MODERN ROQ:
THE ORAL HISTORIES OF FORMER KROQ DJs DUSTY STREET
AND "SWEDISH" EGIL AALVIK
A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Master of Arts in Mass Communication

By
Elizabeth Ohanesian

December, 2007
The thesis of Elizabeth Ohanesian is approved:

José Luis Benavides, Ph.D.  
Date  
11-26-07

James Hill, Professor  
Date  
11/26/07

Melissa A. Wall, Ph.D., Chair  
Date  
11-26-07
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Radio</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network radio to Infinity</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising in the radio age</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio must pay its dues to ASCAP and BMI</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payola strikes again and again</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock 'n' roll and the top 40 take shape</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.M. supercedes A.M.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Economy</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders of the media market</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commodification of music</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music, radio and audience</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KROQ's History and Significance</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KROQ in the 1970s</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Roq of the '80s&quot;</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KROQ reaches toward Infinity</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KROQ &quot;world famous&quot; from 1990s to the present day</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iii
Methodology

Oral History 37

Project Plan 38

Sample Questions 40

Findings 41

Interview with Dusty Street 41

Interview with "Swedish" Egil Aalvik 70

Conclusions 98

General Discussions 98

Limitations of the Project 103

Further Research 104

References 106
Abstract

MODERN ROQ:

THE ORAL HISTORIES OF FORMER KROQ DJS DUSTY STREET
AND "SWEDISH" EGIL AALVIK

By

Elizabeth Ohanesian

Master of Arts in Mass Communication

This study explores the changing roles of the radio DJ through the oral histories of Dusty Street and "Swedish" Egil Aalvik, both former DJs at KROQ 106.7 F.M., Los Angeles. Based upon the work of political economic theorists, the study asks whether or not the creative input of the DJs changed as a result of corporate ownership. Street and Aalvik discuss their work in radio, what they brought into KROQ to help create the sound that defined the station in the 1980s and how their creative contributions changed when KROQ was bought by Infinity. These histories help reinforce political economic theory, indicating that the role of the creative minds in this medium drastically changed with corporate ownership.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Political economic media criticism often argues that as media conglomerates grow in size, the creativity of the products produced by these firms decreases (McChesney, 1994, 2000, 2004, 2005; Bagdikian, 2004). Scholars in this area, particularly Robert McChesney and Benjamin Bagdikian, often point to commercial radio as an example of this criticism (McChesney, 1994, 2000, 2004, 2005; Bagdikian, 2004). These scholars note that, particularly after the passage of the Telecommunication Act in 1996, radio corporations have grown in size to help shape an industry dominated by two major forces, Clear Channel and, to a lesser extent, Infinity/CBS Radio. As a consequence, political economists argue that radio stations no longer truly serve the local communities in which the stations are based. These scholars also argue that, in a heavily consolidated industry, the playlists that shape the sound of music-based radio stations have shrunk, essentially eliminating airplay for cult, regional and emerging artists (McChesney, 1994, 2000, 2004, 2005; Bagdikian, 2004).

Political economists argue that the media consolidation trend of the 1980s and 1990s has had a negative impact on the radio audience (McChesney, 1994, 2000, 2004, 2005; Bagdikian, 2004). With that in mind, this researcher asks how such changes in radio ownership affect the DJ. If radio playlists have grown more limited, have the job duties of the DJ also diminished? If there is less room for experimentation on commercial airwaves, have DJs lost the freedom to introduce new music?

For this project, I explored these questions by conducting oral histories with Swedish Egil and Dusty Street, two former DJs from radio station KROQ 106.7 FM, which has served the greater Los Angeles area since the 1970s. KROQ is credited with initiating the modern rock format and is often credited with popularizing national music
trends (Ross, 1992; Loscalzo, 1996; Orshoski, 2003; Reynolds, 2005). The station's history also reflects the sort of corporate consolidation described in political economic work. A little known company, Mandeville, owned the station throughout the 1970s and much of the 1980s, at which time KROQ developed its reputation as a trendsetting radio station with high ratings (McDougal, 1986). In 1986, Infinity Radio, one of the nation's largest radio firms, purchased the station at a record-breaking price (McDougal, 1986).

In the late-1990s, Infinity merged with CBS/Westinghouse, which, in 1999, merged with Viacom (Aversa, 1996; Massey, 1999; Business and Technology Editors and Entertainment Writers, 1999). In late 2005, Viacom divided its radio, television and film holdings, making KROQ a part of CBS Radio (Chaffin, 2005; Mainelli, 2005).

This study explored ownership and staff changes on KROQ as they impacted two DJs. Since both subjects were involved with the station throughout the course of the 1980s, the emphasis is on Mandeville's sale of KROQ to Infinity and changes within the management following the station's sale. This study focuses on the individual experience of the DJs in light of the changes at KROQ, i.e. how the changes in ownership and management affected their contributions to the station and ultimately determined their fates with the station.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review that follows provides background information on the radio and music industries, as well as an overview of KROQ's history.

The first section details the evolution of radio, focusing primarily on the industry surrounding the medium. This section describes a pattern that exists within the growth and expansion of the radio industry. Special attention is given to matters concerning CBS Radio and Infinity Radio as KROQ has been part of the Infinity family since the mid-1980s and Infinity is currently a subsidiary of CBS Radio, formerly Viacom.

The second section applies the work of political economic theorists to both radio and music industries. Both industries are included because of their constant interaction. This section explains the ideas behind many of the policies and practices described in the first and third sections.

The third section provides an overview KROQ's history. This includes brief discussions of several significant trends that the radio station has popularized and its connection to various music scenes existing in the greater Los Angeles. The focus of this section, however, is on changes in management and programming over the years.

History of Radio

The history of radio is marked by numerous technological advancements, government intervention and corporate scandals. The history of this medium suggests that early innovations are often hindered by legal battles, but eventually succeed in gaining mainstream acceptance. As the popularity of the technology grows, commercial interest groups take notice and adapt the technology to coincide with their needs. With the involvement of commercial interests, the influence of the technology is often stunted. As the audience becomes frustrated with the lack of creativity and diversity in this realm,
a new technology that can cater to myriad tastes will rise and the popularity of the older technology diminishes.

Corporate interests have been present in radio since the initial development of the medium (McChesney, 1994). Even in its earliest stages of growth, radio was intended to serve commercial and government agencies (Briggs & Burke, 2002). With this in mind, this historical overview of the medium is not intended to discern when corporations came to control radio, but how corporations have shaped U.S. radio. This section of the literature review focuses specifically on issues that pertain to modern rock radio stations like KROQ, commercial stations that function as part of a major network and focus on playing new music. These issues include the birth and growth of radio networks, advertising, publishing rights and fees, payola, the development of rock 'n' roll radio and the popularity of FM broadcasting.

*Network radio to Infinity*

Early in its development, radio hosted a range of stations operated by diverse groups, most of which were small in size (Briggs & Burke, 2002). However, by the early-1930s, independent and often non-profit stations gave way to networks that were funded primarily by advertisers (McChesney, 1994; Briggs & Burke, 2002).

RCA started the first of the "wired networks" in 1922, when it began to set up broadcasts to air in various regions through telephone lines (Smulyan, 1994, p. 57). At the Radio Conference of 1924, RCA's David Sarnoff lobbied for "super-power stations," essentially strings of stations across the country airing the same broadcasts via transmitters and telephone wires (Smulyan, 1994, p.38). While this idea was not well received at the time, it does appear to be similar in nature to today's radio market, where the programs of a station in a large market are often broadcast throughout smaller radio
The concept that Sarnoff described was, essentially, a large-scale version of the radio network RCA had already developed and later implemented at National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), where Sarnoff was president (Smulyan, 1994). NBC was one of two dominant powers in radio broadcasting for much of radio’s early history. Its chief rival was Columbia Broadcasting Systems (CBS) (McChesney, 1994).

CBS began its existence as United Independent Broadcasters (UIB), which struck a cross-promotion deal with a then-failing record company known as Columbia Phonograph Company so that UIB could have an exclusive catalogue of artists to perform on its broadcasts (Archer, 1939). Coinciding with the deal, Columbia re-branded itself as Columbia Phonograph Broadcasting Systems. The record company, however, could not keep up with the demands of the broadcasting market and UIB subsequently cancelled the deal, at which point Columbia’s broadcasting department joined UIB and became known as CBS. CBS changed hands several times and continued to flounder as NBC opened affiliates across the United States. It was not until William Paley, a businessman whose introduction to radio was through a sponsored program he hosted for his father’s cigar company, bought CBS that the network became a force to rival NBC (Archer, 1939). Like NBC, CBS developed syndicated programming and the two networks were able to form a stronghold over the radio market of the time (Douglas, 1999). While Sarnoff and Paley would develop a professional rivalry, both NBC and CBS played pivotal roles in the development of the radio industry in the United States, through lobbyist groups such as the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) (McChesney, 1994, 2004; Briggs & Burke, 2002). One of the ways in which the two networks worked together for a joint interest was in the development of a public relations campaign meant
to sway public opinion towards commercial, network programming during the Washington D.C. radio battles of the early-1930s that lead to the Communication Act of 1934 and the creation of the Federal Communication Commission (McChesney, 1994; 2004). At the same time, these two groups, again through the NAB, worked with American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA) to gain support from publishers for commercial network broadcasting (McChesney, 2004).

After the advent of television, the power of the networks in radio waned slightly, as some of their affiliates parted ways (Douglas, 1999). Many of these stations operated independently and brought a regional focus to the broadcasts (Douglas, 1999). However, in years to come, new networks emerged and grew in both market control and political clout. One of the major broadcasting networks to emerge from this later period is Infinity, which will be further discussed in the section regarding the background of KROQ 106.7 FM.

Advertising in the radio age

In its earliest stages, radio was not perceived to be a profitable endeavor and advertising was not a concern of either the industry or the government (Smulyan, 1994; McChesney, 1994, 2004). The concept of transmitting ads over the airways was British in origin and did not enter the American consciousness until 1922 (Briggs & Burke, 2002; Albarran, 2004).

Advertising came into practice after several ideas to obtain funding by other means for radio stations fell out of popularity (Smulyan, 1994). Network stations are generally credited with the widespread use of advertising because it proved to cover costs of networking technology as well as the publishing fees that had to be paid to companies like ASCAP for playing songs while still bringing in a nice profit for station owners.
Advertising, however, was not necessarily popular with the radio audience (Smulyan, 1994; McChesney, 1994, 2004). In the radio battles that preceded the Communication Act of 1934, advertising became a central issue of debate (Smulyan, 1994; McChesney, 1994, 2004). Protests against advertising, led primarily by education groups, were eventually counteracted by the campaigns of the radio lobby (Smulyan, 1994; McChesney, 1994, 2004).

In the decades that have passed, advertising has done more than fund radio stations, as it also steers the direction of radio programs (Smulyan, 1994). Beginning in the 1950s, radio stations began "narrowcasting," or formatting stations to appeal to a very specific audience (Douglas, 1999 p. 225). Part of this phenomenon is credited to radio's connection to the advertising industry, which relies heavily on market research to identify a specific demographic to which it will advertise (Smulyan, 1994). When the FM rock station boom of the 1960s and early-1970s proved incredibly popular with young people, advertisers took notice (Douglas, 1999). This led to the increase of specialized FM stations in the 1970s and 1980s (i.e. modern rock and classic rock) and the use of computers to program music (Smulyan, 1994; Douglas, 1999). The shrinking playlists that have dominated FM rock radio for the past few decades is perceived to be a result of a pervasive thought in advertising that people prefer familiar music to new sounds (Smulyan, 1994).

**Radio must pay its dues to ASCAP and BMI**

In 1909, Congress passed a copyright law extending the rights that already pertained to inventors of tangible devices to creators of intellectual and artistic work, what is known today as intellectual property, by stating that a person who owned the copyright could profit directly off the public performance of that work (Ryan, 1985). For
example, a person who holds the copyright of a song can earn a fee for the performance of that song, even if the copyright holder is not performing the piece.

This law led directly to the formation of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) in 1913 (Ryan, 1985). ASCAP compiled a catalogue of its members’ work that it could distribute to those who were willing to pay for the performance rights. Since radio did not exist as a music outlet at this time, ASCAP focused on hotel and restaurant owners, who would hire musicians to perform popular songs within their establishments and the film industry (Ryan, 1985). ASCAP turned its attention towards radio in 1922, as music shows became popular across the country, and decided the radio industry as a whole owed the group $1 million annually in licensing fees (Ryan, 1985; Douglas, 1999).

Radio programmers were in a quandary. They did not want to pay ASCAP, but they were reliant on the publishing group’s catalogue for new music (Ryan, 1985). Similarly, ASCAP needed radio, as the technology had become so pervasive that sales of sheet music, which brought in a considerable amount of income for both publishers and composers, had dropped drastically. ASCAP was able to collect a great deal of money from radio stations by using a pay scale charging radio stations percentage rates for use of ASCAP songs with the rates increasing annually. Ultimately, though, the radio industry found a way around the new policies (Ryan, 1985).

ASCAP’s weakness was that it had a very restrictive membership policy (Ryan, 1985). The policy generally excluded what were commonly referred to as “race” and “hillbilly” performers, African-American jazz and blues and Caucasian country-western artists. Because of this, many performers of considerable popularity and importance were
denied membership to ASCAP (Ryan, 1985). The association also set pay rates according to the length of an artist's career, which irked emerging performers (Douglas, 1999). Perhaps with the knowledge that there was a large, untapped source of talent in need of publishing representation, Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI) formed in 1939 (Ryan, 1985; Douglas, 1999). Since the NAB was actively pursuing non-ASCAP music, BMI was able to secure a great deal of airplay for its represented artists on the two major networks, NBC and CBS. This led to a lengthy legal battle and a strong rivalry between the two groups that lasted for decades (Ryan, 1985; Douglas, 1999). The most significant result of this ordeal was that many stations began to regularly play “race” and “hillbilly” records, which would greatly impact the history of twentieth century pop music, as these are the roots of rock 'n' roll (Ryan, 1985). The payola scandals of the 1950s and early 1960s are also said to tie in with the ASCAP controversy, as the initial claims were purported to be part of ASCAP's retaliation against BMI for gaining a tight grasp over the publishing rights of rock 'n' roll songs (Douglas, 1999).

**Payola strikes again and again**

With increased popularity in the 1950s, DJs often sought outside income, which included appearances, various positions within the music industry and payola (Segrave, 1994; Douglas, 1999). While music directors were certainly susceptible to payola, DJs were the primary targets, as they were high profile and often published charts of their most popular songs in local papers. Sometimes DJs were very obvious about their participation in payola practices (Segrave, 1994; Douglas, 1999).

One of the most notorious instances of payola is the case of Alan Freed, who was fired from stations in New York and Los Angeles for payola practices (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977; Segrave, 1994; Douglas, 1999). At the height of the investigations, radio
stations fired their staffs and changed formats in order to avoid potential scandal (Segrave, 1994). While this is perhaps the most infamous and widespread investigation of payola, the practice never disappeared and payola scandals arise every few years (Segrave, 1994).

Payola scandals resurfaced in the early twenty-first century. In early 2005, both the FCC and New York state Attorney General Eliot Spitzer opened investigations into the payola practices of a New York radio station (Tucker, 2005). By the end of the year, this investigation led to an antitrust lawsuit against Sony BMG, which settled a payola lawsuit that summer, brought on by various independent labels that felt the record corporation had blocked their entrance into the radio market (Butler, 2005).

During the course of these payola scandals, which are ongoing and now involve more than one radio station in New York, broadcast corporations including CBS Radio/Infinity and Clear Channel banned the use of independent record promoters, outside help contracted by record companies to push albums and singles to radio stations, at their affiliates (Tucker, 2005). In November of 2005, an anti-payola bill was introduced in Congress, although, as of February 2006, this bill had not yet been passed (Holland, 2005; Lee, 2006).

In April of 2006, the FCC began an investigation of major radio corporations, including CBS Radio, for payola practices (Duhigg, 2006a). KROQ has not been mentioned as having any involvement in payola practices. However, the current payola probe is said to have an effect on all radio stations, particularly those specializing in new music (Duhigg, 2006b). Fear of a payola investigation is said to have lead directly to a major drop in the amount of new music currently added to radio stations, with
programmers at Los Angeles stations concerned that adding unknown artists will automatically prompt full-scale investigations against them (Duhigg, 2006b).

**Rock 'n' roll radio and the top 40 take shape**

As television replaced radio as the preferred medium for live performances, radio stations relied more on pre-recorded music (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977). This development made the DJ the star of the airwaves (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977; Douglas, 1999). With the introduction of rock 'n' roll combined with the development of portable and car radios during the 1950s, music-based programming grew in popularity, particularly with teens (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977; Smulyan, 1994; Douglas, 1999). Audiences became devotees of the radio stations and DJs that played their favorite music (Pielke, 1986). The record industry took notice of radio's resurgence when record sales had skyrocketed, thus beginning a longstanding relationship between the record industry and radio stations (Smulyan, 1994).

At this time, small independent stations that had built identities based upon specific, oftentimes regional, styles of music were quickly being outnumbered by network stations boasting the top 40 (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977). The top 40 radio format, which relies solely on the biggest hits of the time, was developed by Todd Storz, the owner of a radio chain who purportedly heard a waitress play the same song on a jukebox three times in a row and decided that repetition was key to radio programming (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977). This led to the concept of "rotation," where popular songs are repeatedly played over the course of the day and the top 10 are played most frequently (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977, p. 59).

As the top 40 format spread, different stations added to its development. Eventually, news programming was shortened to basically the day's headlines and a few
catchy clips (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977). KFWB in Los Angeles popularized the promotional stunts that have become a staple of commercial radio. Eventually, top 40 stations eliminated the roles of “personality jocks”, DJs who were well known for both their on-air persona and music selection, and learned to rely on a strict programming formula (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977, p. 60).

The rise of the top 40 station inevitably led to the demise of AM radio as the source for new music (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977). While the stations remained popular, their influence in breaking new artists diminished. Music directors selected all of the new additions to the station library based on sales, airplay on other radio stations and placement on Billboard and other music industry charts. The major argument in favor of this system was that it would prevent DJs from selecting the songs and therefore curb payola practices. The programming itself was dictated by the desired demographics, which was used to bring in advertisers (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977). The focus on advertising also deterred people from listening to AM radio, as stations continually increased the amount of commercials played during the course of an hour (Smulyan, 1994; Douglas, 1999).

**FM supersedes AM**

Where AM radio consisted primarily of top 40 stations that relied on formulaic playlists consisting of only hit singles and DJs that did little more than announce the weather and station identification, FM rock radio played non-single album tracks from artists who might have been otherwise ignored and featured DJs who supported new and oftentimes challenging music (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977; Douglas, 1999). FM also lacked the amount of commercial interruptions of AM radio, as many people were not able to receive FM stations on their radios at first, making it less desirable to advertisers (Smulyan, 1994). Due to these factors, FM
became a substantial alternative outlet for music fans, particularly teenagers (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977; Smulyan, 1994; Douglas, 1999). By the end of the 1960s, FM was not just a hit with the youth audience, but with advertisers (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977; Smulyan, 1994).

