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Commentary/by Steve Carll

Recent FCC crackdown on obscenity threatens college radio

The word "censorship" has been floating around America a lot during the waning years of the Reagan presidency. Censorship, of course, is nothing new (Plato argued in favor of it in his Republic); censorship also runs counter to the First Amendment, which states in part: "Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press." Recently, there have been several cases in the world of music and radio which raise the spectre of censorship.

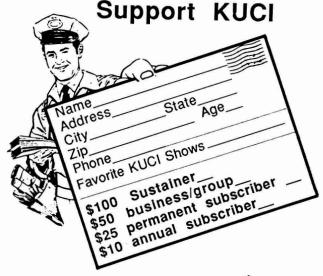
—A group of Washington senators and businessmen's wives who call themselves the Parents' Music Resource Center, financed by Adolph Coors

SO, what exactly is the FCC's policy on indecency? It used to be limited to the "seven dirty words" mentioned in the famous George Carlin monologue, but a year ago, the FCC declared it would broaden its definition of indecency...

Co., Merrill Lynch, and Occidental Corp., started a prolonged series of attacks on rock music, demanding warning stickers on albums it found offensive and "restraint" of violent, sexual, drug-related and "occult" imagery in albums, album covers, and videos.

—Singer Jello Biafra and five others were charged with "distributing harmful matter to minors" when a ten-year-old boy wound up with a copy of the Dead Kennedy's Frankenchrist album. The album included a poster of a painting by Swedish surrealist H. R. Giger entitled "Penis Landscape"

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KUCI TOP TEN

- 1. fIREHOSE (SST)
- 2. POGUES (Island)
- 3. ROBYN HITCHCOCK (A&M)
- 4.MIDNIGHT OIL (CBS)
- 5.JAZZ BUTCHER (Relativity)
- 6. GODFATHERS (CBS)
- 7.RED LORRY/YELLOW LORRY (Red Rhino)
- 8.HOUSE OF FREAKS (Rhino)
- 9. SONIC YOUTH (SST)
- 10.DAG NASTY (Dischord)



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TOP SPINS/record reviews

ROCK

(SST)

Sonic Youth is certainly the On their latest release, Master-Dik, they continue to assault the listener with walls easily outdistance the power of any heavy metal band. Master-Dik maintains their trademark sound-the chaotic guitar roars of Thurston Moore and Lee Ranaldo anchored solidly by than their past releases.

that insures the group the status of the Velvet SONIC YOUTH Master-Dik Underground in twenty years (just you wait).

Side two begins with an world's best-named band, ordinary cover of the Ramones' "Beat on the Brat," which is doomed (like Husker Du's "Eight Miles and walls of sonic attack that High") to be the dilettante fan's sole reference point to the band. Too bad. The remainder of the side consists of various studio outtakes and live fragments pieced together into a surprisingly cohesive whole. the unflappable rhythm This eleven-minute, multisection of Kim Gordon and divisioned opus contains just Steve Shelley—but this about everything—hapless extended play record is a French interviewers, a halfmuch looser construction hearted Beatles cover, a hysterical impression of Side one consists of the George Benson, the "Big Ben blistering "Master-Dik," five Song," a capella vocal minutes of a startling impressions of percussion, combination of rap and and on "Our Backyard," tortured guitar moans which what sounds suspiciously like is as powerful as anything a maniac with a 2x4 running Sonic Youth has ever done. around in an aviary. Enough THIS is the quality of material range for ya? Ending the side

is "Traffick," five seconds of utter audio chaos which serves as concise statement of ideology as one could hope for from this areat band.

—Gondolcı Bob

METAL

FATES WARNING-No Exit (Enigma)

Back and better than ever, Fates Warning offers its fourth album. The Conneticut-based band is now fronted by Ray Alder, whose incredible vocal mixed with range is thunderous rhythms and crisp production. Guitarists Jim Matheos and Frank Aresti combine to offer texture and mystical melodies. All songs are worth a listen, yet "Anarchy Divine," "Silent Cries," and the eight-part, 21minute epic "The Ivory Gate of Dreams" stand out.

-Ace Fury

OF STÜDENT RIGHTS, THERE CAN BE NO SECOND BEST.

Today, success in student government requires teamwork that is committed to creativity, integrity and discipline. ASUCI prides itself as a student government which upholds these values to their highest level. Whether it's a need for multicultural studies, shuttle service, lower parking rates or the highest quality of nationally recognized entertainment, ASUCI is on the job.



Associated Students of the University of California, Irvine ... excellence is the name of the game.

Looking out the window over the parking lot and the Student Services building, I can just see a slight orange starting to creep into the clouds, adding the first touch of color to the greying night sky. I'll have to finish this up and get out of here. We're not allowed to be open during normal business hours. It's due to the odd location

of the Darkling Eclectica offices that the Fire Marshsal has given us this rather uncommon stipulation. You see, the offices are located somewhere between the second and third floors here in Gateway Commons. The two and a halfth floor, we sometimes cali it. Now, you can't take the elevator, and there's no door

on the outside stairs; the only door into the offices is on the inside stairwell. You come up from the first floor, down by Food Services, up to the second floor landing, where the door leading into the Commons kitchen is, and then up one more flight. You're now standing on a small landing. Ahead of you will be another flight of stairs with another small landing at the top. By tripping a certain switch along this flight, the top half of the stairway will swing upward, revealing a short staitway leading down to a

This is the door to the Darkling Eclectica offices. So you can see why the Fire Marshal doesn't want us to be open at any time when people might be around. Imagine you're coming down from the third floor when the stairway you've just stepped on suddenly swings up and dumps you over backwards. It'd be bad for business, not to

mention the lawsuits. So our hours are sundown to sunup, roughly, but we're usually open during the day on weekends.

