

# WHITHER U100 RADIO?

U100 might mean "Boogie Radio" to a lot of people, but the tune that crazed newsman Michael J. Douglas, Mesa (The Fox that Rocks) Kincaid, and rotund Rob Sherwood are actually dancing to is more like the "Lame Duck Boogie."

That's because, as of August 1, 1976, U100 will boogaloo right on out of existence.

Did KDWB buy up U100 to shut down the competition? Can Mesa Kincaid do the news



barefoot? Is KDWB an old meanie? Will Rob Sherwood boogie into oblivion? What's this all about, anyway?

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Rob Sherwood: program director at U100, a first-class rat-a-tat-a-tat rock jock and a tough manager as well, issues some of the most direct inter-office memos ever seen. (Whoever has been leaving the news room in a mess, be hereby notified that when I catch you I will crush your head.)



# Playing The Lame Duck Boogie At U100 Radio

by DAVE HILL

**THINGS WERE** a little loose at U100 radio Monday morning. Program director Rob Sherwood, draped in a baggy green turtleneck, was screaming "U100 Boogie Radio!!" into the mike, while shuffling cassettes for the next song in his hand, checking the program log out of the corner on one eye, and anxiously glancing back at the news room behind him, taking it all in stride, and smiling like a big, rumped bear.

In the news room, Mesa Kincaid, "The Fox that Rocks," was bopping around to the boogie beat in her bare feet (the nail polish was peeling off her toes) shuffling through crumpled mounds of yellow wire service copy, looking for some news to slide in between the songs.

Michael J. Douglas, the mad morning newsman, was off on vacation and everyone had forgotten that fact, which accounted for Sherwood bellowing out the Boogie slogans at the mike while Kincaid shuffled through the paper jungle looking for good news copy.

**EVERYONE** seemed to take it in stride. Maybe that's how things are at a lame duck station — as flaky as most radio stations tend to be, only more so. Whatever, after August 1 it won't matter anymore anyway, because that's the date the U100 will boogie right out of the radio business altogether.

The short and simple of it is that Doubleday, Inc., which owns KDWB Radio (and several other top 40 rock stations around the country) has bought out U100 FM, with plans to convert it to KDWB-FM as of August 1st. Providing that the FCC (Federal Communications Commission)

approves the license transfer — which everyone involves assumes will be done with no problems.

"It's simply a matter of KDWB buying out the competition and shutting them down," says U100 general manager Mike Sigelman. "That's one way of looking at things, anyway. That's the feeling we get around here."

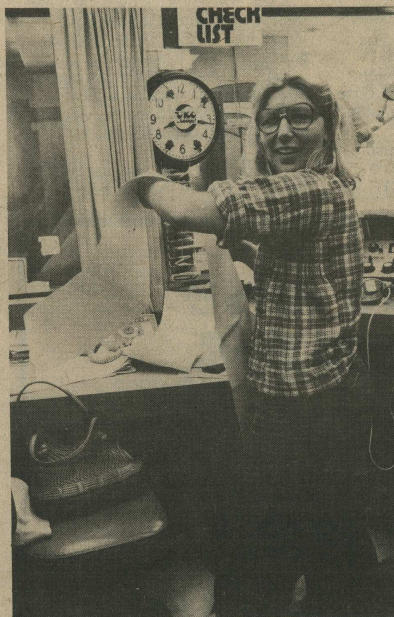
Sherwood agrees. "This is the only market in the country with four AM rockers," he says. "That's more than Detroit or New York or anywhere else. So, if KDWB buys us and converts this to an FM outlet (which will simulcast KDWB's AM broadcast), that narrows down the stations competing for the same general audience, right?"

It certainly has the steely ring of logic and truth to it, especially for the guys who are being bought out and shut down.

"Anyway, it was great while it lasted," says Sherwood. "We've just barely started, in fact — and now it's all over."