FM was not without its problems. The new stations faced dilemmas involving the FCC and advertisers (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977). In part due to the influence of the AM networks, the FCC actively sought instances of legal violations on FM in 1970. FCC chairperson Dean Burch threatened to pursue FM stations for playing music with drug-related and sexually suggestive lyrics. As a result, many FM stations threatened to fire politically outspoken DJs and began censoring songs. Similarly, the political stations were threatened with breach of the Fairness Doctrine, which stated that equal time must be allowed for political issues (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977). In reality, the threats were unsubstantiated, as the FCC had only revoked one license at this point and many of these cases could be fought on First Amendment grounds. A few stations, however, were fined for airing expletives (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977).

Advertising proved to be another obstacle, particularly because corporations began to buy commercial time on FM (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977). FM was then criticized for "selling the counterculture and using the counterculture to sell big business" (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977, p. 119). In one instance, a DJ who voiced an objection to certain commercials while on the air was suspended (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977).

Like AM, FM radio eventually tightened its playlists and stations typically grew more formulaic, particularly in markets that did not include large cities and college towns (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977; Douglas, 1999). The major radio networks that initially fought to halt FM broadcasting, including CBS, eventually bought airspace on this region of the dial (Douglas, 1999). These stations co-opted certain aspects of FM broadcasting,
but mostly relied on the tightly formatted, commercial-heavy programming of their AM holdings (Douglas, 1999).

Insofar as programming is concerned, one major post-1970s development was the formation of the modern rock format. Modern rock, which is probably best known as "alternative" or "indie" rock, was pioneered by such stations as KROQ (Loscalzo, 1996). The format originally consisted of a wide variety of rock music, from mainstream to obscure with an eventual focus on the emerging new wave bands of the early-1980s (Loscalzo, 1996). KROQ itself is credited with breaking British synthesizer-oriented pop bands in the United States (Reynolds, 2005). It is also credited with exposing early punk outfits to Los Angeles (Spitz & Mullen, 2001). When record labels realized that sales for their developing artists were high in areas like Los Angeles, the format grew in popularity (Loscalzo, 1996).

Modern rock radio eventually grew into an influential force in the music industry (Loscalzo, 1996). In the early-1990s, modern rock radio stations were the first to champion the era’s alternative rock bands (Ross, 1992). Later on in the decade, the station turned to pop-punk and ska revivalists (Rosen, 1995; Orshoski, 2003).

With growing popularity came changes in the modern rock format and, as with AM and FM rock stations before, a narrowing of the playlists (Borzillo, 1993). However, in spite of a slimmer playlist, modern rock stations, KROQ in particular, still maintain status as national tastemakers (Orshoski, 2003).

The most prevalent trend in the radio industry during the course of the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries is corporate consolidation (McChesney, 2000). This is due to a combination of vertical and horizontal integration tactics that have been employed by mass media corporations as a whole (McChesney, 2000, 2004, 2005;
Bagdikian, 2004). By this, media scholars noted that companies employ the classical monopolistic tendency to buy out other companies in their field as well as integrating related industries (e.g. owning both music production and music distribution companies) for maximum profit (McChesney, 2000, 2004, 2005; Bagdikian, 2004).

Mass media is now dominated by five corporations: AOL/Time Warner; Disney; Viacom; News Corporation and Bertelsmann (Bagdikian, 2004). The corporations, on the whole, tend to work with programming that is formulaic and has previously proven to be successful (McChesney, 2000; Bagdikian, 2004).

In terms of government intervention, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 had a profound impact on radio (McChesney, 2000, 2004; Bagdikian, 2004). After much corporate lobbying, the FCC lifted restraints on media ownership so that one company now can own a maximum of eight radio stations in any given market. As a result of the newfound federal leniency, many radio stations, particularly those in smaller markets, now operate as satellites for stations from major markets (Bagdikian, 2004). This is accomplished through a process called "voice-tracking," wherein one DJ records air breaks for multiple stations (Albarran, 2004 p. 11). The air breaks are then transferred to sister stations and pieced together with the station's playlist to form a radio show (Albarran, 2004). This poses a problem for residents of smaller cities and towns in the United States, as many stations do not broadcast specifically for the communities they serve (McChesney, 2005).

The FCC further diminished radio broadcasting restrictions in 2003, thus sparking a large scale public outcry (McChesney, 2005). Consequently, both the U.S. Senate and the Third Circuit Court of Appeals barred the FCC from implementing the new legislation (McChesney, 2005). These developments in corporate integration and federal
deregulation of media corporations provide the basis for political economic media criticism.

**Political Economy**

This purpose of this section of the literature review is to discuss the political economic theory of media criticism. Through a political economic approach, scholars look at the structure of media firms, as well as the actions taken by such corporations, to determine how media ownership affects news and entertainment products (Negus, 1999). This frame has been selected because it deals specifically with the organizational structures of global media systems and applies to both the radio and music industries. Therefore, political economy provides a strong lens through which one can view and analyze the evolution and impact of commercial radio over the past two-and-a-half decades.

**Leaders of the media market**

The production of media content is influenced by profit, company size, competition, integration and advertising (McChesney, 2000, 2004, 2005; Bagdikian, 2004). The impact of these factors results in media firms that deal primarily with dollars-and-cents business issues, as opposed to creative issues (McChesney, 2000, 2004, 2005; Bagdikian, 2004). Throughout the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries, media firms have focused on conglomeration by purchasing a diverse range of media-related companies to form exceedingly large corporations that have ties to many different aspects of media production (McChesney, 2000; Bagdikian, 2004). This is due in part to the vertical integration of corporate business systems, whereby media corporations control what is produced and how the work is distributed (McChesney, 2000; Bagdikian, 2004). While this is a relatively new phenomenon for media industries on the whole, vertical
integration has been a part of the recording industry almost since its inception (Rothenbuhler & McCourt, 2004). For recording companies, particularly smaller firms, vertical integration meant that they could produce, promote and distribute the records themselves. However, these were comparatively small operations and the current state of the record industry, combining both vertical integration and conglomeration, is a product of today's media climate (Rothenbuhler & McCourt, 2004).

The media market runs as an oligopoly, whereby relatively few corporations handle the bulk of media output and earn the majority of profit in this area (McChesney, 1994, 2000, 2004, 2005; Bagdikian, 2004). Five corporations dominate the media industries, including Time Warner, Disney, Viacom, News Corporation and Bertelsmann (McChesney, 2000, 2004; Bagdikian, 2004). Until recently, the music industry was also dominated by five corporations: EMI; BMG (Bertelsmann Music Group); Warner; Sony; Universal (Negus, 1999). However, BMG and Sony have since merged into one corporation.

Within the radio industry, the two most prominent firms are Clear Channel and CBS Radio/Infinity (McChesney, 2000, 2004, 2005; Bagdikian, 2004; Albarran, 2004). Clear Channel is the larger of the two, with over 1,000 holdings nationwide, many of which are satellite operations broadcasting syndicated programming (Bagdikian, 2004). Infinity, which has owned KROQ since 1986, was found in the early-1970s and developed a reputation for paying top dollar for radio stations that it never intended to sell (Sanders, 2004). In 1998, Westinghouse/CBS bought Infinity, which then merged with Viacom in 1999 (Bagdikian, 2004). Infinity is now part of the five dominant media firms and is run by a board consisting of people from diverse corporate backgrounds, many of who have no background in media production (Bagdikian, 2004).
Because there are so few firms handling such a large percentage of media-related industries, the current system is not in the capitalist model, although it is often believed to be a system operating in a capitalist tradition (Bagdikian, 2004; McChesney, 2005). These corporations rarely engage in actual competition, often work together on joint ventures and, most importantly, tend to release the same sort of media products (McChesney, 1994, 2000, 2004; Bagdikian, 2004).

Media corporations will generally work together to help protect their mutual interests (McChesney, 1994, 2000, 2004, 2005). In respect to the radio industry, the strength of corporations is illustrated time and again throughout the history of the medium. In the 1930s, the National Association of Broadcasters joined forces with the American Newspaper Publishers Association to help protect the interests of commercial broadcasters (McChesney, 2004). The campaign was successful and led to the Communication Act of 1934 and formation of the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) (McChesney, 2004). In the 1940s, NBC and CBS’s aversion to ASCAP’s publishing fees led to the formation of rival publishing house BMI (Ryan, 1985). NBC and CBS also worked together to hinder the FM developments of Edwin Armstrong in order to protect the large AM holdings and burgeoning television stations (Lewis, 1991). In another instance, NAB successfully worked to repeal the Fairness Doctrine, which mandated that stations offer roughly equal time to opinions on controversial issues (McChesney, 2000; Bagdikian, 2004). Most recently, radio corporations worked together to see through the Telecommunication Act of 1996 (McChesney, 2000, 2004, 2005; Bagdikian, 2004).

The Telecommunication Act of 1996 was intended to deal with telecommunication and media corporations overstepping each other’s boundaries
(McChesney, 2000). In the process, the legislation deregulated radio, meaning that major corporations were allowed to purchase up to eight stations in a single market (McChesney, 2000, 2004). Because the economy of the late-1990s boasted low interest rates, many station owners sold to larger chains (Albarran, 2004). This has resulted in a situation where two companies own roughly 10% of all US commercial stations (Albarran, 2004). In addition, the Telecommunication Act of 1996 changed the license renewals from every three years to every eight years, which hinders community involvement in the renewal process (Bagdikian, 2004).

In the music industry, major corporations also tend to bond in order to protect their collective interests (McChesney, 2000, 2004; Alderman, 2001; Albarran, 2004; Bagdikian, 2004). This is usually done through the efforts of the Recording Industry of America (RIAA), which functions in a fashion similar to the NAB in that it lobbies Washington for legislation (Albarran, 2004; Alderman, 2001). The RIAA also keeps tabs on record sales and is responsible for certifying albums Gold, for sales of 500,000 units or more, and Platinum, for sales in excess of 1,000,000 units (Fink, 1996; Alderman, 2001).

Sometimes record companies are at odd with radio stations. Such was the case in the early days of FM rock radio (Eliot, 1989). FM rock radio had developed a reputation not only for playing album tracks, as opposed to simply relying on singles, but for airing full albums in their entirety. The record industry, thinking that this practice would hurt sales of albums, threatened to pull advertising from FM rock stations (Eliot, 1989). Since record companies made up a large part of FM's advertisers, the stations eventually curtailed the practice (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977; Eliot, 1989).
The main target of the RIAA's ire, however, seems to be emerging technology. Record companies essentially crushed the DAT recorder on the grounds that it could produce such clear reproductions of music that it would hurt album sales (Rothenbuhler & McCourt, 2004).

Most recently, the RIAA has waged its war online. The most noteworthy example of this is a suit filed by the RIAA against Napster in 1999 for piracy (Alderman, 2001; Rothenbuhler & McCourt, 2004). The RIAA has successfully lobbied for the passage of the following legislation: the Audio Home Recording Act of 1992, which criminalizes copying material for anything other than personal use; the Digital Performance Rights in Sound Recording Act of 1995, which gives artists the exclusive right to broadcast their own music online; the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, which greatly extended the life of a copyright for both individual and corporate owners and gave corporations the power to digitally protect CDs, which eliminated part of the 1976 Copyright Act that allowed for the owner of an album to make as many copies as he/she wished, as long as it was for personal use (Rothenbuhler & McCourt, 2004).

As illustrated, the major media corporations have a powerful sway with lawmakers. While this does have a great deal to do with the work of lobbyists, such as the NAB and RIAA, this tie between Washington and corporate America is also due to the business links between lawmakers and corporate powers (McChesney, 1994, 2000, 2004; Bagdikian, 2004). This is most evident in the relationship between radio corporations and the FCC.

Because the FCC can create and enforce its own laws, it tends to operate on its own, without input from either the public or other branches of the government (McChesney, 2004). There is also a large crossover between the government
organization and media firms, as many members of the FCC take jobs at corporations after entering the private sector (McChesney, 2004). With this sort of cronyism pervasive throughout the FCC and the entities it is supposed to regulate, decisions are often made outside of the public eye. Media outlets rarely report on policy changes or the current state of media ownership and the FCC has little need to enforce the public interest aspect of broadcasting, following the argument that the scarcity rationale that once impacted broadcasting legislation is no longer relevant thanks to emerging technologies (McChesney, 2004).

**Commodification of music**

One major effect of a media system operated by so few entities is the lack of diverse content (McChesney, 2000, 2004; Bagdikian, 2004). While creative content does appear from time to time, media production on the whole relies on certain formulas (McChesney, 2000).

Radio stations are described in terms of format, such as modern rock, classic rock and top 40. Overall, radio stations tend to follow the structure designed by top 40 stations in the 1950s (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977; Douglas, 1999). DJs, with few exceptions, do not select the music and the playlists tend to focus on the most popular songs in the format (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977). A music director selects the new additions to the station’s library and a program director decides how and when the songs will be played (Fink, 1996). Oftentimes, stations hire consultants, who conduct audience polls and make recommendations based on responses and industry knowledge, to the station (Smulyan, 1994; Fink, 1996). Specific shows, such as the *Weekly Top 40*, are syndicated, as has been a common practice since the birth of the major networks (Fink, 1996).
In some cases, a radio station’s entire programming schedule functions in a manner similar to syndication. This is often the case with Clear Channel outlets, whose staff of 200 runs over 1,000 stations (Bagdikian, 2004). In this sort of environment, stations in less populated areas operate as satellites for stations owned by the same corporation in larger cities (Bagdikian, 2004). This is accomplished through a technique called “voice-tracking,” whereby air breaks are recorded, transmitted and broadcast through electronic means (Albarran, 2004 p. 211). This eliminates the local element of radio broadcasting (McChesney 2000, 2004, 2005; Bagdikian, 2004). The lack of local broadcasting has cut costs for media corporations, but it also has prevented important local news from reaching citizens of less-populated regions of the United States (McChesney, 2004; Bagdikian, 2004).

With respect to the music industry, production also follows specific conventions. Despite the artistic ambitions of performers, contemporary music is intrinsically tied to the capitalist system in which it is created (Rowe, 1995). While the commercialism inherent in contemporary rock and pop music does not necessarily hinder an artist’s creative output, there can be a struggle in the process between artist and corporation simply because both are coming from different perspectives (Pielke, 1986; McChesney, 2000, 2004). The focus here, however, is not on the struggle between artist and record label, but on the process by which the record industry unleashes hit records, whereby “an industry produces culture and culture produces and industry” (Negus, 1999, p. 14).

The job of the record industry is to take a work of music and sell it to the public (Rothenbuhler & McCourt, 2004). Traditionally, this is done through prompting an audience to purchase copies of an artist’s single or album. Over the years, however, this has grown to include licensing agreements and other sources of revenue. This includes
lending a song or artist to another non-music company for cross-promotion purposes (McChesney, 2004).

As major record labels bear the attributes of other corporate entities in both structures and goals, they tend to be less inclined to take chances on new and innovative music (McChesney, 2000, 2004). Sometimes, however, segments of the public react strongly against the corporate formula and a new movement emerges, as is the case of punk rock’s emergence in the late-1970s (Pielke, 1986; Eliot, 1989; Spencer, 2005). Although numerous punk bands were signed to major labels, mainstream success eluded most of the performers in this scene, particularly in the United States (Eliot, 1989). Similar to hip-hop and reggae, punk worked its way up from city streets to the corporate consciousness (McChesney, 2000). By the early-1980s stations across the United States, including KROQ in Los Angeles, began incorporating punk and its many offshoots into their playlists (Pielke, 1986). Over the years, as punk’s popularity increased, particularly during the 1990s, the movement was strategically utilized by major corporations to build and maintain an identity (Spencer, 2005). By the end of the 1990s, new music communities were identified, labeled and marketed at a much faster rate (McChesney, 2000). This occurred in spite of the common cries of music fans that artists are “selling out” (Rowe, 1995, p. 22). This is because, in general, the need for youth to develop an identity that is different from older generations often makes them more susceptible to be drawn into the capitalist economic system (Pielke, 1986; Rowe, 1995). A younger person might not just say that he/she is a fan of Green Day, but identifies his/herself as a punk. That label, then, becomes something upon which corporations can draw new consumers. Young punks can buy appropriate clothing, such as Sex Pistols t-shirts and human-sized
dog collars, at chain stores like Hot Topic or collect cellular phone ring tones from punk-themed Top 40 artists off of corporation-operated websites.

Within rock music, there are a slew of genres and sub-genres used to define and market bands (Pielke, 1986). For example, today one might say that he/she has a preference for punk, post-punk, pop-punk, synth-punk, emo, hardcore or numerous other labels. While some of these so-called music movements have been developed solely by the will of corporations, many of these scenes often grow outside of the corporate eye, but are often appropriated for marketing bands (Goodman, 1997; Negus, 1999; McChesney, 2000). Therefore, while record labels function as corporations and abide by the conventions of industry, these firms also have a tendency to incorporate elements of the youth culture that surrounds them (Negus, 1999). This is not a new phenomenon (Goodman, 1997).

The existence of so many genres within the music industry is telling, as it points the necessary and often shaky relationship between art and commerce (Negus, 1999). Music genres exist specifically to ease the marketing process and are derived from an ill-perceived view of a specific music scene or subculture (Negus, 1999). For example, a label can take one emerging band that has a style similar to an established group and draw a comparison, even if the two are dissimilar, to say “If you like Band A, you will love Band B.” It is, ultimately, an attempt on the part of corporations to hold the attention of a fickle audience (Negus, 1999).

**Music, radio and audience**

Much of the inner dealings within media industries are left unreported or appear primarily in business or trade papers (Schiller, 1989; McChesney, 1994, 2000, 2004; Bagdikian, 2004). As such, a significant portion of the population remains unaware of

One of these assumptions is that there is a wide array of media outlets from which one can choose (Schiller, 1973). In fact, one must have a sophisticated knowledge of mass media in order to seek and obtain alternative information (Schiller, 1973). In the case of radio, this means that some might look at stations as individual entities when, in fact, one person can serve as the head for eight stations in a given area (Albarran, 2004). This might also mean that people will turn to satellite or Internet radio as a means of exhibiting freedom of choice when, in fact, it is not the individual medium that is flawed, but the system on the whole (McChesney, 2000). Without alterations in the way media systems are owned and operated, which involves policy review, satellite and Internet outlets could fall to the same fate as terrestrial radio (McChesney, 2000).

