

Cashing In On Tragedy

Written by Keith ID775

Wednesday, 26 January 2005 23:35 -

Last week the Hot 97 morning show that is hosted by Miss Jones, Miss Info, Todd Lynn and DJ Envy thought it would be funny to play a song that made fun of the Tsunami victims and as some say that tried to make light of the situation. The song was a spin off of the 1980's classic "We Are The World" which actually celebrates its 20

th

anniversary this week. Unlike the original song that was put together to help address the problem of famine in Africa the parody was a tasteless joke. Not only was it a tasteless joke but it rubbed many people the wrong way and may cost a few their jobs.

The song makes light of how the tsunami "washed your whole country away." Other lyrics refer jokingly to orphaned children being sold into slavery and people watching their mothers get killed. "Go find your mommy/I just saw her float by/a tree went through her head/and now the children will be sold to child slavery." In an on-air exchange, Todd Lynn, another crew member, burst out with the statement "I'm gonna start shooting Asians."

Miss Info an Asian woman and co-host of the show known for her news & gossip work and writing for some prominent Hip-Hop magazines objected to the song before it was even aired and said so on the show. Only to be attacked by Miss Jones and the other hosts. Miss Jones had this to say, "I know you feel you're superior because you're Asian, but you're not." Miss Info said, "That song is really offensive to me, and I opted not to involve myself."

Councilman John Liu said it was outrageous that the station, owned by Emmis Communications, aired the song for four days before pulling it off air. "It degrades the more than 280,000 victims. It demeans all of us here in New York and throughout the world who are

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engaged in trying to help these victims of the tsunami." Mr. Liu and other Asian leaders have called for the Federal Communications Commission to crack down on the station and demanded Miss Jones, whose full name is Tarsha Jones and all those involved in the show get fired. Along with requests of other nature like how much of their salary should be donated to funds in support of victims.

The station has since pulled the song off the air and has posted the following on the homepage of the Hot 97 website:

Statement from WQHT-FM, HOT 97

New York City - Miss Jones and the HOT 97 Morning team have been indefinitely suspended for the airing of a song that made light of a catastrophic event, as well as comments made at the time the song was aired.

Earlier this week, Miss Jones said on the air "I apologize to all who have been offended by my poor decision to go along with playing that insulting (to say the least) Tsunami song. I should have known better and I didn't. So I'm sorry and hopefully we can move forward from this, or I can move forward from this being a better hostess, because I am better than that, and I know better than that -- and you deserve better radio than that."

While Miss Jones has apologized on the air, in the media and on the HOT 97 website, station management felt that stronger action was necessary to demonstrate the severity of the situation.

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Emmis Radio and HOT 97 will not tolerate such derogatory and racially insensitive content. This incident in no way reflects the spirit of HOT 97. The station has a long-time and well-known reputation for community involvement and support.

Emmis Radio President Rick Cummings said, "What happened is morally and socially indefensible. All involved, myself included, are ashamed and deeply sorry. I know the members of the morning show are truly contrite. They know their actions here are inexcusable."

We would like to clarify that no company advertising on our station had any connection to the Tsunami Song and no company advertising on our station endorsed or sponsored the offensive material aired on the "Miss Jones in the Morning" show. We apologize for any misunderstanding that may have caused listeners to believe that anyone, other than the morning show staff, was responsible for the material that should not have been aired.

Well it did not take long for someone in the Hip-Hop community to step up. The well-known Asian rap artist Jin went to the studio real quick and made a song in response. The song was actually played the other morning by the substitute host E-Bro. "F*ck the Tsunami song and whoever thought of it. / Matter fact, f*ck the engineer that recorded it. / And the brains behind the scenes, that applauded it/ Anything for ratings huh... the sh!t is corporate/ That little bullsh!t statement has got to be/ the world's most half-assed apology/ Thousands are still getting discovered each day/ how dare you compare a life to a week's pay." The song that is set to the tune of Jay-Z's "Breathe Easy." Jin also goes after the host of the show Miss Jones with comments like, "no-talent wannabe shock jock."

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“Anything for ratings huh... the sh!t is corporate” took the words right out of my mouth. This was nothing but a publicity stunt gone wrong. This is not the first time for Hot 97 either. They faced a similar situation the days following the death of Alliyah. The hosts at that time Star & Bucwild also made some tasteless jokes and got the station some attention. The funny thing is that the co-host at the time was none other than Miss Jones who walked out on the show. That stunt worked to get the attention and publicity they wanted. Star even made a comment on his new show the other morning that it was a publicity stunt.

Well here we are a couple years and an international tragedy later. It's no secret or maybe it is that the show was due to change real soon anyway. The Hot 97 morning show has been searching for a new DJ to co-host the show with Miss Jones for quite some time now. So what better way to introduce the show than with a little publicity stunt that caused a few to get fired or some people to leave the show cause they don't agree with what is going on.

My prediction is that there will definitely be some changes in the days to come. Why only an on air apology from Miss Jones? Because she is actually in the plan for being a part of the new show. Miss Info saved her face when she denounced the song and took a stand on the show. So she will move on. DJ Envy has got plenty of other stuff to do. He has a record label and enough experience for plenty of options to explore. The comedian of the show Todd Lynn will take the real heat and be the one that actually gets canned for the stunt.

Hot 97 and other radio stations and shows should learn from this. In these days of the FCC that is ready to pounce for the slightest thing any group complains about and people that love to jump on soap boxes and start rallies this stuff just doesn't fly anymore. The only way to get away with slightly pushing the envelope or jumping on the bandwagon of being a shock jock is to get on satellite radio where you cant be regulated. Or don't try to capitalize on a tragedy that is still unfolding when the count of the dead or the missing is still changing everyday over a month later.

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