the talk industry, providing quality information and guests.
- ** Individuals should write to stations, both to commend and to complain. They should also call in when they hear bigotry, and help confront it
- ** Individuals should also alert community groups about hate on talk radio.

ENDNOTES

¹ According to Alan Colmes, in *Talkers*, host Barry Gray was “the first person to invite listeners to phone in, even before the technology existed for two-way talk He’d simply paraphrase the callers’ comments and make it sound like a conversation, often reworking the listener’s remarks for the sake of clarity.”

² Stations have a seven-second delay system to “catch” offenses before they reach the air (the delay is then slowly made up, and the listeners usually don’t know that something was edited out). This fail-safe mechanism is reserved for obscenities, libelous attacks, and other clear-cut outrages. It rarely needs to be used.

³ The FCC adopted a new rule, on December 18, 1988, that bans indecency and obscenity on radio and television twenty-four hours a day. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia enjoined the rule, and required the FCC to create a record to show that such a ban is “necessary and proper” to protect children.

⁴ Obscenity is always prohibited from the airwaves as beyond First Amendment protection; indecent speech has qualified First Amendment protection — it can be regulated.

⁵ The publications further explain:

Section 326 of the Communications Act prohibits the Commission from censoring broadcast material and from making any regulation which would interfere with freedom of expression by broadcasting. . . . Under existing law, broadcasters — like newspaper publishers — are responsible for deciding what they will present to the public. Neither the commission nor any other government agency can direct station licensees to present or refrain from presenting specific programs, or tell them how their call-in shows and other programs should be conducted. . . . The public interest is best served by permitting the expression of any views that do not involve “a dear and present danger of serious substantive evil that rises far above public inconvenience, annoyance or unrest.” . . . if there is to be free speech, it must be free for speech we abhor and hate as well as for speech that we find tolerable or congenial

The complaints the commission receives are, interestingly, not limited to claims of bigotry. The publications note:

Among the comments the Commission receives about telephone call-in or “open mike” programs are objections either to the broadcasting of discussions on certain subjects, or to refusals by talk-show hosts or their station personnel to allow some subjects to be discussed. Other complaints are that the commentary on questions and issues has been inaccurate~ inadequate or unfair. Program hosts are sometimes said to be biased, insufficiently informed, and/or discourteous to callers. Callers also have objected because their chances to be heard on a program have been limited or even entirely barred by stations.

Some persons complain to the Commission that networks or individual stations or their employees or guests have broadcast extreme statements on political, economic or social questions. Others fear that certain broadcast statements would endanger the United States or its people, or imperil institutions such as our form of government, our economic system, the family or marriage. Still others object to what they feel is advocacy of law violation or extreme attacks on government, public officials, existing laws or social conditions, because they believe such attacks are un-American and an abuse of freedom of speech. Objections are also expressed to some broadcasts on the grounds that they criticize, ridicule, “stereotype” or demean individual or groups because of their religion, race, national background, gender or other characteristics.

⁶ Regardless of political leaning, McMahon lists thirteen qualities that a talk-show host should have:

- 1) intelligence, depth of thought;
- 2) opinions — people who have opinions on everything
- 3) life experience (“A common thread they all have is they’ve all lived out of their cars at one point in their life . . . they’ve lived life in the gutter; they’ve lived it on top. They’ve been in a lot of different situations. And this allows them to recognize things in their life that are interesting and recognize things in other people and their callers”);
- 4) likeable;

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- 5) curious about everything — want to know why this works, why that works
 - 6) a great range of personality,
 - 7) can deal with everything, from the most serious, to the most humorous, silly, goofy stuff in the world;
 - 8) a high level of consciousness of things — a real sense of themselves, how they think and feel about things . . . why they feel that way so they can talk about it and articulate it;
 - 9) emotionalism. They're very emotional people. They wear it right out on their sleeve;
 - 10) listening skills — good interpersonal communication skills;
 - 11) a sense of humor. . . these people can see the human in even the most difficult situations. They have a sense of humor about almost everything and certainly about themselves;
 - 12) the weirdness factor. Most of the great ones see things a little differently than the rest of the world;
 - 13) mischievousness. The good ones have a little mischief in them. They love little tricks. They love to poke fun. They just have that child-like mischief in them.

⁷ Defined by the *New York Times Magazine* as "Objects of Limbaughian displeasure and causers of the world's major ills (along with gay activists, homeless activists, animal rights activists, black activists, artists, vegetarians, and female reporters in locker rooms).

⁸ Ed Koch commenting "Uh, oh. ah, urn, uh, ah, let me finish, urn, uh, ah, ah, ah, urn, let me repeat, ah, ah, ah, um, ah, um, ah, that's all I can say."

⁹ Rush Limbaugh, despite his extreme conservatism, is not an "activist" on radio. Although, like most hosts, he is a proponent of as many different approaches to talk radio as there are personalities, he told *Talkers* that he "does not think [that urging] people to tear credit cards in half, or send in tea bags ...[is] a good route."

¹⁰ The Liberty Lobby bought approximately half of the Kayla Satellite Broadcasting Network of Richland Center, Wisconsin, in July 1988. Kayla (also known as "North America One"), in turn, bought the Sun Radio Network of Tampa, Florida in December 1989.

¹¹ For example, Don Marwell of WACV in Montgomery, Alabama, when asked what he says when people call in suggesting that Israel is behind putting President Bush up to fighting in the Middle East, says, "Well, I don't say anything. I let them speak their piece." And when asked about how he handles racial bigotry, he says, "If a regular caller calls in with an obviously white bias, I know that at some point during the hour or two hours I'm on the air, one of my black listeners will call up and take that particular person to task. and so they just sort of offset eachother ."