Similarly, the public might assume that specific record labels are independently run when, in fact, they are part of a much larger media corporation. Since conglomeration has been a hallmark of media companies in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, five record labels with different names could actually be part of the same corporation (Negus, 1999; McChesney, 2000; Bagdikian, 2004). Additionally, many labels that are represented as independent actually have ties to major labels, either through distribution or joint releases of a particular album (Negus, 1999).
Another common misconception is that media outlets must remain completely free of government interference in order to retain their independence (Schiller 1989; McChesney, 2000, 2004, 2005; Bagdikian, 2004). This viewpoint has, throughout the years, been perpetuated by language that presumes anything operated by the government has ties to communism (Schiller, 1989). Such beliefs help ingrain the notion that any sort of change in the structure of business at the hands of the government is un-American (Schiller, 1989). Consequently, many believe that the current media marketplace embodies capitalist ideals, when, in fact, it is a non-competitive situation with very few organizations at the helm (McChesney, 1994, 2000, 2004, 2005; Bagdikian, 2004). The reality is that the media system is comprised of large-scale corporations that release the most products and, ultimately, earn the most profit in their respective industries. These corporations pull together, not only in joint ventures, but also to lobby Washington for legislation that works primarily for the benefit of the corporations. Thus, smaller operations often find it hard to survive unless they merge or are bought by conglomerates (McChesney, 2000, 2004; Bagdikian, 2004).

However, while it is true that media perpetuates the illusion that all is well within the current system, it is perhaps a bit overbroad and fatalistic to state that the US population is completely oblivious to the means by which media corporations operate and that there is no resistance (Schiller, 1973). As previously stated, punk was born in the wake of frustration with 1970s corporate rock (Pielke, 1986; Eliot, 1989; Spencer, 2005). While much of the look and sound of punk has since been commodified, punk did spawn a do-it-yourself (DIY) movement that still exists today (Spencer, 2005). DIY has resulted in independent record labels, distribution companies and publicity firms, amongst other aspects of the music industry (Spencer, 2005). In relation to radio, DIY
also helped popularize interest in pirate and micro radio (Spencer, 2005). While the conglomerates still overshadow these facets of the music and radio industries, the influence of DIY forces in shaping contemporary mass media should not be overlooked.

**KROQ's History and Significance**

This section provides an overview of KROQ's history. It focuses primarily on the changes that occurred at the station during transitional periods, including Infinity's buyout of the station and that radio corporation's subsequent mergers with other major media firms. This section also briefly identifies major music trends that KROQ is credited with supporting and its connection to Los Angeles-based music scenes.

**KROQ in the 1970s**

KROQ 106.7 FM and its AM simulcast existed throughout the bulk of the 1970s, although its history was spotty (Brown, 1976). The station was forced off the air for two years due to severe financial problems that led its staff to stage a walkout and caused troubles with the FCC regarding its license that persisted for years after it returned to the air (Brown, 1976; Brown, 1978; Libeau, 1981). When KROQ re-launched in 1976, its playlists were similar to those of other FM rock stations of the time (Brown, 1977). The difference between KROQ and other rock stations, however, was its Sunday night line-up, which consisted of a variety of eclectic programs, most prominently *Rodney on the Roq*, hosted by Rodney Bingenheimer, who was credited as the first American DJ to play punk rock (Brown, 1977; Mendelsohn, 1979).

In the early years of the Los Angeles punk scene, bands often had difficulty finding venues to play shows, partially due to the music's reputation for rowdiness (Spitz & Mullen, 2001; Hurchalla, 2005). KROQ itself took to promoting events under the name KROQ Cabaret (Belsito & Davis, 1983; Spitz & Mullen, 2001). These shows, which
eventually drew large audiences, not only helped the scene, but also helped promote the station when it was still a fledgling entity (Belsito & Davis, 1983; Spitz & Mullen, 2001). In another instance, when famed producer Kim Fowley started his own series of rock shows, allowing any band who showed up at the event to play live, regardless of experience, KROQ helped promote the event. As with KROQ Cabaret, this helped secure KROQ's credibility with the punk community (Spitz & Mullen, 2001).

In 1978, KROQ, with a new program director, Rick Carroll, underwent significant changes in its format and began a large-scale publicity campaign (Brown, 1978). At around this time, the station launched a local music specialty show, which seemed to build upon the connection to the Los Angeles music scene that had already been established with Rodney on the Roq (Brown, 1979). In addition, the station began to incorporate more new music, most of which could not be heard on other commercial radio stations, in the hopes that it could build a reputation as a tastemaker across the city (Brown, 1979). Over the course of the late-1970s, and even into the early 1980s, the station gradually acquired a substantial audience and its ratings slowly increased annually (Goldstein, 1982a).

"Roq of the 80s"

In the late-1970s, KROQ had established itself as the punk-friendly commercial radio station in Los Angeles, but, by 1980, Program Director Rick Carroll noted that the station was moving away from this image (Hilburn, 1979; Brown, 1980a). The station went by the slogan "Roq of the 80s," emphasizing its focus on new music (Brown, 1980a). This move was at times criticized by punks, as well as by people who did not consider the music favored by the station to be rock (Erlich, 1981; Spitz & Mullen,
However, it was largely praised, particularly in the *Los Angeles Times*, for its emphasis on new and different music (Brown, 1980a; Brown, 1980b; Hilburn, 1981a).

KROQ functioned differently from other rock stations of the early-1980s (Brown, 1980a). Before 1979, KROQ was a freeform station, where DJs selected the music played on their shows (Brown, 1981). There were problems with this direction, though, as advertisers were not attracted to stations lacking in a specific format (Billboard Radio Monitor, 2005). Additionally, Los Angeles also boasted several well-regarded commercial rock stations, known as AOR or Album Oriented Rock stations, and KROQ was not in a position where it could compete with these existing stations (Billboard Radio Monitor, 2005).

Carroll, who had previously worked in top 40 radio, wanted to apply the top 40 format to a station focusing on underground music (Brown, 1981; Billboard Radio Monitor, 2005). Essentially, this meant that Carroll's playlists would take relatively unknown artists and play the music as if these were the top bands in the country. While the idea of a playlist immediately eradicates the notion that DJs are responsible for what is played on air, this notion is not entirely true in the case of KROQ (Billboard Radio Monitor, 2005). During the station's early years, DJs did have a significant pull over what was played and many were considered responsible for the popularity of certain artists. Carroll allowed several DJ free choices every hour and paid close attention to what the DJs selected. Many of these DJ picks were added to the regular rotation at the radio station (Billboard Radio Monitor, 2005). The station became widely known for breaking new artists and served as a launching pad for many underground bands that later became successful on a mainstream level (Brown, 1981; Hilburn, 1981a; Billboard Radio Monitor, 2005). Unlike other rock stations at the time, KROQ did not use market
research to develop its playlists, nor did it focus on 1970s-style hard rock (Brown, 1980a). Also unlike other commercial rock stations, KROQ targeted a teen market (Goldstein, 1982b). This was considered unusual because, during the 1980s, the teen market was considered largely undesirable by advertisers (Goldstein, 1982b).

The teen audience was crucial in KROQ's development because station management felt that by capturing the attention of an audience at an early age, they would create a community of listeners that would grow with the station and remain loyal over the years (Goldstein, 1982b). In addition to developing a unique format, KROQ helped raise awareness about itself by presenting concerts in the Los Angeles area (Hilburn, 1981b). In some cases, KROQ worked directly with local venues, tipping agents on to bands who should play in Los Angeles (Hilburn, 1981b). Through such actions, KROQ seems to have built a corporate identity early on in its history as a station geared towards introducing young people to new music. In this sense, it follows patterns of branding and marketing (McChesney, 2000).

Between 1981 and 1983, KROQ received local and national attention for its programming. In 1983, despite a ratings slip, Carroll was named Program Director of the Year and KROQ was named Station of the Year by the Los Angeles Times (Brown, 1983). The station was widely regarded for its influence, especially on teens, and was compared to the FM rock radio stations of the 1960s (Brown, 1983). Carroll then gained work as a consultant for radio stations across the country, where he helped implement the new format into fledgling stations while remaining Program Director at KROQ (Goldstein, 1983; Brown, 1983). During these years, Carroll modeled twelve radio stations in KROQ's image, even advising that the stations hire British DJs similar to
popular KROQ personality Richard Blade (Brown, 1983; Goldstein, 1983; Christian, 1983).

In an interview, Blade equated KROQ's importance to that of MTV (Christian, 1983). Years later, KROQ would be cited alongside MTV as crucial in popularizing synthesizer-heavy British groups in the early-1980s (Reynolds, 2005). This style of music, often referred to as new wave, was often overlooked and sometimes even derided (Reynolds, 2005). A specific criticism of KROQ sent into the Los Angeles Times reflects this animosity towards electronic music (Erlich, 1983). Despite criticism of music played on KROQ, the station did well in terms of ratings. A slight drop in Arbitron numbers in 1983 was credited to an abundance in commercials, which was later remedied (Goldstein, 1983b). By 1985, KROQ was a Top 5 radio station with roughly 800,000 listeners at any given time (McDougal, 1985).

By the end of the 1980s, KROQ began to decline in ratings, reaching a low of 16 in the Arbitron ratings in 1989 (Goldstein, 1989). This slump was the result of several factors.

First, Infinity Radio purchased KROQ in 1986 at a record price, causing others to take notice of its uncommon format (Goldstein, 1989). As a result, several other local radio stations adopted aspects of KROQ's format into their own, making for more competition (Goldstein, 1989). Second, KROQ's transition into a holding of one of the country's leading radio corporations was not without problems and issues regarding format and management did arise as a result (Brown, 1995b). Program Director Rick Carroll left the station in 1985 to focus on his work consulting for modern rock upstart radio stations, but returned in 1988 (Billboard Radio Monitor, 2005). He passed away one year later (Goldstein, 1989; Billboard Radio Monitor, 2005). Several months passed
before the station hired Andy Schuon as Carroll's replacement and brought in Trip Reeb as station manager (Goldstein, 1989; Brown, 1995b). Third, KROQ's position as a tastemaker created a unique problem in that, by the end of the decade, many of the bands it had championed had moved on to mainstream success (Goldstein, 1989). With a good portion of the KROQ staples in regular rotation on other stations, it seems that the management was in search for what it should do next. In 1986, at roughly the same time as the Infinity buyout, KROQ opted to split its format between new music and material from the early portion of the decade (Goldstein, 1986). This decision was perceived to be more popular for advertisers, who targeted adult audiences during this decade (Goldstein, 1986). However, the format change reduced the amount of new music added to the station's music library (Goldstein, 1986). Two years later, the station shifted formats again (Goldstein, 1988). This time, the station opened up its format to feature more genres, including hip-hop, with a focus on making sure that KROQ played the new singles and album tracks before its rival radio stations (Goldstein, 1988).

By the end of the 1980s, KROQ seemed to be at a crossroads. The new manager, Reeb, proclaimed that KROQ's downfall was not playing heavy metal and insisted in interviews that this was the station's new direction (Goldstein, 1989; Brown, 1995b). He then fired a chunk of the staff and declared that he wanted to mold KROQ in the image of MTV (Goldstein, 1989).

**KROQ reaches towards Infinity**

Infinity Broadcasting was founded in the early-1970s by Mel Karmazin and several other associates (Sanders, 2004). Karmazin remained at the head of Infinity until its merger with CBS/Westinghouse, at which point he went to head the radio division of
the merged corporation. After Viacom purchased CBS/Westinghouse, Karmazin went to become COO for the conglomerate (Sanders, 2004).

Karmazin’s company developed a reputation early on for its willingness to pay top dollar for its holdings, exemplified by its purchase of KROQ (Sanders, 2004; McDougal, 1986). In the mid-1980s, Infinity owned seven stations nation-wide, which made it a large-scale radio corporation for the times (McDougal, 1986). The group had holdings in several large radio markets, but did not own any Los Angeles stations. At that point, KROQ was owned by Mandeville and had earned a reputation in the earlier half of the decade as a top radio station in the city, with consistently high Arbitron ratings (McDougal, 1986). While KROQ’s owners at the time were reticent to sell, Infinity eventually raised its offer to $45 million dollars, the largest sum paid for a radio station at the time (McDougal, 1986). The deal was made with the understanding that Infinity could bring in more ad revenue and that KROQ would not have to make significant changes in its format and staff (McDougal, 1986).

Seven years later, Infinity broke another record in spending, when it purchased Los Angeles-based KRTH for over $100 million, shortly after the FCC allowed radio corporations to own two AM and two FM stations in one major market, helping to secure Infinity's position as a dominant force in radio (Lycan, 1993). By the end of the 1990s, Infinity, having merged with CBS, owned over 150 stations nationwide (Massey, 1999). Amongst CBS/Infinity’s current holdings are seven Los Angeles-based radio station, including KROQ (http://www.cbsradio.com/stations/index.php).

Infinity and CBS/Westinghouse merged shortly after the passage of the Telecommunication Act of 1996 (Aversa, 1996). At the time of the merger, the two companies had a total of 73 radio stations, exceeding the limits of the time. As a result,
the merged corporation sought, and eventually earned, special permission from the FCC to maintain its holdings, at least for an extended period of time until the group could sell some of these assets (Aversa, 1996). The FCC then granted the group a waiver allowing it to exceed the cap on both radio and television stations in major markets, Los Angeles included, for an indefinite period (Aversa, 1996).

In 1999, Viacom bought CBS. Viacom appealed to CBS as it had MTV and its affiliated stations, therefore it had a built-in youth audience that CBS desired (Business/Technology Editors and Entertainment Writers, 1999). As Viacom sold its radio assets to one of the companies that eventually formed Clear Channel earlier in the decade, the corporation desired CBS' holdings in this area (Massey, 1999; Sanders, 2004).

Since MTV was arguably Viacom's greatest asset, part of the intent of this merger was to incorporate the music/youth culture station's influence into radio broadcasting (Business/Technology Editors and Entertainment Writers, 1999). Essentially, MTV would serve as a programmer for Viacom's newly acquired radio holdings, while the radio stations served as a cross-promotion vehicle for MTV (Business/Technology Editors and Entertainment Writers, 1999).

While MTV was set to be a basis for Viacom's radio assets, the cable television channel was, in a sense, already influenced by Infinity's KROQ. This is because several KROQ staffers had gone on to jobs at MTV. One such example is Andy Schuon, who was Program Director at KROQ from 1989 through 1992 (PR Newswire, 2002). Schuon worked for MTV during the 1990s, left Viacom to pursue other interests and returned to serve as head of programming for Infinity in 2002 (PR Newswire, 2002).
In 2005, Viacom decided to split its film/television and radio holdings and Infinity is now under CBS Radio (Chaffin, 2005; Mainelli, 2005).

**KROQ, "world famous" from the 1990s to the present day**

In the early-portion of the 1990s, KROQ, now functioning under the slogan "World Famous," competed for listeners with several other stations, most notably KQLX 100.3 (Pirate Radio) and KAIZ 103.1 (MARS FM), for ratings (Weinstein, 1993). While both stations bore a striking resemblance to KROQ, neither was able to survive past the first few years of the decade (Weinstein, 1993).

Inside the station, several people in programming left KROQ for MTV (Hochman, 1997; PR Newswire, 2002). Meanwhile, Infinity made a deal with radio syndication service Westwood One, allowing certain KROQ shows to be heard across the country (Garber, 1990). These changes seemed to have pointed KROQ in a direction where it could only increase its power within the radio industry.

By 1993, the chart-topping success of Nirvana's album *Nevermind* had changed the landscape of pop music (Weinstein, 1993). The success of the album, which was initially pushed by KROQ and MTV, opened the doors for other previously obscure rock bands. Thus, music that was generally only played on college radio stations and selected commercial outlets, like KROQ, were now climbing up the Billboard charts (Weinstein, 1993). This, combined with the recent demise of rival stations Pirate Radio and MARS FM, translated into massive success for the radio station. In one year, the station jumped from 14 to 5 in the Arbitron ratings (Weinstein, 1993).

One of the major trends that KROQ helped launch was the popularization of Orange County as a music center (Orshoski, 2003). After punk broke in Los Angeles, a similar scene grew in Orange County (Blush, 2001; Spitz & Mullen, 2001; Hurchalla,
Given the close proximity between Los Angeles and Orange Counties, there was overlap between these two scenes, however, they remained distinct (Blush, 2001; Spitz & Mullen, 2001; Hurchalla, 2005). Orange County bands, on the whole, played louder, more aggressive music than LA bands, and this formed the basis for many of the groups that would achieve mainstream success beginning in the 1990s and continuing through the present (Blush, 2001; Spitz & Mullen, 2001; Orshoski, 2003; Hurchalla, 2005). KROQ played many of these bands since the station's inception, but most of these early Orange County bands remained cult figures (Orshoski, 2003). The station also broadcasts to Orange County and, by the mid-1990s, roughly half of its audience lived in this area and were considered to be amongst the station's most devoted listeners (Brown, 1995 A). At the same time that KROQ acknowledged its popularity in Orange County, several KROQ-sanctioned bands local to this area, including No Doubt, the Offspring and Rage Against the Machine, crossed over to mainstream success, helping spawn a fascination with this region (Brown, 1995a; Orshoski, 2003).

At the same time that a new crop of KROQ bands were infiltrating the mainstream, new Program Director Kevin Weatherly, who came to the station with a background in top 40 radio, implemented a new and more restrictive playlist (Borzillo, 1993; Weinstein, 1993). This move received criticism from longtime listeners, who felt that KROQ now sounded the same as a top 40 station or MTV (Weinstein, 1993). Although KROQ was once the place where new music often overlooked by the mainstream had a home, non-established artists were now largely ignored (Weinstein, 1993). However, this move is credited with causing a surge in the station's ratings during the early-1990s (Borzillo, 1993).
Despite KROQ's reputation early in its life for adding music based on instinct, the station now relied heavily on research (Brown, 1980a; Brown, 1995b). New music was tested through a series of phone calls made to audience members (Brown, 1995a). Every song, including listener requests, was carefully plotted onto the playlist (Brown, 1995a). In spite of the changes, KROQ's popularity continued to rise and, in 2001, it finally reached the top position in the local Arbitron listings (Shuster, 2001). The station is also still considered to be heavily influential upon U.S. radio and record sales as a whole (Boyle, Taylor & Stark, 2006).
Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology employed for this project was oral history, the findings of which have been compiled in manuscript form.

**Oral History**

Oral history is often seen as a means of gathering the stories and views of the "underprivileged, the dispossessed and the defeated" (Henige, 1982, p. 107). While the DJs at KROQ were perhaps too well known, at least on a local level, and successful in their careers to fit that specific definition of oral history, the methodology did appear to be the best means to gather an alternative perspective on the effects of media consolidation as it specifically affected KROQ. By using oral history, the researcher was able to explore the how media consolidation changes the environment and job duties of people who work for a media outlet in a creative capacity.

