
APPENDIX

CBSC Decision 09/10-0818 CHOZ-FM re the song "Money for Nothing" by Dire Straits

The Complaint

The following complaint was submitted via the CBSC webform on February 1, 2010:

station: CHOZ-FM

program: Evening Programming (unsure of host)

date: February 1, 2010

time: 9:25 pm

concern: A song was aired, "Money for Nothing" by Dire Straits, and included the word "faggot" a total of three times. I am aware of other versions of the song, in which the word was replaced with another, and yet OZ FM chose to play and not censor this particular version that I am complaining about.

I find this extremely offensive as a member of the LGBT community and feel that there is absolutely no valid reason for such discriminatory marks to be played on-air.

Broadcaster Response

The station responded on March 4:

We have reviewed the material in question. When determining what musical selections air on our station, we always take content into consideration, and attempt to balance the point-of-view of our listeners with the integrity and authenticity of the musical selections aired.

In this specific case, the song in question has been played countless times in its original form, from its #1 release in 1984 to the present day, and continues to be aired on stations across the country in this form. As this selection has been aired continuously for 25+ years, and the original version is regarded by many as an historically successful and essential rock hit in that form with these particular lyrics, management chose in this specific instance to retain the authenticity of this selection. Below we have some chart stats on the single, [which] support its mainstream acceptance:

1986 Grammy for Record of the Year

1986 American Music Award for Record of the Year

1986 9 MTV Video Music Awards

Billboard #1 single September 21 - October 5, 1985

The abridged version is aired on other stations mainly due to its length, but OZ FM changed formats to Active Rock and at that time it was decided that a number of selections be presented in their authentic format, for example:

The Who - "Won't Get Fooled Again"

Golden Earring - "The Twilight Zone"

Guns N' Roses - "November Rain"

Aerosmith - "Sweet Emotion"

All of these songs, in addition to Dire Straits "Money for Nothing", under OZ FM's previous format, aired from time to time in their abridged form, due to their length. However, under OZ FM's new format all of these songs returned to their original form to provide listeners with authentic cut, as other stations in the market and across the country had done.

We understand the concerns you have raised regarding this particular selection and do apologize for any undue stress caused to you as a listener by the lyrical content of this selection, but based on the above reasoning, we have operated with the understanding that in this specific case, no editing of the material is warranted.

Thank you for your comments and concerns. Regardless of the outcome of this particular matter, the input of listeners is of great value to us, and we appreciate you taking the time to bring this to our attention.

Additional Correspondence

The complainant filed her Ruling Request on March 4 with the following comments:

I have received a reply from [the Senior Vice President], of NTV/OZ FM radio regarding my complaint placed through the CBSC in late February. The complaint regards an uncensored version of the song "Money for Nothing" by Dire Straits which contains the word "faggot" on three occasions. After reading the reply carefully, I still feel as though the reply I received is unsatisfactory.

In the letter, [the Senior Vice President] lists a number of reasons in an attempt to justify his stations airing the uncensored version of the song. One of the reasons given was the awards and acclaim that the original version of the song has received. These include 1986 Grammy for Record of the Year and 1986 American Music Award for Record of the Year. This is comparable to the achievements of Kanye West's 2005 song "Gold Digger" which received 9 Grammy nominations, including Record of the Year, and is certified triple platinum. This song contains another discriminatory slur, not directed towards sexual orientation, but towards race. When played on OZ FM, this slur is censored despite the song's achievements. I fail to see a difference between the two situations.

He also goes on to compare this song to others played in their original format such as: "November Rain" - Guns n' Roses and "Sweet Emotion" - Aerosmith. He states that the

aforementioned songs, along with "Money for Nothing," were at one time aired in abridged versions due to their length but are now played in their entirety as the result of a new format. However, that appears to be the only thing these songs have in common as neither of them contain the offensive language which is the subject of my complaint.

I am highly dissatisfied with the response I have received. I do not feel the argument in favour of the unabridged version of the song was valid, and it is certainly not strong enough to justify playing such words on the radio. This word carries an unavoidable connotation of hate. By airing it unapologetically on the radio, this station is indirectly propagating hate. Although I can see the value in a timeless classic rock song in its original form, I cannot help but feel that it does not overshadow the importance of ending discrimination.