GM, think they're smart enough.

DO YOU HAVE ANY BOUNDARIES FOR GOOD TASTE IN YOUR PHILOSOPHY?

We won't put on something we feel will hurt our audience, and that's a matter of judgement on every song. We don't pre-judge songs; we listen to a record and then decide. Some records get heavy negative feedback from listeners, and we listen to their opinions. Most songs that are questionable we would test anyway, and the decision to play it would be based on the feedback. As long as the listeners feel the product we present is in good taste, I would expect that should be enough. I don't need NAB to set up standards of good taste for this station. Our listeners do, and I think they're smart enough. My basic broadcasting philosophy is that a radio station has to appeal to the listener. If I get a tremendous amount of negative response, that's a red flag. We didn't play either Madonna's 'Hanky Panky' or Digital Underground's 'The Humpty Dance' here, even though they've hit records. We put Madonna on in four different dayparts, and every time we played it, we had huge phones complaining about it. And 'The Humpty Dance' was the same story - every time we went into a test on it, we'd get negative feedback from our audience. Our target audience told us they didn't like them and not to play them. We don't make the rules - the audience does.

STEVE VIRRISIMO
GM, KGIL - San Bernard/no

It hasn't necessarily caused any re-thinking, but it has re-emphasized the concern that has been prevalent recently over certain songs and lyrics. The decision in Florida is of obvious concern, as it's an offender of the First Amendment, but as broadcasters and parents we have certain responsibilities we must face. Since there's no written guideline from the FCC or the NAB, it's up to us as broadcasters. I can't take into consideration only whether playing a song will give me another share or whether not playing it will hurt me. All California licenses are up for renewal this year, and the last thing I want is a stack of letters to the commissioner of my radio station complaining about my programming.

HOW HAVE YOU DONE IT UNTIL NOW?

I usually leave it in the hands of my programming people, as they are very level-headed broadcasters. We play the hits, and we play what our audience wants to hear, even if our audience wants to hear 2 Live Crew. We actually played the cleaner version, and we still got numerous complaints, but by the same token it was the most requested song on the radio station. When I got complaints I started calling broadcasters in other parts of the country, and ironically, I found I was getting a lot more negative feedback than other stations - including those in the Bible Belt. They weren't getting anywhere near the negative feedback that I was in this market. So one morning my morning show stayed on the air until noon, and we had an open forum discussing 2 Live Crew on the air. We had listeners of all ages call in to talk about why they liked or disliked the song, and we got the complete gamut of responses. For instance, a single mother in her early '30s said she liked the song because it has a danceable beat, but one morning when she was taking her daughter to school her daughter was singing 'Me So Horny', which she found offensive. We're the number one teen station in the market, but we're also number one adults 25-54, which puts us in a unique position, because we're trying to appeal and appease demographics on both ends of the spectrum. We ended up dayparting the song, and airing it when we felt there would be less young children listening and more young adults listening. I think it was a good compromise and the listeners felt it was fair under the circumstances. Personally respond to every complaint I get from listeners, and I hear what they have to say. If it has to do with programming then I discuss it with my programmer. I don't always agree with what my people have to say, but I think it's great for broadcasters, particularly general managers, to hear what your listeners say about your radio station. And I think they appreciate that I took the time to hear them, whether or not I agreed. It's ironic that a court can rule against somebody talking about sex, when there are lyrics that encourage people to take drugs. There's a Rock station in my market that plays Eric Clapton's 'Cocaine' half a dozen times a week. A 12-year-old can go into a video store and rent one of the Chainsaw Massacre movies. And yet somebody can't buy a record with lyrics that may be considered questionable to some people as it pertains to sex. I don't recall anybody on my programming staff holding a gun to anybody's head, making them purchase the album. Each broadcaster has to stay very close to the pulse of their audience, and let the audience dictate whether or not they think a song is obscene. We respond to our audience - we don't make the decisions for them.

RICHARD PALMSE
Executive VP/GM, MCA Records

From MCA Records' point of view, we feel that we must act responsibly. There are records in the marketplace that MCA would probably not release, and we reserve the right to make the judgement of whether we want certain music on MCA or not. But we also staunchly defend the right of artists to express themselves and the right of someone else to put those records in the marketplace.

WHILE TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION ARTISTS' FREEDOM, IS THERE SOME PLACE WHERE THE LINE SHOULD BE DRAWN FROM THE RECORD COMPANY'S STANDPOINT?

The artist has the right to free expression, and we're not about to rewrite the First Amendment. We have the right as MCA Records to say that we don't choose to release what an artist is expressing artistically, but some other label can choose to release it.

TOM MATHESON
GM, B96, CHICAGO

The court decision hasn't caused us to re-think our policy. I am disturbed by the court decision, and I think that we as broadcasters have to make community decisions, along with our audience. We don't play 2 Live Crew ourselves, but I can tell you that when we sit down and decide what's going over the air, we are very sensitive to how our listeners feel. I'm convinced that if you're in touch with the community, you're not going to have problems. But we can't let these court decisions stand, because if it's 2 Live Crew today, who will it be tomorrow?

BILL TANNER
PD, POWER99, MIAMI

We are in the area directly affected by the decision, so we have to draw the line. For example, we were going to do a 2 Live Crew weekend and give away copies of the album, given the fact that while you can't sell AS NASTY AS YOU WANNA BE, it doesn't say you can't give it away. Our lawyers advised us not to do it because if the record wound up in the hands of someone under 18, we could actually be prosecuted for a felony. So there's a chilling effect here. Someone said that you may not like what a person says or does, but you defend their right to do so. I believe that broadcasters better be mindful of that, as well as the issue of discretion as the better part of valor. I was just on a talk show on another radio station in this market, and we spent the better part of a four-hour show talking about First Amendment issues, 2 Live Crew, and the issue in South Florida about the "Tonga" bathing suit, which is really just a g-string, and which they've banned on state beaches. An awful lot of people expect the record industry and the radio industry to impose some sort of in-house restraints on vulgar language, or language which promotes promiscuous sex and drug abuse. All these problems which are prevalent in society have to be addressed by radio stations in a responsible manner, and the time has passed when you just turn your head and look the other way when it comes time to examine record lyrics that have an effect on young children. Where you actually draw the line depends upon the individual circumstances and the people making the decisions. There are conservative companies and there are very liberal companies, and it's up to the corporate