In conducting an oral history, one must first identify the problem that will be explored through this project (Henige, 1982). When conducting the oral history, techniques vary according to source, but the first stage of the project is research (Henige, 1982; Hoopes, 1979; USHMM Department of Oral History Staff, 1998). Insofar as finding appropriate interview subjects, some suggest a period of participant observation, while others suggest engaging in a round of preliminary interviews (Henige, 1982; USHMM Department of Oral History Staff, 1998).

It is recommended that the full-length interviews take place through one-on-one meetings (Henige, 1982). Tentative questions should be developed prior to the date of the interviews and should be formulated to draw on the personal experience of each interviewee. These questions, however, should be subject to change, as all sources point
to the necessity of spontaneous conversation in gathering an oral history (Henige, 1982; Hoopes, 1979; USHMM Department of Oral History Staff, 1998).

Following the interviews, the first-person accounts should be checked for accuracy against interviews with other informants and outside documentation (Henige, 1982; Hoopes, 1979). It is sometimes suggested that follow-up interviews take place (Henige, 1982).

**Project Plan**

While scholars have looked at radio through a political economic frame, work in this area tends to discuss the effects of media conglomeration on the audience, overlooking the effects on the individual DJ. With this study, I explored how changes in radio ownership have affected the job duties of the DJ and his/her creative input in the medium. I chose to pursue this avenue by compiling the oral histories of two former DJs at KROQ 106.7 FM, both of whom were part of the staff when the station was bought by Infinity. These oral histories aimed to answer the questions: Did change in ownership result in a change in the duties of the DJs? Did the DJs lose a certain amount of on-air freedom as a result of the change in ownership?

In order to compile appropriate questions for this project, I researched the history of KROQ as well as the business climate surrounding the station. This findings of this research appeared as the literature review in Chapter 2 and consisted of political economic media criticism along with relevant historical information culled from available books as well as newspaper and trade magazine articles. This research was meant to inform the questions that were asked during the interview process.

When searching for informants, I followed specific criteria. First, I looked for DJs who were no longer affiliated with KROQ. Second, the DJs had to have been in a
position where they would follow a playlist, or hot clock. Third, and most importantly, the DJs had to have been working at the radio station during a transition period, whether that transition was a matter of ownership or management staff.

Five former KROQ DJs were located and were asked for an interview. Of these five, two agreed to participate in the project. Interviews were conducted with two disc jockeys who have been affiliated with KROQ. Both disc jockeys worked at KROQ throughout the 1980s and were on staff at the time that KROQ was sold to Infinity. Both have since left the radio station. These informants were selected specifically because they were in a position to answer questions as to the effects of ownership changes on the station's programming. DJs were asked to discuss how the content of their shows has changed over the years and what events specifically led to these changes.

The two informants for this project were Dusty Street and "Swedish" Egil Aalvik. Both participated in interview sessions that were roughly one hour in length. Street's interview session was conducted via telephone, as she has since moved to Cleveland, Ohio. Aalvik's interview session was conducted in person. Questions were prepared in advance and used as a guide for the interview. However, the researcher did ask additional questions based on the interviewees responses and did occasionally engage in off-topic banter in order to keep the pace of the conversation fluid.

Both interviews ran at least one hour and have been presented as verbatim transcripts in Chapter 4.
Sample Questions:

1. When did you begin work at KROQ?
2. What led to your job at KROQ?
3. In what capacity were you hired?
4. How did your position at the radio station changed over the years?
5. What are your memories of KROQ’s early years?
6. How did the station change after it was purchased by Infinity?
7. How was the station affected by the death of Rick Carroll and the subsequent management changes?
8. Did you ever run into any problems with management? Please explain.
9. Did you ever run into any problems with the FCC? Please explain.
10. Do you feel that KROQ is reflective of Los Angeles? Please explain.
11. What events led to your departure from the KROQ?
12. How would you describe your experience with the station?
Chapter 4: Findings

Interview with Dusty Street

Dusty Street

Location: Via Telephone

Date: August 21, 2006

Time: 4 p.m.

Q: Everything from now on is being taped and I'll send you the transcript. The first question is Dusty Street is a radio name, right?

A: No, Dusty Street is my real name.

Q: Oh, wow.

A: Yes, I know, everybody says that. My father's name was Emerson Street. We used to live on Emerson Street on Palo Alto, which was pretty funny. Emerson Street on Emerson Street. My middle name is Frances, but I guess when the nurse or whoever wrote it in saw Dusty as my first name, they thought I was a boy, so they spelled my name -cis instead of -ces for a girl. So, in 1964, when I graduated from high school, we were at the height of the draft for the Vietnam War. I got my draft notice. I had to go down to the induction center and kind of shake my tits at them and say, "Excuse me, honey, I think you got the wrong gender." So, Dusty Street is my given name.

Q: That's a great name.

A: Thank you.

Q: When did you realize that you wanted to be a DJ?

A: I never did. I never had any intention to doing this. I was going to San Francisco State College. And I took, uh, this was 1964, '65 and everybody was dropping acid. Tuning in, dropping out, zoning out, whatever. I hitchhiked to Mexico and spent about
six months in Mexico in my sophomore year, just before my sophomore year of college. When I came back, I realized that I didn't want to do, I didn't want to stay in college, there was nothing that I wanted to do there and I didn't want to become a telephone operator or a secretary or any of that junk, because there weren't a whole lot of options open for women.

I had been working in television at San Francisco State with this guy name Mylon Melvin. So, when I came back to the United States, I sat down at one of these coffee houses in San Francisco and I ran into him and I said, "God, I need a job and, I don't know, I don't want to do this crap." He said, "I just went to work for this underground FM radio station called KMPX and they are looking for female engineers." I said, "I don't know anything about radio" and he said, "Oh, Dusty, you worked in the television department with the equipment there. I'm sure you could figure it out."

So, I went down and I applied for the job and, son of a bitch, I got it. I, uh, it was as an engineer, not a disc jockey. I was so terrible the first day that the disc jockey I worked for kicked me out and said, "Don't come back here until you've learned how to do this." So, that night, I went into the combo operation, which is the—combo operation means that the guy runs his own board—so I went in and sit in with this guy and learned how to run the equipment. And, you know, and at six o'clock in the morning, when my disc jockey came in, I just continued on. So, I did a twelve-hour shift that one day. And I made two or three mistakes and then the next day made two and then one and then there I was on the radio. They had decided that the female engineers were going to get their own show because we had been screaming about it. So, they gave us our own show. I did a couple of shows there. Then the disc jockey that I worked for got sick one day and they hired me, they said, "Okay, well, you can do his show." So, I did his show and the
A: They got all pissed because back in those days, you could say "god" and you could say "damn" but you couldn't say "god damn" together. We were playing "God Damn the Pusherman" from Steppenwolf. So, because, you got to realize that when we started on FM radio, the only thing that was on FM radio was cooking shows, God and foreign language. Nobody had FM in their cars. There were no FM radios in cars, can you imagine that?

Q: Nope.

A: The only way you could get FM was you had to have one of those tuners on a hi-fidelity system, a hi-fi system. We would, literally, our engineers figured out how to get a coat hanger and attach it to the back so that you could get the radio station. We would send out these little diagrams of how you would attach a coat hanger or a piece of wire to the back of your stereo and that's how you could get the radio station. It was crazy because nobody had any rules for what we did. It had never been done before. Nobody had played albums on the radio. Everything was played, it was top 40 radio. It was 45s. The longest record you could play was two minutes and fifty-nine seconds with the one exception of "El Paso" by Marty Robbins, which was three minutes and fifteen seconds, and you talked between every record and blah blah blah.

Tom Donahue heard "The End" by the Doors on an acetate, which was how records used to come out. They would press them on this thing called acetate and it would be good for about five or six plays. It was basically a test pressing and only people that worked in the industry, that were members of the band or producers or something, one of the heads of the record company, would get these test pressings. So, Tom Donahue knew the guy that was with the Doors and he played the first Doors album for him. And Tom, who was at KRLA, which was a top 40 radio station at the time, said,
"I have got to be able to play this music on the radio." So, he literally found KMPX in the newspaper under, you know, bankruptcies. They were about to go under when Tom grabbed them when he got six hours and he sold the time and then he got another six hours and so on and so forth. He created KMPX in six-hour blocks.

I'm going through this long diatribe to explain to you that nothing had been done before in radio. It had all been very regulated AM radio. Nobody had, everybody was fast-talking—"Hey, Mommy-O, Hey Daddy-O, this is [inaudible] Roscoe" and that kind of crap. All of the records were very short and disc jockeys were suit types. I remember somebody coming into KSAN and telling us that the men had to wear ties to work and the women had to wear dresses and we all just rolled over laughing. It ain't going to happen. So, the FCC would throw weird things at us because there were archaic laws that had been made. It was not that big a deal, I think it was a ten thousand dollar fine.

Now, of course, if you use a swear word on the air, it's $350,000. The FCC, thank you, George W. Bush, the FCC just changed the regulations and tripled, it used to be $3,000. They tripled the amount of money. So, if somebody says something like "damn" on the radio on accident, they lose their job. It's already happened to people who have worked at radio stations for twenty-five years. Somebody said piss on the air.

Q: Really.
A: There was a news article about it.
Q: Gosh, I'll have to look that one up.
A: Nobody can afford the fines anymore. That would break a radio station.
Q: So, how did you end up at KROQ?
A: Well, I was in San Francisco, working at a small station called KTIM. I fell madly in love with this crazy Englishman. I was on the air at KTIM and, once again,
There was an article about Adolf Coors Brewing Company refusing to pay minimum wage to its workers. I believe that Colorado was a right to work state or something. But, at any rate, it was something really horrendous. I don't remember the exact business, but I remember that I was really aghast at it. So, I got on the air and KTIM was owned by this small newspaper in San Rafael, which is very right wing. I got on the air and I read the article because you had to read the news and I kind of parenthesed it with "Adolf Coors Brewing Company, geez, he has the same first name as Hitler." My boss heard me and went through the ceiling and fired me.

Q: Oh, wow.

A: Oh, yeah. He said, "How dare you equate the owner of a successful business with the most horrendous tyrant of history."

So, I got fired and I didn't know what I wanted to do and my English boyfriend had just come to Los Angeles, where he was doing a syndicated radio show called Rock around the World. He needed a female voice, so I came down to Los Angeles. I would actually come down for three days and then go back for the rest, four days, and I was traveling back and fourth. Over Christmas vacation, I decided that the traveling was far too expensive and I wasn't making any money because I was spending it all on airfare. So, I packed up all my stuff up and put it in storage and flew down to Los Angeles and got myself an apartment and went back to work after Christmas vacation and the guy looked at me and said, "I'm sorry, we just went Chapter 11." So, here I am with all my stuff in storage in San Francisco, a brand new apartment and no job. So, I said, "I don't know what the hell I'm going to do" and my English boyfriend said, "You know, your friend Chuck Randall works at a radio station called KROQ in Pasadena. Why don't you
give him a call?" I had known Chuck from Northern California. I called him, went over there and got an interview at KROQ.

The Insane Darrell Wayne, well, it just so happened that that day they had fired Frazier Smith. They didn't tell Frazier that they had fired him. So, I had talked to them on a Thursday and they said, "Can you start on Saturday night?" Seven to midnight. I said, "Sure." Now, I was brand new in LA. I had no idea who Frazier Smith was and that he was such huge, he was this huge persona at KROQ. I go into the radio station and somebody had called and told Frazier before seven o'clock, thank God, that he had been fired. But, the management didn't bother and I got a telephone call from Frazier Smith after I had been on the air for a little while and he said, "You know, I wanted to hate you, but you're not bad."

I did weekends for a short time and then the gas crunch came and I did mornings for a little while, that didn't last very long. I finally wound up doing six to ten.

Q: In the evening?
A: I was there pretty much from 1979 through 1989, with one small stint, I, when Rick Carroll, I walked out in 1980 and went to KLOS for a short time. From KLOS, where I was only doing weekends, I went to K-West for a year and then Rick Carroll brought me back in '81 and I pretty much stayed there until '89.

Q: Now, when you first went to KROQ, what was the station like? What was the atmosphere like?
A: It was like, you know that radio station, I mean that movie *Airheads*.

Q: Uh-huh.
A: It was kind of like that. People were, you know, it was really crummy. It had this horrible green carpet that went everywhere through it and the green carpet was because
the owner of the radio station had carpeted his house in this green carpet and had a trade out with Carpeteria and they had some leftover carpet and used it for the radio station. So, we had to do a Carpeteria spot every half-hour and we did Carpeteria spots as long as I was there, until Infinity took over. It was pretty funny.

The people were great, the pay was terrible. I don't remember what we got paid, but I know it was around $800 a month after taxes. It was just really bad, but, you know, once again, you do it for the love. Radio for me has always been about the music. I never thought about being a "star" or a great disc jockey or any of the rest of it. I fell in love with the music when I first started.

I worked for a great guy named Abe "Voco" Kesh I worked for him at KMPX and when we went out of strike for the short period of time between, let me back track. We worked at KMPX and we went out on strike and I had no job and Voco, who I had worked for as an engineer, said, "I need someone to help me." He was a producer and at the time he was producing Harvey Mandel and Blue Cheer and some other acts. He said, "I need someone to come with me and keep track of all the garbage," like an assistant. I became his assistant and I went on recording sessions and stuff and learned a lot about the making music. It actually changed the way I heard music. I was able to hear through the ears of a producer, which completely changes the way you listen to music, and through the ears of a musician. To hear something be put together from the ground up, I mean, it's a lot like how architects must look at buildings or artists look at a painting.

When you know how the thing is built, you have a different vision of it.

And so, my love of music came from that and this man Voco had the most extensive knowledge of music and was always exposing me to really bizarre combinations. He would play Mid-Eastern music next to Led Zeppelin next to the blues
and make it work. It just enlightened my, it just exploded my whole musical heart. I fell so much in love with the music that I would work for a radio station because of the amount of freedom I could have. I needed the ability to listen to music from wherever I was getting it and be able to put it on the air.

That's the way I broke bands like the Pretenders and Duran Duran and Depeche Mode. Nobody had heard of these guys before—Gene Loves Jezebel. I had a friend send me records from England or I had a connection through a great import store like Vinyl Fetish and they would come in and bring me five or six new records every week. Plus, record companies sent me all the new stuff constantly. So, I was able to put together sets of music and break new bands. It always gave me a thrill to know that if I played Echo and the Bunnymen, then six months later you would be listening to it in the clubs and it would be a big hit. That was part of the joy of doing radio. It was never about look at me, look at how great I can talk because I can't talk worth shit.

As far as personality goes, my personality shmersonality. It's all about the music. It's all about presenting the music and presenting the history of the music too because by the time I got to KROQ, I was in my 30s. I was in my mid-30s and most of the kids that were working there were in their 20s. I already had at least, let's see I started work full-time in '69 and went to work there in '79, so I had ten. I started in '67, so I had twelve years of radio under my belt when I started at KROQ. It was all about the freedom. It was never about the money, it was never about the acclaim, it was all about the freedom. I tried to maintain that freedom as the belt grew tighter and tighter around the industry and that freedom, that love of freedom, eventually got my ass canned from KROQ, in 1989.
I was let go for being a renegade, which is kind of ironic because that was pretty much the foundation that KROQ was founded upon—the fact that we were all renegades and the music was, uh, renegade-al. Nobody in the country was playing what we were playing when we started.

Q: What happened?

A: Well, darlin', the belt gets tighter. As I explained to you before, one of the reasons that they put the kibosh on KMPX and we had to move to KSAN is because once something becomes successful, they want to put it in a bottle. It's like lightning in a bottle. Okay. Well, we're going to regulate it, we're going to regiment it and we're always going to make sure that we're going to make a lot of money off of it. The bottom line with radio always will be money. The success of the radio station is directly in response to its ratings. If they can charge $200 a minute or $300 a minute, that's what their goal is. They don't want anybody taking any chances with their money and freedom, to them, is taking a chance.

The program director keeps his job by being able to take all of the credit for the success of the radio station, but the program director's job is to program the radio station. Now, if I'm playing the music I want, rather than the music that the program director wants me to, he can't take credit for any success and he's also afraid that if I fail, he will get that as well. So, me being an individual directly relates to his success as a program director and he can't have that.

Q: You mentioned that you first left in 1980 when Rick Carroll came in. Was there a shift in the programming?

A: When Rick Carroll originally came in, he had been at KEZY and he brought in this formula. Here we were, we were playing the Talking Heads and the Sex Pistols and
Television and all those kind of bands and all of a sudden he brings in Deep Purple and all this dinosaur crap because he had been the program director out of KEZY, which was down in Orange County. I didn't want to do that. I was tired of fighting. I got offered a job because, as I told you, I took over for Frazier Smith. Well, Frazier Smith had, in turn, gone over to KLOS and was doing the morning show over there, was very successful over there and he found a job for myself and another guy named Al Ramirez. It was money. I had been broke forever and now the freedom was being taken away from me and I was tired of being broke as well as having my freedom taken away from me, so that's when I split.

Over the couple years, actually, a year and a half that I was gone, Rick Carroll came to the realization that what we were doing musically would be better for him than to try to recreate another classic rock station, because there was already K-West and KMET. So, he went ahead and the smartest thing he ever did was to let go of Deep Purple and UFO and all that garbage and all the hair bands and realized that we had something. Rick, even though he formulated and came up with the Rock of the '80s, he did give us a lot of freedom. I was allowed to have my Import Show, that was the name of it, where I had that record store come in with their records.

Q: Was that Joseph?
A: I'm sorry.

Q: Was it Joseph from Vinyl Fetish?
A: Yes, it was Joseph from Vinyl Fetish and his partner. I forgot his name.

Q: Henry.

Q: Yeah, I only know Joseph, he's really cool.
A: Do you see him?
Q: Yeah.
A: When you do, would you give him my love?
Q: I will.
A: Actually, you can tell him that I work at the Rock Hall and at Sirius and he can get a hold of me through Sirius. I would love to talk to him. I absolutely adore both of those guys, but Joseph, what a wonderful person he is.
Q: He's really amazing, I like him a lot.
A: Yeah, he turned me on to some wonderful music. He and Henry would come up to the radio station and bring me some wonderful music. We had a really good little thing going on there, a little specialty show for many years. But, you know, things started getting tighter.

Eventually, what happened was that the owner of KROQ, Ken Roberts, sold KROQ to a big corporate entity called Infinity Broadcasting and Infinity, you know, Infinity is a huge corporation and you can't buck the system with Infinity. Their philosophy is that you do it our way or the highway and that's pretty much what happened to me.
Q: When it was bought by or sold to Infinity, were there changes immediately at the station?
A: Well, no, because they couldn't find a program director that fit with what they wanted to do. They brought in a general manager who was actually someone that I had worked with in Northern California who was the general manager of WBCN, a guy named Tony Bernardini, and Tony was pretty cool. He understood about the music. WBCN was a very successful freeform radio station in Boston. He didn't make a lot of
changes really fast. But, you know, Tony was doing two radio stations on opposite sides of the country and it wasn't really being successful and Infinity wanted a lot bigger success than Tony was giving them, so they put him back in Boston and they hired a guy named Trip Reeb and Trip Reeb evidently had it out for me. I didn't give Trip any kind of respect. I didn't bow down to him because I never did that to general managers. I always thought that they were idiots and I still do. At any rate, it just deteriorated and he came up with some phony reason that he fired me. He told me it was because I created a problem with one of the shows we were doing, but that was bull shit.