¹² Richard Cotton was a professional anti-Semite and racist who was national coordinator of the White Solidarity Movement and the producer of *Conservative Viewpoint*. Cotton wrote, in *Conservative Viewpoint*, that " Any organization, to be worthy of your support, should state without equivocation that the Jew and our society are incompatible." He frequently expressed these views on radio in the 1960's and 1970's.

¹³ Bob Ray Sanders invited Bradley Smith on the air, believing Smith to be as he advertised himself to radio stations during the Persian Gulf War - an expert on war crimes trials. "Within five minutes, " Bob Ray Sanders says, "Smith started talking about the Holocaust being a hoax. I was shocked. "

Bob Ray Sanders aired a show the following week about the Holocaust, with a survivor as a guest.

¹⁴ KOA is the station where Alan Berg, a Jewish talk-show host, was killed by the neo-Nazi group, The Order. Asked how he deals with the threat that incident suggest, Rosen said: "I ignore it. You just can't do what I do and be looking over your shoulder. I'm kind of fatalistic about that. Now, I have a different approach from Alan Berg's. I'm controversial, but Berg was outrageous strictly for the sake of being outrageous. Alan was a great entertainer, but there wasn't a lot of substance. Alan was very glib and bright, but Alan was not known for doing a alot of homework, a lot of research. He kind of winged it. Alan would go out of his way to try to inflame somebody. There are times when I'll have a heated ex change, but that's not

my general demeanor. Most of the time I can disagree without being disagreeable."

¹⁵ Rosen tells of his attempt to get a guest who could give a "point-by-point rebuttal" to Bradley Smith. One Jewish organization he contacted said, "We don't have to answer arguments, they're so preposterous." Rosen replied, "No, you *do* have to answer those arguments. It's only the people who are already convinced who don't have to answer them."

Most Jewish organizations, however, would not provide someone to debate a Holocaust denier, and for good reason. It is not simply that the topic is preposterous. It is that by debating one suggests that there is truth on both sides. The denier wins, regardless of what is said, if it appears there is a debate.

¹⁶ Dennis Lowry's 1981 study for the American Jewish Committee, *Racial and Religious Bias on Radio Call-in Programs — A Philadelphia Study*, included the following statements heard on WWDB: "Blacks are smoking pot and cigarettes in busses." . . . They [blacks] are committing the most brutal, vicious crimes you can imagine." . . . "The niggers and spics . . . bust up our community." . . . "I would assume [the reason for the lack of black success] is mental and genetic, and they can't cut it."

¹⁷ See Dennis T. Lowry, *Racial and Religious Bias on Radio Call-in Programs — A Philadelphia Study*, (The American Jewish Committee, 1981) and S. Robert Lichter, *Racial and Ethnic Images on Talk Radio*, (The American Jewish Committee, 1990).

¹⁸ The white stations, in 1989, had, correspondingly, 86 percent negative comments about blacks to only 14 percent positive comments.

¹⁹ The AJC 1990 study found that "94 percent of the evaluative statements about blacks were negative on white stations." Consider this snippet from WABC:

Caller: The jerk that called up and said police officers were hitting pregnant women . . . if they hit them a bit harder they probably would have dropped all the loot that was stuffed up underneath their blouse.

Bob Grant: Yeah, but so many of them really are pregnant, they just don't know who the father is.

Another caller: That's another thing, it must be pretty confusing in their neighborhoods on Father's Day.

Bob Grant: I know what you're saying.

²⁰ On some of the religions stations that cater to the extreme right-wing anti-Semites, one can hear the preaching of "Identity religion." Identity teaches that the Jews are not the real Jews, but the offspring of Satan. The real Jews, instead, are the Aryans, who supposedly migrated to Europe from Israel.

²¹ Mike Harris, however, has a problem with screening callers on his station. "I try to screen them," he says, "but what they will do is, then, accuse you of trying to control who is getting on the air, of Nazism and censorship."

²² Among others employed were "international bankers," "a scroot," "an interloper," "a tightwad," "a thief" "the big nose."

²³ For example, the show of June 26, 1985.

Caller: Why is it that there was so much hatred between the Jewish and the Germans?

Lambert: Well, because one of the things, if I recall looking back in history, the industrial might of Germany was being throttled, so they claim.

Caller: Well, I'll tell you one thing for sure. My mother came from Austria and she told me a lot of things what happened. And there was one thing that happened that the Jewish controlled all the money.

Lambert: Uhm.

Caller: And they were keeping the German people under their thumbs. And the same thing is gonna happen here. The same thing is gonna happen here in time. The Jewish are controlling our money here, too. I'll tell you one thing for sure, that's why there was a hatred, because they were controlling everything.

Lambert: The German population couldn't get their hands on enough to eat, couldn't get their hands on enough to buy nothing.

Caller: Folks better wake up. It was nice talking to you this morning.

Lambert: Okay. I appreciate your input here, my friend.

Caller: All right.

Lambert: Call us again. Thank you.

(Another) Caller: You were mentioning Mengele.

Lambert: Yeah.

Caller: Well there was an article in *Spotlight*.

Lambert: What'd they call it? One big fancy, colossal hoax.

Caller: Right. A big hoax. Well, in the library yesterday, I looked it up. You know

Lambert: It said Dr. Mengele's death was known for years.

Caller: That's right. And he didn't even hit the newspapers and stuff until the mid seventies. Isn't that something. I looked in the index of all the periodicals back to the Second World War, and he never even he wasn't even *in* the indexes until the seventies. Now, isn't that amazing?

Lambert: Yeah. Well, it's like I said. They keep throwing this stuff up to stir up world opinion.

²⁴ KGO (San Francisco) Radio president and general manager Michael Luckoff says that only 3 percent of the listening audience ever phones in.