**U100**, way back once upon a time, was WPBC, an easy-listening station headquartered in Richfield, with sedate offices in a colonial building on Nicollet Avenue where no one would have dreamed of even whispering "boogie."

Then, in the early 1970s, the quiet little station was bought by Fairchild Industries, which changed the name to WYOO and made it an "Oldies" station. Mike Sigelman, sales manager at KDWB, was hired as general manager, and, three months later he hired Sherwood, then a popular disc jockey at KDWB, as his program director. (Radio is a very incestuous business, and it's not



Mesa Kincaid, "The Fox that Rocks," slows down the pace to deliver the 8 a.m. news.

uncommon for a jock to move through four or five stations in a single market area in the course of three or four years, then move to another city and repeat the process.)

"When I came over to the stations I was quite content to gear down from Top 40 and follow the Oldies format," says Sherwood. "That was the plan."

**BUT** the plan got changed. "After I came here in April, 1974, we kept on playing oldies, but I

missed rock a lot. I mean, I like rock tremendously. Anyway, we got together after a while to plan our fall campaign — myself, Mike, the salesmen. We started tossing around ideas to promote, based on the oldies format. But the ideas were weak, shallow. Nobody seemed to really be very excited about the format.

"So someone said, what if we . . ." Everyone jumped on the idea of turning WYOO the oldest station into

U100, the hard rock boogie station. "We got corporate approval in four days, the response was that solid."

(Another factor was the shakeup at KSTP. In 1972, after years as a sleeping giant, with a strictly MOR format (as in Middle of the Road, meaning Johnny Mathis, Yes, John Denver, Maybe, and Alice Cooper, No!) KSTP became KS-15 and literally tore the marketplace to shreds, beat hell out of the competition for the first six months running, and joined the ranks of Top 40 rockers at a full run, giving the old giants, KDWB and WDGY the scare of their lives.)

WYOO meant the fourth entrant into the marketplace. (In addition the Twin Cities already had several "chicken rockers" pecking away at the 12-18 and 18-34 rock audience, WCCO FM and KFMX, as well as KQRS, which had already locked up the "progressive" pseudo-underground market.)

#### WHY "BOGGIE RADIO?"

Sherwood says he got the idea from Zap Comix, wherein various characters, particularly the fabulous furry freak brothers, would suddenly shout "Boogie" just for the fun of it.

"We made the switch at the State Fair in 1974, which gave us a great sendoff, and we've been going up ever since." Sherwood insists, and Sigleman confirms, that U100 has had an ever upward sales and market pattern since, though neither suggest that they were quite on a level with any of the big three — KSTP, WDGY, or KDWB.

"And now KDWB has shut us down, in effect, just when we were about to turn the corner," says Sigelman, with a bit of sour grapes in his tone. It's obvious he likes being the general manager at a top 40 station more than being a sales manager at another top 40 station.

"I hate to see a station that's done what we've done go down the tube," he says. "It's a real shame."

"We're a target for every station in town," says Sherwood. "That's a compliment to our energy. KSTP and

others have counter-programmed us, but we don't counterprogram them." (In radio talk counter programming means when the other guys give away Fords, you give away a Cadillac, if they give away \$5,000, you give away \$6,000.)

"We had a great run here and we've done some great things," says Sherwood. "But now it's like we're all sitting around, waiting for the demise of Boogie Radio. Well, we'll have some fun while we can, anyway."

**ANOTHER FACTOR** in the fluctuating radio market in the Twin Cities is the FCC ruling that restricts the simultaneous broadcasting of the same program over both an AM and an FM station. As of a year ago, stations were forbidden to do this, unless they were licensed in a city of 100,000 people or less.

Since KDWB is licensed in both Minneapolis and St. Paul, they aren't allowed to do this — so they've had to go without FM programming, since they didn't want to create a whole new FM format to meet the legal requirement.