Q: It seems, from the articles I read, that there were little up-shakes at the station, during the bulk of the '80s. Like, I guess at one point, Rick Carroll had gone on to format other radio stations, but was still at KROQ.

A: Yeah, Rick went on to format other radio stations and they started, but the thing was, Rick was the kind of hands-off program director that you always loved. It was when they brought in other people trying to actually give us a formula. They were trying to have somebody follow Rick Carroll's format, but Rick Carroll's format was, I mean, Rick kept his music keys in his back pocket and would call you up an hour before the next shift and tell you what the next shift's worth of music was going to be. Sometimes, he wouldn't call up until five minutes into your show to tell you what you were supposed to play. He literally programmed the station out of his back pocket.

There was a lot of stuff going on, none of which I'm comfortable talking about. It had nothing to do with radio and why Rick went away, you know. But these were times, this was the '80s and let's just suffice to say that there were a lot of excesses on everybody's end. I guess you understand what that means? [Note: a likely reference to the drug culture that surrounded the music industry in the 1980s.]
program director liked me so much that he gave me a weekend shift. So I went, I started
doing weekends in, I think it was about 1969 and after about three or four months of that,
a full-time shift became available and I went on the air full-time in 1969.

I was only going to do it as something to do until I figured out what my career
was going to be, but that was in 1969.

Q: How long were you at KMPX?
A: Well, KMPX lasted for about a year and a half, or maybe a year. And then they,
like with every radio station, once it becomes a success, they try to change it and they try
to take over and put lightning in a bottle as it were. They were going to fire our program
director, Tom Donahue. Tom Donahue is now known as the father of FM radio and is
actually, outside of Alan Freed, the only DJ that's been inducted into the Rock and Roll
Hall of Fame. At any rate, we weren't going to work for anyone but Tom, so we all went
out on strike in protest.

And we were picked up by a corporation who had a classical radio station, which
was called KSAN, the sister station was KPPC, no, I'm sorry, KMET down in Los
Angeles. So, we started KSAN in San Francisco and they started KMET in Los Angeles,
and Tom Donahue was the program director for both stations. So, I worked at KSAN for
a couple years and, it's like every disc jockey, you know, has a resume of fifteen radio
stations. I worked at KSAN and another station in San Francisco. And then, in 1979, I
followed an Englishman who I was madly in love with to Los Angeles and I got a job at
KROQ and I started working at KROQ. So that's how I got to LA

Q: So, how did. Let's back track a bit. I had read that stations like KSAN and KMPX
got into some trouble, or at least had some threats from the FCC because of anti-war
speech and stuff like that. Was that something you were involved in?
Q: Exactly.
A: Okay.

Q: When you started at KROQ, was there a definite regional focus? Was it something that could only happen in LA?
A: No because it was happening all over the country, but it was something that could only happen in a major market because people in Kansas and Oklahoma City and Tampa, Florida were not going to be ready for this kind of thing. But, when KROQ emerged, they also had the emergence of radio stations that were like that, obviously in New York and in Boston, as I said WBCN. I guess they made, there were other kind of attempts at it in Philadelphia and Chicago. I think Chicago still has their radio station, Norm Weiner, I believe, is the program director still. It's something that happened kind of organically across the country, you know, and it happened this way with freeform radio, when we started that in the '60s as well. It's kind of a group conscious without being a group, if you catch my drift. With any art form—and that's one thing that people forget about radio is that it's an art form, or at least it was until they killed it—when any kind of art starts, like any art movement at all, it doesn't just start at any one place. Maybe that one place is known as home of, but it does have a tendency to grow up organically in other places.

First of all, you can never say enough about college radio because college radio will always be playing new music. The only difference between college radio and us in those days was that we could get to more people because we had a bigger signal. We could also have "professional" disc jockeys, for whatever reason. The other thing about college radio is that it is kind of like, really haphazard in the way it's put together. So, it's kind of catch can. Like I said, it's organic and I think it could have happened, it did
happen, everywhere in major markets. Who knows who was the first? I like to think that KROQ was the first of its kind, but who knows?

Q: When you were there, was there a kind of connection between KROQ and KXLU?

A: No. No. We didn't have any connection. That's another misnomer about radio. The disc jockeys don't know each other or care about each other. If you do, it's competition. But, we had no competition. The only thing that we were interested in doing is, we were interested in knocking out KMET. That was the big thing. When you're birthing a form of music like that, I think that maybe 91X and us were closer than KXLU. That's public radio, right?

Q: Right, it's a college station.

A: I think that we had more of an influence on them than vice versa, because I know that all of the music we got, we got from record companies. If you're going to be influenced or have a connection to another radio station, you have to listen to them. I have a feeling that most of us at KROQ were like I was and didn't listen to anything but KROQ. I mean, why? We were great. Why not? I always wanted to hear what the other jocks were doing.

Q: Were the DJs sharing music with each other as well then?

A: Oh, absolutely. And it depended, of course, none of us had the same taste, mind you, but we all had a certain amount of respect for each other. Freddy Snakeskin and I were pretty good friends, although though he and I had extremely different tastes in music. They do kind of cross over in certain areas. He would bring "Teenage Enema Nurses in Bondage" and I would bring Gene Loves Jezebel. We shared music with each other always.
Q: So you played a lot of the early goth stuff then?

A: Oh, I was the queen of goth. As a matter of fact, I got a gold record from Beggars Banquet record label for the entire record label rather than just a single record, which is what most people get the album for. They gave me a gold record for the entire company. I was the home of goth for a long time. If you were going to hear Bauhaus or Love and Rockets or any of that stuff—Sex Gang Children, Alien Sex Fiend—all that stuff. I love that stuff. I'm a complete gothy.

Q: Me too.

A: Are you?

Q: Yeah, that's how I know Joseph.

A: Oh, of course. Yes it all ties in. He had a great show that he does or used to do. I know he brought it to Las Vegas once, although I missed him. Do you know what it is?

Q: I don't know. Oh, Make Up?

A: I'm sorry.

Q: Was it called Make Up?

A: Yes, Make Up. There you go.

Q: I don't think they're doing that anymore.

A: That's too bad. That seems like it would be pretty darn interesting.

Q: Yeah, I worked for him at a bunch of different clubs.

A: How old are you?

Q: 29.

A: Oh, okay. I mean, I thought you might have been 21 or 22. I thought, boy, she's been hanging out with Joseph a lot for such a young girl.
Q: No, I was actually at KXLU and that's how I ended up working for one of his clubs and then I ended up working for a bunch of his clubs.

A: Well, you know, what a terrific guy. What are his clubs in LA? I've been gone since '95.

Q: He does Bang! on Saturday nights and actually he books at the Key Club.

A: Well, when I come to LA, which I may do next year, I'll have to look him up.

Q: Yeah, he's definitely at the Key Club.

A: Whatever happened to Henry?

Q: You know, I have no idea. I've never met him. I've only heard the name, that he was one of the original owners of Vinyl Fetish. Where were we? How much do you think the DJs actually shaped the sound of KROQ?

A: It was very much us. Because of the fact, KROQ now is completely controlled by Kevin Weatherly, who is their program director. Back in the '80s, KROQ was absolutely formed and formulated by us. Each jock had his own forte. Richard Blade was going to be playing the more pop-oriented stuff. You know, Wham! He actually brought Janet Jackson in once, which I thought was pretty funny. Snake was going to play a lot of weird stuff, Memoirs of John Wayne Gacy or something, I don't know what the hell, but he was always going to play, and this was all within the general format that Rick put down. We were always going to play our core bands, we were always going to play the Smiths and Depeche Mode and U2 and Duran Duran and blah blah blah. I had my own thing coming in, a lot of it being goth music. Sometimes, I got all kinds of crap for playing Guns N' Roses first. People said, "You can't play 'Sweet Child O' Mine.'" I said, "The hell I can't, this is a great song." Because, once again, I think those phony boundaries musically are phony boundaries. I think that a good record is a good record.
And I had played AC/DC on the air, up until about '85, I was playing AC/DC. So, I put "Sweet Child O' Mine" on the air and it became the #1 most requested record, even above Duran Duran and Depeche Mode, much to their surprise.

I had my deal. Jed had his. Rodney, of course, was always very interesting with music and still is from what I understand, even though they have him on at zero AM on a Sunday night. Absolutely, because everybody's taste is valid and when you put it within a structure of a few hundred titles, a few hundred bands and then let everyone have their input into that general framework, that's what made the radio station. You would always be able to hear those familiar songs that were the new wave, that you could identify—Oingo Boingo, Devo and all that stuff you could always hear—but then there would be that weird record that we would pull out every once in a while. That's what made it interesting. That's what lacks in radio now.

What I find really horrible about these radio stations like Jack, they're just segues for the sake of segueing. There's no rhyme or reason to them. They're put together by a computer and it's, as far as I'm concerned, one train crash after another. It's like, we're going to take every genre of music and throw it together because that's what freeform radio was. It is the weirdest mutation of what was an art form that I have ever heard.

Q: I take it that you guys actually picked up the records, put them on the turntables, wound them back and played them?

A: Yeah, otherwise they wouldn't get on the air.

Q: I know, but radio stations don't look like that now.

A: No, they don't, especially the one I work for now. The one I work for now, everything is on computer. There's not one ounce of music inside the booth at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. That's how it is at every radio station in the country now. With
very few exceptions, all the music is pre-programmed into the computer and all you do is sit there and press the button. There's about three programs. There's Profit and Scott and one other. I mean, you know, again, thank you Ronald Reagan for deregulating radio and making it the crap that it is. It's now owned by three major corporations. Like Clear Channel, it's, I think in Minneapolis. They have one great big building and all of their channels are programmed from there. Every time you hear an extreme radio station or a chill radio station or soft rock of whatever it is, it's all exactly the same music and they just imprint their local disc jockeys and sometimes they don't even do that because a lot of time they're paying disc jockeys to voice track, so you'll be hearing the same disc jockeys in five or six different markets.

Q: In fact, I was listening to something today and it sounded like it was something that could have been broadcast throughout other cities. It sounded like it had been pre-recorded, sometimes, if you listen very carefully, you can tell if it's pre-recorded or live.

A: Well, not really. I pre-record some of my Sirius shows and I would dare you to figure out which ones are pre-recorded.

Q: Okay.

A: Will you listen?

Q: Okay.

A: Do you have Sirius radio?

Q: No, but does it come through online?

A: Yeah, but you have to be a subscriber.

Q: Oh, I have to figure out how to do that.

A: You can get three free days from Sirius.com and then in the morning, starting at seven o'clock in the morning from seven to ten AM every day but Monday and Tuesday,
I'm on 14, Classic Vinyl 14. Then from noon until three, every day until Saturday, I'm on First Wave 22, which is the KROQ format.

Q: I've been wanting to listen to. I saw the First Wave Weekends and it looked pretty cool.

A: It's a great station. It's just like old KROQ. It's like the old KROQ formula, it's the Rock of the '80s formula, but it doesn't have all of the input of weirdness that we used to have, which is kind of sad. However, I was playing the Bronski Beat "Tell Me Why?" the other day and I was thinking of Joseph because he brought me that record.

Q: I love that record.

A: It's wonderful.

Q: From what I read, it sounded like there were FCC problems with KROQ that lasted from the '70s and weren't resolved until the '80s.

A: You know what, the FCC was always a part of any radio station. Like I said, quite frankly, the FCC was a problem for general managers and program directors to deal with, not disc jockeys. We certainly never had any problems with the FCC on a disc jockey level. If there were FCC problems, I didn't know about them.

Q: Did you do a lot of appearances or DJ at proms or anything like that?

A: Yeah, I did my fair share, nothing I'm terribly proud of. I don't remember a lot. I hated going to high schools. That was Richard Blade's forte, he loved going to high schools. I was a big fat drunk in those days, so I loved going to bars. I hung out at the 321 Club and the one down near Redondo Beach or Dillard's. Dylan's, I mean, not Dillard's. That's a department store. But, my favorite stuff was that I got to go onstage and introduce people at the Universal Amphitheatre, like I got to bring on Siouxsie and the Banshees and stuff like that. I always liked that. I had my own special chair, front
row center at Universal Amphitheatre. Every time I wanted to go see a show at Universal, I had my own chair, right there, front row center.

Q: There were a lot of reports, I guess, in the LA Times in the '80s, they used to do a lot of reports on the radio station ratings. They would analyze them, which I guess they don't do now. The way that they wrote about them, it would be like there must be something going on at KROQ because there was a drop, like in '83 or something like that.

A: Let me tell you about ratings and why they are such crap. I'm so glad I work for Sirius because there's no such thing as ratings in satellite radio. What happens is they send out 500 books and these little diaries that they send you are supposed to be filled out over the course of a week and you're supposed to fill out every day, every day part, what you're listening to and who you're listening to. First of all, nobody does it every day during the course of the week. The end of the week comes and they go, "Damn it, I have to fill this out."

[phone conversation cut out]

A: I'm sorry, I'm walking around the yard trying to keep my cats in bounds here.

Q: That's okay. I thought I lost it because I was changing the tape.

A: Oh, well, maybe it was all your fault.

Q: It could have been.

A: I'm just trying to keep an eye on my kitty cat. I don't know where the hell he went. He's such a little jerk.

Q: So, radio books, they don't fill out the radio books every day.

A: Yeah, but the thing is that they're so arbitrarily given out. For instance, one book is supposed to be representative of 500 families. Well, that's ridiculous. If you take a
block's worth of people, I can guarantee that they aren't listening to the same thing in every household. So, I never felt that the ratings meant anything.

Now, people were always trying to read into the ratings, why something happened. It always used to drive me nuts. If you read about that stuff, you know, the only matters that ratings ever had to anybody was how much you can charge for your commercials. That's the bad thing about terrestrial radio. If your ratings are down, you don't have as much juice to charge what you want. Like, for instance, KIIS FM can charge $2000 a minute because you know, they have 2/3 of the audience. KROQ was, you know, not able to charge as much money if they don't have enough ratings. Then, if you drop in the ratings, say you go from third to fourth or fourth or first to third, everyone is trying to figure out why you aren't first anymore. Quite frankly, it's very easy. It's where all the books went. All the books were in beach communities when you were number one and they went to soccer moms when you were number four. That's what ratings are about. Ratings are crap.

Q: Did you guys get crap about ratings being at different levels at different times?
A: Oh, we would have meetings and they would go you know, if they were up everyone was happy and if they were down, there would be a big pep talk on how to bring them back up. No disc jockey in the history of decent radio every gave a flying petuti about that. Nobody cared.

Q: On the other hand, I was reading this book called Rip It up and Start Again, it's the history of post-punk, and the author Simon Reynolds credited KROQ, especially in the early '80s, as being "as crucial as MTV in popularizing the new music of the era."
A: Uh-huh. I mean, that's true, but that has nothing to do with ratings. How popular you are has nothing to do with ratings. Ninety percent of the people that listened KROQ
were not going to get books. They were transient college students or high school students
that had no more intention of filling out a diary and, quite frankly, let me ask you this:

have you ever gotten an Arbitron diary?

Q: Never.

A: Alright, well, hey. The correlation between your effect on history and the ratings
you are getting are completely askew. The number one rated radio station in Los Angeles
for years had been the Spanish station. Do you think that it had an effect on bringing
more Spanish music to the public?

Q: Uh-uh.

A: Okay, point made.

Q: I think most of the people I know would know more about the bands played on
KROQ or Indie than on a Spanish station.

A: I wouldn't know anything, but, believe me, the Spanish stations are rated number
one. So, it really has nothing to do with the influence on music. First of all, the people,
the influence on music comes from people buying records and they don't rate how many
people are buying what kind of music. You see, purchasing music and the kinds of music
people are purchasing are not directly related to any ratings, but we were very influential
because when we first started, everybody regarded us as, oh, that silly little radio station
in Pasadena playing that weird music, but, you know, I was used to that sort of comment
because I started out in radio stations that were breaking ground. That was what I loved,
going to a place where there were real groundbreakers. At any rate, we all knew that this
music was going to hit. It was huge in England and it was just a matter of time before it
came over here. And, once again, it was another perfect time in time because every
generation has to have their own music and, let's face it, the generation coming up in the
'80s didn't want anything to do with disco or the Tom Pettys or Jackson Brownes or any of that. They needed their own music and this was exactly right on time. The punk movement started in the late-'70s and it was just perfect for people coming up in high school or college to have something new that they could identify with as their own.

Q: Were there things in Los Angeles that, in particular, that you were bringing? I know you mentioned Vinyl Fetish and The Import Show. Would you be going out to see bands and say, "Oh, this sounds pretty cool" and then start playing them?

A: Not for me. That might have been for other people. I always relied on directly listening to music. I was never one for going to clubs and listening to new music particularly. When you look at my playlist, you realize that a majority of my music came from England. I was, at the time, going with an English guy who had buddies that were sending him records or bringing them over when they came to visit. That's why I started playing the Pretenders before anybody else, because I got their singles as part of a care package from a buddy in England in 1979.

For me, rather than hearing a band and playing them on the air—because, usually, if you hear a band in a club, they are not going to have an album, at least not in those days. The correlation, it wasn't like you could go and record your band on a computer and put it on a disc that night. If you were a band, you had to go through the process of getting a record label to produce your record and press it and all the rest of it. It was a much more difficult process for bands back in those days then it is now. On the other hand, I also relied on friends of mine in the music business, independent promotion men, to send me stuff that was brand new that was interesting, that they had gotten a hold of and that they liked. I had a buddy named Jim Garineau who was managing a band called
Social Distortion and so that's how I got into Social D. It was more like that. It wasn't so much going to clubs.

Q: Roughly, how much of your six to ten time slot was your own music as opposed to what was in the hot clock?
A: Say there's ten songs in an hour, five would be my pick.
Q: Oh, wow. When did that number start to decrease?
A: For me, never.
Q: That's pretty cool.
A: That's also why I got fired. I mean, they brought it down. First it was, you know, it was you could play, they said you could play three records or four records in an hour. I guess it was four records in an hour. Then it was three records and two records and then one record and now I think it's one record a shift. I think that's what Jed told me.

But, you know, I played what I wanted, but that's the other thing too. I wasn't a complete freak. I understand the balance between education and entertainment. You've gotta give people what they want to hear. I can't just sit around and play the music that I want you to listen to or that I listen to at home. That's boring. That's not successful and that's not professional. You want to hear Duran Duran, Depeche Mode and U2, I'm going to play that. But, I'm also going to interject it with some of the other stuff I want you to hear like the Bronski Beat or Flesh for Lulu or whatever else it is that I happen to pull out of my hat. It's a little balance. You put a new record in between, you sandwich it in between a couple familiar records.