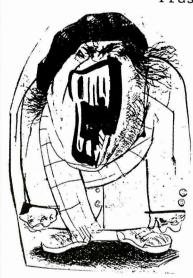
Back to the offices, though. Our door has one of those big frosted glass windows set in it, but we haven't gotten around to painting our name or logo on it yet. Ned keeps saying that he'll get around to it, but he's been saying that for almost four years now.

This door to remain locked during business hours

KUCI's Darkling Eclectica is sometimes obscure, often surprising and always up on time

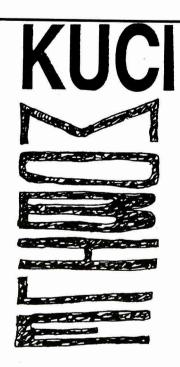
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CENSORSHIP: The FCC violates your rights too

Continued from page 3

and a warning sticker. The charges were dismissed.

—A record store clerk in Florida was arrested for selling a rap tape containing "explicit" lyrics to a minor. Charges were dropped.

—Wal-Mart stores across the country took copies of Rolling Stone, SPIN, Creem, Tiger Beat, and other rock magazines off its shelves after the Rev. Jimmy Swaggart declared that rock 'n' roll is pornographic.

—The FCC revoked the license of a college radio station in Texas for playing songs with explicit lyrics, and gave it to a Christian group.

Other actions (warnings and/or fines) have been taken by the FCC against: UC Santa Barbara's radio KCSB, for station, "obscenity" after a single complaint; KPFK in Los Angeles, for sexual descriptions included in a radio play concerning AIDS; and WBAI in New York which was planning to broadcast a portion of James Joyce's Ulysses—despite the fact the station had aired parts of the novel for seven years without complaint. The FCC commissioner who issued the warning admitted he had not read the work.

So what exactly is the FCC's policy on indecency? It used to be limited to the "seven dirty words* mentioned in the famous George Carlin monologue, but a year ago, the FCC declared it would broaden the basis for its definition of indecency to "language or material that depicts or describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium, sexual or excretory activities or organs." The offense is actionable if aired

at a time when there is a reasonable risk that children are listening, and need not be repetitive. The context in which the language is used will be an important factor in determining obscenity.

Now what do these statements mean? As a definition of indecency (and a basis for action) many radio programmers feel they are very vague and allow the FCC, according to anticensorship activist Frank Zappa, to "branch out into this gray, or call it beige, area of indecency." The stations who are hurt the most by the new FCC policy are small, non-commercial operations with Class D licenses; they typically have less money and fewer rights vis-a-vis the FCC than larger operations. And these smaller stations, many of which are college outlets like KUCI, and which are most vulnerable to "public" and FCC whim, are the ones trying to break down the conventions of music, thought, and ultimately, radio itself.

One has to wonder what all the fuss is about. The survival of a culture depends on its ability to deal positively with new ideas. No scientific research to date has shown there is psychological harm to an otherwise stable person caused by the words to a song (or any other words). If you don't like what you hear on the radio, you don't have to listen to that station, but why take away everyone else's right to listen to that program?

In America, we have always valued the "marketplace of ideas": let people say what they want to say, and if someone's idea is bad, counter it with a good idea rather than

shutting it off at its source (before anyone else has a chance to judge its value). The Constitution is meant to protect this marketplace. As Zappa says: "This is a very subjective world...I don't think that you would enjoy spending the rest of your days in an environment that restricted your version of your own reality any more than it already is, and any time you opt to diplomatic or nice with people who try to promote censorship, you are going to regret it.

KUCI's policy at the moment is to strongly discourage the use of any profanity on the air, either by the DJ's or on the music they play. The staff is justifiably unwilling to risk KUCI's license using our airwaves to defy the FCC's authority. You, the listener, on the other hand, are at no risk-because that authority comes from you as an American citizen. So if you feel your right to hear is being violated in the name of minority opinion of "decency" you should write the Federal Communications

Commission at 1919 M Street NW, Washington, D.C., or give them a call at (202) 632-7000.

If you don't like what you hear on the radio, you don't have to listen to that station. But why take away everyone else's right to listen?

DARKLING ECLECTICA: the show that follows the sun

Continued from page 5

Going through the door will put you into our main office. It is something less than spacious. We've managed to fit four desks in here, one of which I am now sitting at, two filing cabinets, mostly empty, and three book cases, one of which is completely filled with comic books. If you're still standing in the doorway, the room runs lengthwise off to your left, along the outside wall of the building, which is why we have these windows.

Speaking of which, I can see the sun starting up over Student Services. I'd better wrap this up.

At the end of the main office is the door that leads into the chaircreature's office. I'm the acting chaircreature until our new one arrives, which ought to be in a couple weeks. The reason I'm out here rather than in there is that the typewriter's out here. Normally, the typewriter would be at the second desk in the chaircreature's office, but we don't really have a typewriter yet; this one's just a loner until ours comes in. That ought to be in a couple of weeks, too.

Anyhow, the chaircreature's office has two desks, another empty filing cabinet, two empty bookcases, and two windows. It's right at the corner of the building, so one window has a nice view of the park. The coffee maker is on the second desk now, where the typewriter's going to go, but we only use it to make cocoa. None of us can drink coffee.

And that's the Darkling Eclectica offices. The sun's up outside, and I can see crows hopping around in the parking lot, so I'd better close up.

But you know, out of all the peculiar things about this place, the one that's always struck me the most is that I can never seem to find these windows when I look at the building from the outside.