U100, which is still licensed to Richfield (although the station is actually located on Cliff Road and Cedar Avenue, far out in Eagan) can — and has — broadcast simultaneously on both AM and FM. So, when KDWB takes over U100 August 1, it will simply install an engineer at the U100 facility and broadcast KDWB's AM program over the (former) U100 FM frequency.

That, in turn, will change in May, 1977, when a new FCC ruling takes effect, which says that no station can simulcast the same format over AM and FM at the same time, period.

**FOR THE TIME** being KDWB has no plans beyond using the U100 facility for KDWB's FM broadcasts, starting August 1, this year.

"But I do have another version of how our company came to buy U100," says Gary Stevens, vice president and general manager of KDWB.

"We didn't go out and buy U100's FM to shut down the competition,"

emise of Boogie Radio.

says Stevens. "Nothing like that at all. You want to hear the real story, how it really happened?"

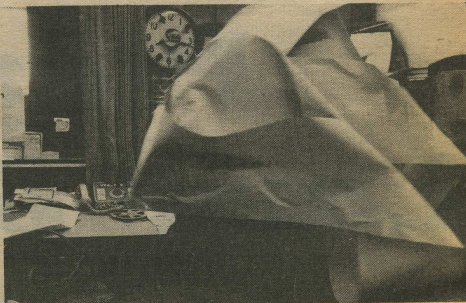
Stevens explains that the decline and fall of U100 Boogie Radio began when WAYL made a move to purchase U100's AM outlet, because they wanted an AM frequency to go with their FM program.

"And that has a lot to do with the engineering aspects of the business," says Stevens, who — in addition to a background that includes being the top-rated rock jockey in New York a few years ago — is both knowledgeable and voluble on the technical side of radio broadcasting.

"Back when stations were first built, people didn't provide for coverage out in the country. I mean, who would have put a station in



Crazy times in the newsroom (right) as Mesa Kincaid really digs — through the wire service copy — for a hot news flash. Above: A sign of the times on the bulletin board at U100, Boogie Radio.



Burnsville 30 years ago? It was a wilderness that no one dreamed would ever fill up with people. But it has.

"Anyway, a lot of stations are badly located. Having both an AM and an FM station — in two different parts of the metro area, makes it possible to send a good signal out in both places, and cover a lot of the market. It's hard to pick up KDWB out in the north suburbs, and it's hard to pick up KQRS in St. Paul, for example. I'm sure that's one reason WAYL wanted U100 AM."

But, in order to make the deal, WAYL needed to find someone willing to buy U100 FM. **ENTER KDWB.**

"They — the people from WAYL — went all over town trying to peddle U100 FM. When they came around to us and made us an offer, we had to take it. It was — and you can quote me — an offer we could not refuse."

Stevens, who rattles off figures with the rapid-fire assurance of a super fast radio announcer with more than a passing interest in finance, says that they made the deal at three-quarters of a million dollars.

"But they threw in the building free, and that's on the books at \$225,000.

That's great frontage there, 35-E will go right behind it. It's a choice property, we can sublet space there, and we only have to pay off \$2,000 a month to the old WPBC people in the deal. We got a million dollar deal at half price, and we retire part of the debt at \$2,000 a month, the rest over seven years.

"I mean, how can you walk from that? We weren't really out looking for FM yet, but when they came to us with this deal, we had to take it. It makes money sense, that's all."

**AS FAR AS** "shutting down the competition," Stevens just laughs. "They never came in over sixth in ratings, so it wasn't a matter of being challenged at all. If I wanted to worry about anyone, I'd worry about WDGY. That's the sleeping giant.

**AND U100?**

"It was simply a deal that came our way, one that was too good to refuse, that's all. We were looking toward an FM outlet in the future anyway, but we never went hunting. We just took a great deal that came to us."

Meanwhile, at U100, the lame duck boogie will continue into June and July, and then . . . Silence.

Mike Sigelman: "It's a case of buying up the competition and shutting it down."