It has a name in the business, it's called the "thread of the familiar." That's the thread as in threading a needle or a piece of thread, something that people can follow. Well, I used to hate that I and I used to call it the "threat of the familiar." You know how
you hear the same records over and over and over again ad nauseum? To me, that's the "threat of the familiar." But, you know, those days are long gone and they will never return. Satellite radio is interesting. It's falling into the same pit as terrestrial radio is a little bit faster. It does have a couple of shining, glowing channels. There are a couple of places, one of them is called Sirius Disorder, where you know, you can hear pretty much anything back-to-back. There is a freeform era about that and the music is better. Even the formatted radio stations have much broader formats. Most radio stations have a playlist of, maybe, I don't know, 1500 records and 500 at a time get on the air. That's not an exact figure, so don't quote me, but it's kind of an idea. I'm giving you an idea. It's a very small playlist that most people are choosing from and there are three or four of the main things that you are going to hear, you are going to hear every hour. There are three or four records that are going to come up every hour, which is why you can't stand listening to terrestrial radio.

Q: Yeah, it's a problem.

A: Over and over and over. All the disc jockeys sound the same. The girl on extreme sounds the same in Minneapolis as she does in Los Angeles as she does in Seattle. It's the same stereotype.

Q: There are books about radio that say that disc jockeys become popular because of the music they play, not necessarily because of the sound of the voice.

A: Yeah, I think that's true, but I don't think that it's the music that they play, it's the music that they pick. That's another thing. I don't know of any disc jockey that's becoming as famous as we were at KROQ on the air today. You have your Howard Stern, of course, and you have your Rick Dees and Ryan Seacrest, but, trust me, if Ryan Seacrest weren't on American Idol, nobody would know who he was outside of Los
Angeles. It absolutely is not the personality. It is the music, but then you have to take it another step further and the reason why it was the music that was popular is because we were picking the music.

Q: So the music and the personality are intertwined?
A: Absolutely. Just like Rodney. When Rodney Bingenheimer gets on the air, you know what you are going to hear. When I got on the air, you knew what you were going to hear. So, yes, absolutely, they used to be intertwined. They aren't anymore and there is a reason for that. They want disc jockeys to be kind of a plug in. They don't want any disc jockey to have any kind of a pull or popularity that won't allow them to pluck them out and throw them away when they decide that they want to.

Q: There has been speculation, I have read in places like *Billboard* and I think even the *LA Times*, about radio stations claiming that the reason why the radio station playlists are so narrow and the reason they don't let the DJs pick out stuff is because of payola. What do you think about a statement like that?
A: Well, they've gotta have an excuse. What did Bush say about the war, we would rather fight them over there than fight them over here. You know what, honey, it's all a sound bite. That's a goddamn sound bite if ever I heard one. There's no, it's bull shit. I won't even grace that comment with a comment except for bull shit.

Q: I understand. One last question, you were owned by Mandeville from the time you were there until about '86, right?

Q: He was your owner?
A: Yeah.
Q: Were you the only Mandeville station then?
A: Yeah. I think we were the only one. He was a very smart business man. Ken Roberts bought KROQ for something like $10 million dollars and sold it for $48 million ten years later. It was a business move on his part. Then he bought a radio station that became MARS FM and he owned MARS for a while. He sold MARS to Clear Channel, I think. He made another $40 million or something like that.

Q: I think that frequency went to Clear Channel and then to Entrevision. It's Indie 103 now. It's sort of like KROQ, but it's owned by a Spanish station. You didn't go to MARS did you?
A: No, I went to, because, once again, it was Freddy Snakeskin's format and I didn't want to have anything to do with that dance format. I hated that music and for me it's always been about the music. No, I went to KLSX.

Q: Okay, that's where I remember hearing you after KROQ? I was wondering if it was KLSX or MARS.
A: I went to KLSX, my friend Raechel Donahue went to MARS. I was already at KLSX when they put MARS together, so I was already working. By this time, I realized that freeform radio was pretty much dead in the water, so I decided to go work for the money. After almost 30 years on the air. The kind of radio I was used to doing was dead and I had to face that. It became let's do it for the money and, believe me, I got paid a hell of a lot more.

Q: Now, were you and Raechel Donahue both at KROQ and KSAN?
A: Yeah, Raechel Donahue was married to Tom Donahue, so Raechel and I have known each other since we were 18. As a matter of fact, we're together here in Cleveland. She works for Sirius too. We came to Cleveland for the same freeform radio
station and we stayed for Sirius, so she's working for Sirius Classic Vinyl two days a week. She does my show on my days off and she does stuff for Sirius Gold, which is an oldies station. We're both working out of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. We've been friends for forty years.

Q: That's pretty cool.

A: Yeah, it's pretty amazing.

Q: I would imagine you were two of the first women to become well-known as DJs.

A: Actually, we are. I was the very first female disc jockey on the West Coast and Raechel followed me. I was on the air before she was with my own show. She had been on the air, of course, with Tom Donahue as his assistant, but yeah, we're one of the very first. We've both been on the air for almost forty years now.

Q: That's amazing. As women, are there any sort of hurdles, at least in the early days, maybe even now?

A: It's really ridiculous because all of the hurdles and all of the barriers that we broke down in the '70s are all back up now. Every ounce of progress that we made for women has been destroyed. It's gone full circle. Women, all the women sound alike. It's all about tits and ass. Nobody has a clue as to what the music is. It's all fast-talkin' and being risqué on the air. Nobody has any musical knowledge or wants it. It's where you were last night, who you were partying with and what you were wearing? Who the fuck cares?
Interview with "Swedish" Egil Aalvik

Location: Starbucks, West Hollywood, CA

Date: August 28, 2006

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Q: So, the first question is how did you get into radio?

A: Well, I was a club DJ in my home country of Sweden and I was dying to get into radio and in Sweden there is government controlled radio and they wouldn't let me in. You had to go through a special school or class and they took four new entries every other year. The first time I tried, I was number five and the second time I tried, I was number thirteen. You had to kind of like tell them that you wanted to be a journalist. You had to show them that you had journalistic skills and that's why I wanted to be on the radio. To just be on the radio, to just play music and to just be an entertainer was kind of out of the question.

At the same time, as I was a club DJ in Sweden, I also brought over some radio DJs from something called Radio Luxembourg, it was a very big and powerful AM station in the '70s in Europe and it was, outside of the BBC Radio 1, kind of the only outlet that played that kind of music. I think that when the BBC, I would assume that the BBC was broadcasting at night, I'm not really sure what they were doing at that time, but that station came on at eight o'clock at night and then stayed on until four o'clock in the morning. Those DJs that were on there like Tony Prince or Paul Burnett and those guys, they became huge and I brought them over to Sweden, much like somebody would bring Laurent Garnier or Carl Cox to come to America today, we would bring over those DJs. When they came over to Sweden, I found out a little bit more about radio and how radio worked and how it could be and they invited me to come to Luxembourg, so I went there.
to see the operation and loved it. So, I came to America and that’s what I wanted to do and pretty soon after I came here, I ran into a program director here in Los Angeles, kind of like my first or second day in LA and he invited me to stay and introduced me to a mobile DJ company and after a week, I was working for that mobile DJ company. That was in 1976, at the end of 1976. And then it took me until 1982 to actually get a job at KROQ.

Me and Richard Blade, we lived in the same apartment complex in North Hollywood and he had gone to Bakersfield and San Luis Obispo to work in radio and to break in there and then when he came back from San Luis Obispo, he started working at the old KNAC in Long Beach, when that KNAC was like KROQ, they were alternative long before they were heavy metal. And I was working at a club called Thomas Lord's Disco at Victoria Station in Universal City. It was like, it was, well, Victoria Station was themed after the big train station in London. They had a big clock hanging in there in the disco hanging in the bar and T.L.’s Disco, which stood for Thomas Lord's Disco, was an English theme.

At the time, I wanted to stop playing disco music, which we were playing at the time. I wanted to stop playing that and I wanted to start playing new wave music and my buddy Richard Blade could help me make a commercial that we could play on KROQ promoting this new wave night at T.L.’s Disco. Richard took that opportunity to go and hang out at KROQ, because he had to make the commercial. So, he hung out in the production room until he met the program director, Rick Carroll. Then he got himself a weekend job. Then, as soon as he got the weekend job, he brought me in to come in and present a song and when he looked at me and said, "Here's my friend to present the next
song, his name is Egil. He is from Sweden. We're going to call him Swedis Egil.

Swedish Egil, what is your song?" And so I introduced the song.

A couple weeks later, Richard Blade got the morning show at KROQ and I started hanging out and after a little bit, Freddy Snakeskin, who was the program director at the time, hired me to be Poorman's babysitter. Poorman, he was wild and crazy. He didn't really know anything about broadcasting. He wanted to broadcast really bad, so they gave him a shot. It was also difficult for them to find someone willing to do it for little or no money on a Sunday night from midnight to two AM in the morning, but Poorman and I got the time slot and I played the records and made sure that that part of the show was taken care of. Poorman would come up with crazy contests and him talking to the listeners in between the songs and then talking to me about what he was talking to them about became Loveline. That's how Loveline got started on Sunday nights.

We took that show, made it pretty famous and popular, because it was a popular subject and we were touching on subjects at the time that were super cutting edge. But, the thing about it was that there was nobody there that had to try and figure it out. It was an organic thing that kind of happened by itself and because we had lesbian and gay listeners calling us up and asking us about their love lives, we then ended up bringing other listeners on to come in and talking about and brought in a lawyer and brought in, eventually, a doctor, Dr. Drew, that later on took over the show and is now hosting the show. So, that's how Loveline got started, that's how I got started at KROQ.

Q: When you started, were you just doing Loveline?
A: Yeah, I was just doing Loveline. I was just doing Loveline, but I played the music on Loveline, so I would bring in my own songs and, you know, we probably had music that we should follow, but we didn't really. We would put on other things. We would
invite cool bands like INXS or UB40, bands like that would come on and be our guests so that we could play more of their music. INXS at the time was like the big dance, they were a dance act. Everything they made was very dance-y.

Q: Like "Don't Change"?

A: Exactly. Exactly. "Black and White," whatever they were called at the time. I can't remember the names of all of those songs. So, that's what I did. Eventually, I went to a fill-in shift, to another fill-in shift. I liked that time slot so much because there was so much freedom. They were less concerned with what I was doing from midnight to three or from midnight to six that during my entire time at KROQ, for nine years, I pretty much chose to stay at that late time slot. It was difficult. I got married in 1985 and had my baby girl in 1986 and it was difficult to do the all-nighter and be a family man at the same time, trying to sleep during the day, be up part of the day, you know, it was nuts. At the same time, I had the opportunity to do all these specialty shows, like we had a show called New American Rock that sort of focused on American bands like Nirvana and, uh, there was this other band that I got fired for playing. They were also from the Seattle area, a little bit before Nirvana.

Q: Mudhoney?

A: No, but I played them too a lot. God, I forgot. Once I was in that and I was in it with another guy name Lewis Largent, he was my intern and he helped me out, he knew some of the music and I knew some of the music. We played the Replacements. I want to say, not the Stone Temple Pilots, but one of the guys, what was the band that was before Stone Temple Pilots? What were they?

Q: I don't know.
A: Oh, it doesn't matter now. We'll think of it in a minute. But, anyway, I played those kinds of bands, so I had that opportunity. I did a show called *Reggae Revolution*. We did something called *KROQ All Night Dance Music Countdown* on Friday nights. I think I had, on one night, we also had a thing called *Open Line*. *Open Line* was sort of like an alternative to *Loveline*. It wasn't really my idea, it was a guy called Scott Mason who, while filling in for me and Poorman while we were away, he didn't want to do *Loveline* on his own, so he did *Open Line*, where he just invited people to call in, but that whole concept of having people call in and talk and let them talk and not put a time constraint on it sounds very much today like talk radio, talk radio is very popular and that's what it was. So, they kind of let us do talk radio in the middle of the night along with all of these specialty programs and so all that freedom for me meant a lot. That meant that I could be very creative and that's why I enjoy being in radio.

Q: Starting out as a club DJ, was it different for you to adjust to the format of radio? How did that work? Were there more constraints for you in radio than with the clubs, or vice versa?

A: There were no constraints at all because people had barely figured out the term club DJ. DJs were thought of as radio DJs who also DJed in clubs and that's how it was here. It was also the end of the '70s. It was the start of disco and the beginning of DJs coming into their own doing something that was not related to radio. Of course, in the clubs I had, nobody told me what to play. On the radio, they did tell me what to play, but at KROQ that meant playing all the cool tunes that I liked. I tuned into KROQ because they played what they played and I liked KROQ for being so different. I was so sick and tired of corporate rock and I don't think that I really realized at that time...
how much payola really entered into the picture because at KROQ, it was almost non-existent—like Dusty Street would discover Depeche Mode or I discovered New Order.

Q: That was you?

A: Well, I don't know if I discovered New Order really, but I remember getting a promo copy of "Blue Monday" and I brought it with me back to the station just thinking that this was one of the greatest dance records that I ever had or Frankie Goes to Hollywood. That was what I brought to the picture was dance music. Malcolm McLaren "Buffalo Gals," these were songs that I know I brought first to KROQ and so we could play them right away. To hear them play that, but then also the bands that Dusty was bringing in, like the Cure, or Rodney [Bingenheimer] for that matter, Echo and the Bunnymen and Richard Blade with Billy Idol and the Pet Shop Boys. Everybody kind of brought in a little bit here and a little bit there and that was the playlist and we had a thing called a Jock's Choice, which is totally unheard of today, we had one choice per hour, sometimes two, where we could play anything, absolutely anything, we wanted to play.

So, we played artists like Prince, although he didn't really belong on KROQ, but he belonged on there for a minute because he was so cutting edge. This was before Prince was on any other radio. It later on also became a little bit of a problem for KROQ because KIIS FM would pick up on all the sort of top 40 sounding music that we had, so we had a balance of playing the harder edged music and setting it against the Eurythmics or ABC or something more mainstream, then KIIS would take all those mainstream sounding songs and just play them and give us a run for the money for a minute, but KROQ was still the place where all the new music was being played.

Anyway, when the program director put that all into the playlist, we didn't really care, sometimes the program director would put in things that we didn't like and I think
for a moment there, now looking back on it from many years of being in radio, the program director was doing the right thing. He wanted to play some familiar songs. We could have played just all new music all day long if we wanted to, but you know, that's not good. People like to listen to something that they know and are familiar with and to put that into some sort of a system and have logic behind it, you know, it didn't make as much sense to me then, but it does to me now.

And then, I was there in the beginning when they used to, the playlist was a pie, a photocopied pie. They didn't even have a photocopier, so they would run out and make photocopies of this pie and the program, music director would sit down and write a playlist and then that was the playlist that we used. Then, there were certain songs that got photocopied that stayed onto the next shift and the next shift and this was all pre-selected. Then, I remember Selector coming and being the program that we chose and Selector sort of taking over, which is a computerized, automated scheduling system for music, as I'm sure you know. When we saw that, I think in the beginning, we didn't really know how much Selector could be manipulated or how you could make it to work for you, so I think we fought it a little bit in the beginning. But, I'm not saying, that, back then, I think back then, program directors relied on their DJs to bring musical knowledge to the mix, to the radio station where today, the radio station just hires announcers that have little or nothing to say about the music being played. They do a little bit.

I work also over at Power 106 now, I just do a mix show on the weekends there called Power Tools with Richard Humpty Vission, it's really his show and I'm the host, but going there once a week, I see who plays what role in their radio station and they do listen to some of their jocks who are involved in the street. They have Mr. Choc, who is their mixed show coordinator. He listens to all the guys who are out mixing and the most
popular new songs that they may not have added to power and consider those in the music meetings.

Also, back during the KROQ days, now that you look back on it and see that all radio stations were on the take and they took a lot of money from the record companies and the record companies directed many at times what they were going to play. That's how we got some of the most horrible music. Milli Vanilli on the radio, I am sure, I don't have proof to say it, but I am sure there were financial favors that paved the way for them and up until recently, program directors admitting to taking flat screen TVs for adding Jennifer Lopez. You know, it's really sad and it's sad that the part that infused new music into it is no longer there and then I think the other most horrible thing that happened in radio was in 1996 when Clinton signed the Telecom Bill and allowed these big companies to control so many radio stations and that has not done one thing for the listener. It has only made it worse.

The only thing, I was just talking to another. You know, I work at Sirius Satellite Radio now and me and one of the other guys that program over there, were talking about how you know there isn't really anything fun to listen to on regular radio anymore. It's not and it's really difficult, the one that has sort of, it's been around for a long time, but it's gotten worse, I think, is this lowest common denominator. It's like music for idiots. I don't know. It's so the lowest common denominator and it's just sad that there's not somebody there that can come up with something creative, something different, like Morning Becomes Eclectic. It's not necessarily my favorite show, but at least they're breaking new bands and there's an intelligence and thought behind it, it's not just whatever the record company wants you to play.
Q: Right, now as the DJs became more well-known and KROQ became more well-known as a whole, were there people trying to get their records in by any means?

A: Uh, yeah, I think so. I think that we probably also had songs on the playlist that shouldn't have been there. I'm sure that our old program director, God rest his soul, Rick Carroll, took some favors from somebody. He wasn't the only program director. There were other program directors during the mid-'80s, like a guy called Van Johnson. The record companies had a lot of muscle, they had a lot of pull. The record companies, in a way, are kind of like a drug dealer. They will hand you these awesome things for free and then call favors later. So, they would hook us up with a free concert or a trip or with things that weren't necessarily just cash money, so I'm sure that there were songs that were on our playlist that shouldn't have been there, but I think that it was fewer and I think that many of the songs, like I remember one song specifically, like "Dear God" by XTC was, there was a guy on right before me. His name was Roland West. He used to work at KNAC and then he worked at KROQ too. He was on from midnight to three and I was on from three until six. And he came on and said, as I was coming on my shift, he would say, "What's new?" and I would say "What's new?" to him and we would look at each other's records.

I would bring my hottest stack with me and he would have his hottest stack right there. We would compare notes for a little bit and then he said something about that XTC song and I said "Cool, let's try to play it again." It was also at a time where they were making, playing songs like "Blasphemous Rumors," it was a very controversial thing to do. How can you question religion? Period. You know, we had calls from Loveline and people speaking openly and freely about what they thought, so we thought "Dear God" was a great song to play, so I played it too that night. At about nine a.m. the
next morning, the program director was in awfully early, maybe it was ten o'clock in the morning and he goes "Egil, where is that song?" And Roland had left me the record because, so I could play it and there was only one copy of this and it was the b-side to some other, lesser important XTC song, so I had to take that record and rush it right in there and get it carted up right away so that they could get started on playing it and that's how that song got popular. It was totally based on listener reaction from the time when we played it at night. The phone would not stop ringing. People wanted to hear that again and again, so we had to bring it in and that's how that song became famous.

Q: That was a huge hit for them too.
A: Yeah.

Q: I totally remember hearing that.
A: Right and it was just an unimportant b-side, you know, to start with. That was the strength of the listeners. That's what they could do. And it happened many a time, maybe not quite as exciting or with such a special song, but still, the listeners demanded what to hear. I think that happened much more so than any other station at the time that was on the air.

Q: So, talking about listener response, that's quite different from market research, right? Trying to guide a station by what a certain section of the population might want? Focus groups and stuff like that?
A: Ours was just sort of based on very non-scientific research. We were just going by what the core of the listeners that we had created by creating something when we didn't really set out to create something. Like, it was like somebody sitting down and saying, "Now we are going to do this." It just kind of happened. There was a lot more of this music coming out. We were feeding the frenzy by playing some of the music, giving
legs to Oingo Boingo or the Go-Go's or some of these bands—Duran Duran—and other people seeing the success of that and it kind of snowballed. The research you're talking about is deciding that we want to focus on, like, now we have a new station out here, Movin 93.9, they are focusing on women twenty-five to fifty-four and probably more Latina women than Caucasian, so now they go out and research what do these women want. They don't have the time to sort of put on a radio station, throw everything out there, see what sticks and then figure out what they are going to do or get a direction to the station. It's a lot more like we're going to do our research first and then when we come out, we're going to be playing, you're going to notice that in the beginning they're going to be playing a lot more oldies, then they are going to play more newer music as time goes on, but it's definitely geared towards women. Their promos are geared towards women. It's other women talking to other women about how much fun it is to listen to them and then you will hear a lot of female-based songs, songs that will not get guys excited, that will be a blessing for women who wanted to hear more of that, it's now available on the dial.

And so, you know, both it's difficult in today, how people have short attention spans, there is so much competition out there and radio stations are so expensive, I don't think that another KROQ will really happen like that ever again. I think that you can, maybe another KROQ will happen again, it should be a lot of fun, there's a lot of young rock talent out there and I would like to see what would come of it if they let somebody loose for several years to get their footing.

I've been involved in radio, you get three months and if your ratings aren't up high in three months, you're out. Just to get people to know that you are there, with all the competition that is going on, you better be focused and so that is what radio has become,
this focused, lowest common denominator researched music. Then I think that focused research is also dangerous because if you have all these songs that got into the system, meaning into overall radio via payola to begin with, so it's not very good music and you play an old Milli Vanilli song for somebody, that song is going to score relatively high because of the fact that it is familiar.

If there was a way to offer them an intelligent alternative, with real singers and real musicians and real content and say, "Which one would you rather hear?" I think maybe it would be a little different. So, I think that a lot of these research when it's done, it's done with songs that are already bad from the beginning, but they are familiar and familiar is a very important factor for people when they listen.

Q: It's kind of like, just as an aside, I heard a song yesterday where they were playing the keyboards from "Sweet Dreams." Horrible song, but it would catch somebody because it's "Sweet Dreams." Everybody knows that.

A: Exactly and that's why it keeps living on and I think, I don't know, you can't really have Top 40 radio at the same time as you play a bunch of things and introduce a bunch of things. Somewhere along the line, hopefully, there is a happy medium.

Sirius Satellite Radio is a good alternative because they offer, they are so much deeper in every category, but still we play a lot of the same music at the stations. Well, I work at two stations over there. One is a dance station called Area 33, where they put out a lot of new music. But on First Wave, there's not one new song ever, it's just songs from twenty years ago.

Q: How did you guys find new music?

A: It was a lot easier back in the day. It was like you went to one record store, or a couple, because one record store like Poo Bahs in Pasadena, I'm sure Dusty mentioned
that too—it was Rodney's favorite place for music too—they just brought in a lot of new stuff. When they had brought in all the new releases of new wave music and I had gone through all the new music because I think that the main thing back then for a band like U2, who were not really musicians or very talented to begin with, well, they were, but it wasn't like Bono had this clear voice and they were playing complicated, sophisticated music. They were rocking out in the punk rock style. A lot had to do with the attitude. Still, in order for them to get a record made, they would have to be in a band, they would have to rehearse, they would have to play a set of songs and they would have to get their audience excited so that somebody from the record company would see that, go back to the record company, talk to his executive, finally get a producer to go out there to listen to it to see if it was good, and the producer says "Okay, I think that I can mold this into something you can sell." Then bring them into the studio to rehearse, then be there with them co-producing the record with them and so forth and so on.

Compared to today, when you take a laptop, at least in electronic music, and you sit down and you do it right there. As a rock band, you can make your own, record into a laptop and you don't have to have, it's not the same. Because of how it used to be in the old days, it was a lot more difficult to get a record out. You would also have to go to a recording studio and record it. Today, you just do it in your bedroom. Back then, there wasn't so much music, so you could just go to one record store. Poo Bahs was one of the best and it was the best in a wide area, so I would go there. I knew the people. They let me look at all the new releases and that's how I would find them. Back then, also, remember I at KROQ, sometimes the domestic record companies would get mad when we would start playing things before they had the chance to get on it and do their marketing campaign. That's what KROQ was. We didn't want KLOS and KIIS and these
other stations to all get on it at the same time, we wanted to be the ones to play it first. It was a lot different then. Now, today, releases are instantaneous all over the world and very few are limited to an area. It just doesn't exist anymore. Today, I buy all of my music on the Internet as opposed to one record store.

Q: When did they start getting into the computerized programming of the songs?
A: Oh, Selector?
Q: Selector, yeah.
A: Well, our music director, Larry Groves, was already doing the same work manually, according to him and the programming director, Rick Carroll's philosophy. It probably came in the late-'80s. I remember going to Australia to interview Midnight Oil and it must have been in '87. There, I met up with somebody I knew, a program director from a radio station there and I was talking to them about Selector and there were one or two similar programs, software makers that made something similar. But they, too, were Selector and we were Selector, so late-'80s, mid-'80s.

Q: Did it drastically change what you did at the station?
A: No, not really. Again, they had been doing it by hand before. I guess a lot big. Again, one of the plus sides of working midnight to six in the morning is that my program director, Rick Carroll, would, it would be late, he had to make the playlist and he had things to do, parties to go to, what have you, so come midnight, he didn't have the playlist ready. He would tell me, "Come and get it on your way to work" and it wouldn't be ready. And he would tell me, "You can come and get it later." It never came. Then, the next morning, there would still be no playlist when Richard Blade showed up. So, of course, that was a fantastic day for us. It was like scoring a goal, because there was no playlist. We couldn't be blamed for cheating on the playlist when there was no playlist.
So that meant on those days we would go absolutely berserk and play everything that we wanted. The problem was, maybe not really a big problem for KROQ, but it made KROQ sound like slightly different radio stations depending on what time you listened. If you listened to Richard Blade, he would skew in one direction. Listen to Raechel Donahue, it would skew in maybe no direction. If you listened to Jed the Fish, it would skew in his direction. Dusty, definitely in her direction, and, Swedish Egil in a variety of different styles because I tried to keep up on the reggae. I tried to keep on the new American rock. I tried to keep up on dance music and dance music, I meant, electronic music—Erasure, New Order, Depeche Mode, ABC and those kinds of bands. All of those records had dance remixes, so that's what I would be playing. After they could print out the playlist, the machine did it every week, printed out a playlist, they didn't forget anymore. Then it was a lot easier to get it done.

I think that, you know, this was at a time when I paid attention to the playlist, but probably didn't pay that much attention to it, probably didn't have much respect for it because I knew I was going to come and change it anyway. Selector can make a lot of mistakes too. Like Selector can schedule the same music at the same time, it doesn't have enough variety, two of the same artist in the same hour, like that. When the guy was doing it manually, he was sort of going through everything in his mind and all of a sudden there was this whole thing printed out by a machine and the program director would go back and reconcile and you know I think it got better and the variety probably got better for a minute.

You know, I got to tell you, I for a while fought Selector but am now a fan of Selector. I program my own grooveradio.com. I use Selector. I pay for the nose to use the program, but it is the best scheduling program to schedule music. I use it to, you
know, it all is about what you put into it. If you have nothing but good music and you have a loose rotation of everything, it's really just going to help you. I think that when people were bucking at Selector, it's because they were looking at a really tight top 40 playlist where they are hammering the songs over and over again thinking that the machine is doing all of that, as opposed to a little bit of sitting down and thinking about how one song is going to transition into the next is gone, but at the same time, if you want to have some form of rotation and familiar songs, you would have to give a little bit on that end. So, it's both good and bad.

Q: Playing music after the disco backlash, was there any sort of battle for you to get it on the air?

A: Well, okay, first, when I came to America, I was playing funk and R&B music predominantly. That's what was being played in the clubs in Sweden. So, when I came here, I was unique because I was playing in clubs around Hollywood. In LA, I got a club called Nick's Fish Market right away. I got that club out there in Universal City because I played that music, I played the Commodores and the Motown sound, the old Atlantic '60s records and things that were often just heard on R&B stations, like KDAY. I would be playing KDAY music out in the clubs, but people loved it.

It was great music to dance to. Then more and more disco came in—Saturday Night Fever and all that music, Casablanca Records and Donna Summer and the Village People and a bunch of crap came into the music. So in the late '70s, '79 or '80, I had to rethink what I was doing. I had to learn how to play country music. Urban Cowboy came out. It was a huge, popular movie, again John Travolta, and set the tone. If I wanted to keep on playing, many of the same clubs out there in Universal City, I remember having specifically to learn that music. I met up with a teacher and her brother
and learned about the music. A couple of old writers, I took them down to a record store in downtown LA, where you fill up the jukeboxes with 45s. It was a wholesale place. They would have a country section as big as this entire room of 45s and would be there with me to pick out all the records.

Then, when I first started working at KROQ, I was sick and tired of country too. It was a blessing to hear Human League "Don't You Want Me Baby." That was one of the first of that style of record that I bought. I also bought Oingo Boingo and the Go-Go's and I was working at Stuart Anderson's Black Angus restaurant. It used to have a nightclub, a disco, inside and I was working for that chain and they wanted me to have a Wednesday night Happy Hour and they wanted me to be responsible for what was going on and I would go out and buy a box of Oingo Boingo records and a box of Go-Go's records and give them out to try and play the music. I tried to play "Only a Lad" and "We've Got the Beat" and the patrons of those clubs were just going crazy. Some of those clubs had had cowboy music before, so there would be cowboys staring at me going "Are you freakin' nuts? What is this crap you're playing for us?"

That's how the music was in the beginning. Then, you would have a combination of Heaven 17 "Let Me Go," "Just Can't Get Enough" by Depeche Mode, but you would also have the Stray Cats and you would have, I can't remember, but they were sort of non-dance songs. The BPMs were all over the place, so you couldn't really beat match, but you would play song after song. You would play the most popular songs. You would certainly have to play "Don't You Want Me Baby" and you could easily play the dub mix of "Don't You Want Me Baby" from beginning to end. People didn't really care that they were just dancing to beats. Today, you can't play naked beats, just the beat going doo-doo-doo. People will clear the floor. Back then, even the beat was a new and
unusual thing from how other records sounded. It was a different tempo and a different style then what disco had been. So, playing that dance music at KROQ, even though KROQ had this big thing in the late-'70s and super early-'80s, disco sucks, I wasn't playing disco music. I could then take the "Blue Monday" song and try to match it up with a Depeche Mode song. Even in the late-'70s and early-'80s people were beat matching, in the gay clubs in Hollywood, people were super good at beat matching those disco songs, so the knowledge of how to do it was there and during the '80s it was sort of an evolution. In the very beginning, when I first started playing nothing but new wave music, no beat mixing, but then more and more DJs as they came up through the '80s were beat matching songs and were a lot more sophisticated.

We had something called the KROQ Dance Music Countdown, which was a guy from a record pool, the American Record Pool, Randy Cunningham, would beat match these records and put them together on a tape and bring that tape to me and that would be their top 20 songs beat matched and I would play that on the radio and that was the very first mixed show. Today, Power Tools is mixed, but that was the very first mixed show. We used to do it on Saturday afternoons and then later they thought that it was too cutting edge, so they moved it to late night Friday night. But, I had engaged all these different DJs. There was a guy named Swedish Chris who I made a megamix with. We made a megamix of Thompson Twins songs that actually got pressed as a b-side of a Thompson Twins single. He did Depeche Mode megamix and that was when the DMC organization in the UK got started. You would subscribe to them and you were a member of the disco mix club and you would get your Human League megamix on a cassette tape so that in a club, you could play a megamix with people dancing to one song after another. Then the beat matching became more and more important.
Q: So you were playing megamixes on the radio too? I have a Depeche Mode one.
A: Yeah, Swedish Chris made that.
Q: And that was pretty unusual for the time?
A: It was super unusual. It was like, I don't know anybody else who did that. We did it because that music lent itself to do that with. It was easier to make a Depeche Mode megamix or a Simple Minds megamix or a Thompson Twins megamix. Even their music was up and down in the BPMs, but looking at the BPMs and being good with the mixing, we could force those records together. And the turntables were there. The Technics 1200s came in like 1979.
Q: When did you find out about Infinity buying KROQ?
A: Ken Roberts, the owner I guess, he was, I don't know, he was an investor. He was not in it for the radio, he got into it by accident. What happened was that some other young guys who had gotten a hold of KROQ and were running KROQ and they were running out of money and they went to Ken Roberts because he was an investment guy, he had money. They asked him to see if they could borrow money from him and they borrowed $50,000 and then he told them that if you can't pay me back, I'm going to take over the radio station. They couldn't pay back the money, so he ended up taking over the radio station and once he got a hold of the radio station, he realized I can't legally do this, I have to get the FCC approval to take over the radio station. It's a little side note, but it ties into me and the fact that when they heard about Loveline and Loveline got a name and became a regular thing and we were doing it regularly, they told us we could do it every Sunday night for a longer period of time because it would give the radio station a public service credit and it was something that he needed to show the FCC that he had done, not just the required but way up and above the required limit so that it would look
like a really good radio station operating and he spent, I think, probably about ten years trying to get the radio station, paying out tons of money in lawyers fees, continuously hoping to make the money back as a radio station and also maybe as an investment.

At some point there, somebody came and said how much, no, Ken Roberts said how much is the most that anybody has ever paid for a radio station and they said that it was $45 million, it was $44 ½ or something. Then Ken Roberts said, I want $45 and Infinity said okay. It became the most amount of money paid for a radio station ever in the LA area. That's how KROQ got sold.

I think that we kind of had known before that, among adults, that sooner or later it was inevitable. It had to happen. It became a big, popular station, someone else was going to come in and take over the station, take control of it. When it did happen, it was spread out over a long period of time, it wasn't like, they, I do remember that we moved to the new building and that was probably sort of like the definitive leaving the old KROQ in Burbank.

It was a very sad time. We moved out of those studios. But, then, we moved into these new studios with functioning, working equipment and modern and spacious and clean and proper restrooms. It was, KROQ was a dump in Pasadena, a super dump, and really run down. The owner didn't spend a dime on it. Once he sold it to the new corporate company, it looked wonderful. Then we got these new general managers that came in with what we considered to be these corporate rock ideas. There was a guy that came in from, uh, Bernadini from WNBC in Boston and he was our general manager for a minute. We still had our program director Rick Carroll, but Rick Carroll apparently got AIDS and as he got worse and we understood that he had AIDS, he missed his important meetings and it looked like he wasn't going to be able to be in charge anymore and he
wasn't going to be able to protect us from these new people and we kind of just gave up on that.

When this program director from the new Infinity came in, his name was Andy Schuon and Andy Schuon was one of the worst program directors that I had ever had in my entire life. He was, I guess, he was sort of a good corporate program director, but he didn't know anything about music. He didn't have any feel for the music. He didn't fit that at all and was just doing the corporate thing. He was just doing what he was told and he was the one that, you know, pretty much all of those late-night shows that I had, doing the all-nighter, he kind of cancelled all those shows and I became sort of a regular KROQ jock and put up with that and put up with their rotations. It was sort of the beginning of the end. And that's when Freddy Snakeskin. I used to sit and talk with Freddy Snakeskin. I still worked with him on the late night shift. So, I would be there talking to Freddie in the middle of the night. Freddie would be staying up, you know, we would be sitting there and be complaining about the radio spiraling down and the evilness of the corporate companies coming in and taking over.

Eventually, in 1991, what made me leave KROQ was that the same owner, the original owner, Ken Roberts, had bought a new radio station and five years had gone by since he sold KROQ in 1987 until 1991 or 1992. It's a little hazy, the era of time. But, he had signed a five year contract not to come back to the same market, so when that time was up, in 1991, he had bought these two stations, combined them into one signal and tried to prove to everybody that combining two Class As could be Class B, which sort of 103.1 is today, but it really didn't work. It never got the Class B strength. It was never powerful enough to be a Class B in the LA market. Had I known that, I may not have left KROQ, but I left KROQ and I had a wonderful time at MARS and when MARS ended,
after a year, Ken Roberts had enough of us playing techno and house music, that's when I started Groove Radio and it's been 14 or 15 years now.

Q: MARS was only around for a year?
A: A year and a half.

Q: It was terrible reception. In the Valley, you could only get it in the car.
A: Right, but it was fresh and freakin' awesome. There were me and Freddy Snakeskin having nobody telling us what to play.

Q: You guys were management there?
A: Freddy Snakeskin was the program director. I was the music director. I left KROQ to become the music director at MARS FM and to be a music director was something that I wanted to be at the time.

Q: So you ended up making the pie charts and everything?
A: Yeah, we had Selector. And Freddy Snakeskin, my role as the music director was to bring in music to the station, I had a lot of influence over what we added, but Freddy Snakeskin had the final say-so. So, he was the one that decided and he was very computer literate and really early and, you know, he got that Selector program and got it to work and had it schedule for him. It's all about what music you put in to the categories and how many categories you have. Selector is not a bad thing. If you are worried about it's a machine just picking one song to go into the next song, then you also have to look at, like, that's for people who are just looking into a very small area of time on the radio is when it goes from one song into the other. The DJ could be talking or the jingle could be there. There could be a promo or a phone call on the air. So many different things could happen that, on paper, when you look at it, could be a horrible segue but then in reality it wouldn't be a horrible segue. The bigger picture is that people are not listening that
precisely. They're just running around doing their thing—being late for a meeting, picking up the kids, turning on the radio. For them, it could just be the music playing and then the machine is now making sure that the songs are spread out on an even basis so that everyone gets a nice variety, so that when you're driving for twenty minutes, hopefully you'll get the whole of KROQ in twenty minutes and a variety of different styles in twenty minutes and it will be a different twenty minutes than when you put it on the next day.

That's what Selector does and that's where a human being can error getting too concentrated on the segue part and not seeing the forest through the trees. Do you see what I'm saying? So, the Selector, like at that time, I didn't look at the Selector as something bad, but rather as something good. And it's really more about the fact that you really research the songs and have the categories filled with cheese and lowest common denominator songs. If you have categories filled with nothing but killer fucking anthems or just the bomb songs or new songs, you can have Selector spin out nothing but new songs all the time and reconciling means that you take once the playlist is done. Freddy Snakeskin did that job, I didn't do it myself, but whoever does it, you go down that list and you see if that's going to be horrible. Then he has the opportunity to take out one song and put in another song in that time slot. So, that's what Selector is. Selector is a tool to help with the bigger picture.

Q: When you were at MARS, you played a lot of stuff like what became the big rave tracks. Were you not able to play those at KROQ?

A: Well, there wasn't really a rave scene. It had just, just gotten started and me and Freddy Snakeskin, we were getting some slack from some of the other people. Like this Lewis Largent guy, for example, at KROQ. He ended up staying and becoming the
music director and a very popular on air personality for a long time. After I left, I created a vacancy. They brought in Tami Heidi and elevated his position. It was because in 1990, 1991, me and Freddy Snakeskin were really into these super clubby records. I can't remember the names.

Q: Like "James Brown Is Dead"?

A: Yeah, but not really because that was definitely a MARS song. They were European. It was like it had been ten years since the original disco, so some people were calling it Euro Disco. They were sort of taking the Depeche Mode 12" and having the meat of the song in there but have the beats and the producers, or similar producers, make more clubby songs. And so, we were into that and I don't know if we really saw where the evolution was headed, but we got caught up in the middle of it. I had still, I was still going to Poo Bahs in Pasadena, but I had hooked up with a record store that produced the dance music countdown down in Long Beach, called Record Reaction. They were strictly about dance music and very little about, you know, at a period of time, the Psychedelic Furs or Midnight Oil would put out a 12" where there would be an extended version of a proper song.

But, towards the end of the '80s and the beginning of the '90s, there were a lot less of those and a lot more of these new, no-named artists that were making these dance records with these electronic instruments. It wasn't like I couldn't play that at KROQ. It was just that, well, in the beginning of 1991 there was this onslaught of that music and I think had we not seen the reaction of the audience to that music, you know "James Brown Is Dead" or Eon "The Spice Must Flow," that song, the impact that song had on our listeners—and we could sense that right away—was so phenomenal that we got caught up in that and really played that a lot more. There were sort of a lot of people at MARS
who wanted to hold on to the old alternative rock scene and I think that when it came
down to it, we put "Smells Like Teen Spirit" in rotation before they did at KROQ
because it was something that I had been doing, part of the very tail end of my New
American Rock days and I was really big on Swimmer. I was really big on "Smells Like
Teen Spirit" and Mudhoney and Soul Asylum. This whole day, I was trying to think of
that one band from the Seattle area.

Q: Screaming Trees?
A: No, before that. Soundgarden. They had an album and they had some songs with
some bad lyrics on it. Andy Schuon, it was one of the first things he did as program
director, he called me into his office and said that we're not doing New American Rock
anymore. You're not playing that horrible band Soundgarden anymore. I'm like, "Are
you nuts?"

Q: What did they say in the song?
A: Oh, you know, it was some four letter word. Some f-word or something like that
in the song. He didn't want any of it. They never appreciated it. They never appreciated
New American Rock at the time and then in the '90s, that whole grunge scene really took
off. Those bands became huge, much, much bigger than electronic dance music.

Q: By the end of your time at KROQ, were songs like "Dear God" and
"Blasphemous Rumors," songs that are kind of controversial, gone from the airwaves?
At least, with new songs that would be similar.
A: That's a good question. You know, I don't think so. I think that they just took
away the jock's choice once an hour and it was sort of more about how the songs came
about and the fact that we were now on the major record company agenda list. All the
record companies would meet with the program director and come in and present their
agenda—Warner Brothers and Sony and Epic and Universal and Polygram. It used to be a lot of different record companies at the time. They would come in with their clout—their favors or money or what have you. I'm not really sure how that would happen, but they would bring a lot less attention to me and Jed and Dusty and Richard and paying much more attention to that and agendas. In retrospect, there is something to be said for that too because when a band is on MTV, when a band is being written about in all of the magazines, when the advertising for that band happens to be in all the magazines and we add that band, we sort of get to take part in that bigger thing that is happening with the band, as opposed to just being us coming in with an import that's not being played anywhere, that's not being written about. And so, creatively speaking, it was maybe a little not so good, but to get more people to listen to the radio station, to pay attention, to be a little more mainstream, it's probably a good thing. There was a balance there and there was a balance that I was not sensitive to at the time.

I was a program director for many years too. I programmed in Sweden, commercial radio, what I did with MARS and Groove Radio 103.1 and Groove Radio on the Internet and I see the bigger picture. So, I can't say that it was all bad. Good things were probably happening at the same time, but to stop listening to these people—not Rodney or Jed or myself or Richard or Dusty—was also not a good idea.

Q: What do you think you were best known for playing? Because, I've read that it's actually the music the DJ plays, not the personality, that makes a DJ popular.

A: Well, I think that it depends a little bit on, like in the case of Rick Dees, it's the personality and the fact that he plays top 40 music. Richard Blade's personality has a lot to do with his popularity, but then Richard Blade was also part of this bigger thing of playing alternative music that wasn't played anywhere else, so it benefited him in that
aspect too. For me, I think that it was probably a little bit more of the electronica music, but I try to make a point on Monday nights, I had something called The Import Show. It was definitely a take on Dusty Street. It was probably during a time when Dusty was not at KROQ and I said, let me do it. Dusty came back and for a minute we were both doing it. There was a girl, April Whitney, who filled in for Dusty and she was doing one version of The Import Show and I was doing another version of The Import Show. My show was called Importunes or some silly name. On Tuesdays, I had the reggae show. On Wednesdays, I had New American Rock. On Thursdays, I may not have had anything. On Fridays, I had the dance music countdown. I tried to really have a variety. I would be as excited about picking out a new Replacements song as I was about picking out some dance tune and tried to balance it. So, I think a lot of people knew me from just introducing new music. And you know, Swedish Egil does reggae too. He does the 4:20. I don't know if it was one specific thing.

Q: Let me ask you about Reggae Revolution too because reggae doesn't really get played on the radio, except maybe a Bob Marley tune. How did you get involved with that?

A: When I was a DJ in Sweden, reggae was really popular in Sweden. Bob Marley lived in Sweden and right before I left Sweden, like in 1975, 1976, was when Bob Marley lived there and I think for the number of people that live in a country, the harder they come, the soundtracks, they sell more copies in Sweden. It's huge. A DJ by the name of Mark Anthony and that guy, he was importing records from England to Sweden, the 45s and had a DJ organization, like a DJ pool, where you could subscribe for a certain amount of money a month, he would send you five to ten new releases a week. Through those connections, he came across buying bundles of reggae 45s from Jamaica, where the
45 was and still is today an institution. You get launched on there. You have a vocal version, an instrumental version and a b-side. That's how the DJs became toasters, became rappers, became hip-hop. It's all through the whole reggae influence. And so, like in England, they bought them in weight—100 singles, 100 45s. So, he would be 100 45s, give me 50 of them and say "Listen to these." I listened through them and picked out often reggae versions of other American pop tunes and play them in the clubs in Sweden, because of Bob Marley. Bob Marley could do no wrong. "No Woman, No Cry," we played that all the freakin' time. "Cocaine" – Eric Clapton's "Cocaine," Dillinger's "Cocaine," those songs were huge in Sweden in the clubs, not because of the lyrical content, people didn't know what it was, but because of the sound of reggae.

So, when I came to KROQ, there was another guy called John Logic who was playing some African music and some reggae. The minute he played me a reggae song, my memories from mid-'70s Sweden woke up again, it was a little less than ten years later and I instantly fell in love with that. He educated me. We were playing Bob Marley and we were playing UB40 and then we were playing some Peter Tosh and then Peter Tosh was doing some things with the Rolling Stones, one of my all-time favorite bands, and I started getting more and more into it. When KNAC changed formats from the alternative format to the heavy metal format, they fired Roberto, who was the host of Reggae Revolution on KNAC. He said, "Do you want to take my show?" Rick Carroll, my program director, came to me and said, "Well you like some of that stuff. Do you mind if he comes in with you once a week?" I said, "No." So he came on and we became co-hosts. Through him, I was introduced to Pato Banton, who became like a guy, you know, Pato Banton was just that much more into reggae that was the same as the English Beat or General Public or the Police, because of Jamaica being part of England.
and then becoming independent, but they could move there so a lot of Jamaicans moved to England and that whole scene is still very big there. So, I was introduced to all of that and it kind of grew and was happening at the time and more and more reggae was coming onto the scene. The dancehall scene started to come on. Roberto fell off and left KROQ and I took over the show and hosted it by myself and got way into that and then at MARS did something called *Planet Reggae* and then did that at Groove Radio too and it wasn't until we were doing grooveradio.com with Infinity that I finally had to stop doing it because I just couldn't keep up with it anymore. I was going crazy. You know how it is, there are all these new releases and you have to be on top of your game and it's very frustrating, so frustrating that I had to stop. I had to say, "I can't do this anymore. Don't tempt me with anymore new music." I'm still sad today that I wasn't able to keep up with that because Americans finally got the whole thing with the dancehall and now, today, the sound of dancehall is in pop music and hip-hop music and it's all over the place.

Q: Yeah, like Sean Paul's stuff?

A: Yeah, I was playing him years ago. Him and Elephant Man and [inaudible]. All those guys.
Chapter 5: Conclusions

Political economic theory holds that, in deregulating media ownership, a system has been created where media channels are owned and operated by very few hands and, as a result, creative developments have given way to repetitive broadcasting tailored to suit a very specific, well-researched section of the populace (McChesney, 1994, 2000, 2004, 2005; Bagdikian, 2004). In this project, oral histories were conducted with Dusty Street and "Swedish" Egil Aalvik to explore the effects of media consolidation on disc jockeys.

General Discussion

The two informants for this project were Dusty Street and "Swedish" Egil Aalvik. Both Street and Aalvik worked at KROQ throughout the 1980s. As such, both began working at the station when it was owned by Ken Roberts' corporation Mandeville, with Rick Carroll functioning as program director. Both were working at the station when Roberts sold KROQ to Infinity and when Carroll passed away. Both seem to have a great amount of affinity for Roberts and Carroll. In regards to Carroll, both indicated that he allowed the DJs a considerable amount of freedom in terms of the music selected. Street notes specifically that Carroll was a "hands-off" program director and that, although he developed the "Rock of the '80s" format that became modern rock radio, he relied on the tastes of the DJs for guidance.

The informants descriptions of the programming style at KROQ differs from what the literature indicated was prevalent on both AM and FM frequencies during the late 1970s and early 1980s (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977; Douglas, 1999). However, their accounts do coincide with what has been written about the early years of the modern rock radio format, with wider playlists and a reputation for breaking emerging artists.
Considering the responses of both informants, it appears that, although there was some sort of structure inherent to the station's programming, these two DJs were allotted enough freedom to cultivate the sound of their shows and help capture unique audiences.

The informants did take the time to list numerous bands, which might seem irrelevant to readers. However, these tangents do point to a bigger picture. Since the beginning of rock 'n' roll radio, audiences have gravitated towards the DJs that played their favorite bands (Pielke, 1986). In Street's interview, she clarified that it is not necessarily the bands that a DJ plays that brings in the audience, but rather that "it's the music they pick." In discussing the music they chose to play at KROQ, the informants exhibited an attention to detail that indicated that, even when allotted a significant amount of on-air freedom, they were methodical in their selections, perhaps working to cultivate an audience consisting of a certain group of music fans existing in the city. In that sense, the DJs, or at least these two DJs, at KROQ in the station's early years were functioning as program directors on a much smaller scale.

All of this changed, according to these two accounts, when Infinity bought KROQ, Carroll passed away and new management came into the station. Interestingly, Street likens the change at KROQ to the changes in freeform radio after its initial success in the late 1960s. She stresses a need for the management powers to capture "lightning in a bottle," to try and create a formula for something that essentially came to being by chance. She explicitly states that changes at KROQ, which ultimately led to her departure at the station, arose when programmers were brought to the station to essentially follow Carroll's format. The irony of this being that both DJs acknowledged that Carroll's programming style was often spontaneous. Certainly, the accounts of the informants do
bear a striking resemblance to those of the freeform FM stations of the late 1960s (Shapple & Garofalo, 1977; Smulyan, 1994; Douglas, 1999). KROQ, according to both informants, was doing something out of the ordinary and managed to become popular enough to entice a major radio corporation to pay top dollar for the station. In the literature review, it is mentioned that in the late-'70s and early-'80s, several music-based cultures developed on the street-level, often as a reaction to the pop culture of the time, and were eventually co-opted by corporations (Pielke, 1986; Eliot, 1989; McChesney, 2000; Spencer, 2005). Similarly, KROQ began as something antithetical to radio culture of the time and was eventually bought and repackaged by Infinity.

Street and Aalvik both discussed conflicts with different personnel members. However, these separate instances were similar in nature. Street reflected briefly on her interaction with Trip Reeb, former general manager of KROQ, and how she was eventually fired for "phony" reasons that she believes coincided with her unwillingness to follow the tighter format. Aalvik is a bit more candid about his relationship with former program director Andy Schuon, stating, "Andy Schuon was one of the worst program directors that I had ever had in my entire life." He characterizes Schuon as a corporate program director who gave little concern to the DJs' input with regard to the music. He discussed how Schuon cut the specialty programs Aalvik had hosted, which he describes as "the beginning of the end."

Both informants seemed most perturbed by the lack of flexibility within the playlists. Given the sense of pride the informants conveyed for their shows and the music that they selected, it appears that the biggest issue between these DJs and management at that time was over the loss of their identities as presenters of music. This is similar to the conflict that arises between musicians and the corporate record label system (Rowe,
The DJs were commodified, turned into a market research-approved form of what made them popular in the first place, just as is the case with popular music.

The sentiments of the informants are in line with the work of political economy media theorists. In their respective interviews, the informants lament the lack of free choice available to disc jockeys at contemporary radio stations. Both Street and Aalvik vocalized their disapproval of the deregulation of radio ownership that has occurred over the past two and a half decades. Without prompting by the researcher, both noted that changes in this regard have adversely affected the way radio stations operate and have impinged upon the creative development of the sound of music-based radio. Street specifically cites the initial deregulation attempts made by the Reagan administration as giving way to the Clear Channel-style of operation, where stations in multiple cities are programmed from the same headquarters. Aalvik points to the Telecommunications Act of 1996, stating that such concentrated control of radio ownership has "not done one thing for the listener." Aalvik stresses that, as a result of deregulation, radio stations have put an emphasis on the "lowest common denominator." Through their examples, the informants reinforce the work of political economic scholars by illustrating how creativity in US radio has dwindled as the result of a form of capitalism that is assisted by the actions of the federal government (McChesney, 1994, 2000, 2004, 2005; Bagdikian, 2004).

Limitations of the Project

The greatest limitation of this study was that it relied on the testimony of only two DJs. With that in mind, this should not be construed as indicative of the KROQ staff as a whole. It is merely a construction of the oral histories of two individual DJs. Despite the
similarity between the testimonies of both informants, it would be unfair to say that these
two stories were reflective of the entire staff. Had there been more informants involved,
there might have been more variety in the responses.

Because both informants worked at KROQ solely in the capacity of disc jockey,
several issues surrounding modern radio were left unexplored. Specifically, questions
about FCC involvement and payola as they would pertain to KROQ, issues that
presumably would have been the problem of management, were not answered here.
However, as DJs, both Street and Aalvik are well-versed in the management practices
and regulations pertaining to radio and were able to shed light on how these issues
specifically affected them. Furthermore, had management figures been interviewed,
there might have been contradiction to the DJs' sentiments over the loss of musical
freedom at the station and, perhaps, support of the changes that occurred following
Infinity's purchase of KROQ.

Another problem inherent to interviewing DJs is that the conversation can quickly
steer away from the technical and business aspects of radio and towards the music itself.
It was difficult to keep the interviews on track. The primary reason for these diversions
in the interviews is that these are DJs, as opposed to simply radio personalities. Both
Street and Aalvik indicated that there is a difference between what they do and what
popular personalities like Rick Dees, who was cited as an example by both informants,
might do. Both DJs were adamant that their involvement in radio was driven by their
love of music and both expressed extreme pride in the music that they will be
remembered for playing.

Although the focus of the oral histories is on the effects of media conglomeration
and other similar changes in the world of radio, music is always central to the story. This
will perhaps limit the audience for this project to those whose interest lies specifically with music-based radio than a general interest in the political economy of mass media.

**Further Research**

I entered this project with the anticipation of unraveling the history of a radio station through a period of a change, namely a change in ownership from a small radio company to a major media conglomerate. During the course of the project, though, the focus naturally shifted from the history of the radio station to the story of its DJs. In collecting the oral histories of Dusty Street and "Swedish" Egil Aalvik, it became apparent that the DJs' careers exposed more about the changing nature of radio than simply the history of KROQ 106.7 FM.

It is a goal of the researcher to continue exploring the lives of radio DJs, to explain their contributions to pop culture and how the DJs' influence has changed in relation to the evolving sound of radio. Further research will not be limited to the DJs of KROQ 106.7 FM However, through these interviews, new research questions have risen. For example, do satellite and Internet radio stations truly offer DJs a sense of musical freedom that is no longer available on terrestrial channels? Through these new media outlets, can DJs regain the influence they once had?

Additionally, it would be interesting to conduct oral histories with Los Angeles-area radio DJs who worked at other influential stations (both existing and defunct), such as MARS-FM 103.1, which brought techno to Los Angeles airwaves in the early 1990s, and KDAY, a former AM station that played hip-hop in the genres early years. Through conducting these projects, the researcher believes in the possibility of not only exploring the effects of media deregulation and conglomeration, but also telling the story of Los Angeles and its relationship with music.
References:


Duhigg, C. (B). (2006, April 8). Radio Stations Play It Safe Amid Legal Probe;
Programmers choose to air fewer new tunes lest they be accused of taking bribes
2006.

Franklin Watts.

Retrieved on April 29, 2006 from Los Angeles Times Historical.


Garber, K. (1990, September 25). Westwood One announces multiyear group
affiliation agreement with Infinity Broadcasting. *Business Wire* sec. 1 p.1
Retrieved May 2, 2006 from ProQuest.

M75. Retrieved on April 29, 2006 from Los Angeles Times Historical.


Spitz, M. & Mullen, B. (2001). We've got the neutron bomb: the untold story


