

I.R.S. #6 – JUST A FEW WEEKS LEFT!



Filing in *Hz So Good's* 6th Annual I.R.S. - as in **"It Really Shoulda"** been a Top 10 hit – is down to the final weeks. This year everyone who declares their I.R.S. songs is a winner thanks to: HardToFindMusicAndMovies.com. Here's all you have to do:

- Send in your list of songs that make you say. . ."THAT really shoulda been a Top 10 Hit!" at <http://www.musicradio77.com/emailrich.html> or to IRS104@verizon.net.
- Any song that didn't reach the Top 10 in the U.S. is fair game, whether or not it was ever on any chart, ever released as a single or ever released in the U.S. And it doesn't matter if you don't know (or care) whether songs were Top 10 or not. We'll take care of all corrections.
- It doesn't matter how few or many songs you send, just not more than 100, please! Unless you specify otherwise, lists are assumed to be in rank order, title followed by artist. Since this is a ranking of songs, do not list two sides of a single as one entry. Likewise, do not list two or more *versions* of the same song as one entry.
- Everyone filing an I.R.S. form receives a FREE one-year membership to HardToFindMusicAndMovies.com, including a 20% discount off non-sale items! Remember to **include your full name and complete mailing address** at the end of your list to receive. Plus, a few lucky I.R.S. filers will receive "refunds" in the form of either merchandise from RadioLogoLand.com or a 4-disc set of the I.R.S. Top 104 (counting down on tax deadline weekend).
- Listen for the I.R.S. Top 104 count down on [Rewound Radio](http://RewoundRadio.com) (the kickoff on Bob Radil's Friday Night 60s-70s Show, 6-10pm ET) and WRNJRadio.com ("The Rest Of The Week" Sat 6am-1pm and Sun 10am-3pm ET) over tax deadline weekend, starting Friday, April 12th.



If we're not already connected, friend me on Facebook (richappel7) or follow me on Twitter (@RestOfTheWeek) for regular I.R.S. updates.

Preparers are standing by.

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“Fighting to stay free”

#172...March 2013

THEN



NOW



SOON



PREPARING FOR “ALL-STATIONS-EQUAL”
RADIO

And now, ladies and gentlemen...

...the nail-biting has officially begun. Since January 1st I have never seen so much written about the coming world of Internet-and-then-some radio in automobiles.

I know, I know, it's already there. Plug in your phone and you're good to go. Only thing is, changing stations while driving's a little tough. But the pre-set universe is surely on the way. And then what?

Well, it may not mean much as far as news-based AM is concerned. Timely information delivered on stations whose dial positions are ingrained in the brains of long-time listeners will always have a place in the driving experience. People want to know what's going on, especially when it might affect them, like when there are weather alerts. Having a staff to gather and report that news costs money, meaning it'd be tough for someone outside of terrestrial radio to make a go of that.

The other key part of AM, talk, is trickier to call. Some still-popular syndicated hosts like Limbaugh and Hannity will continue to attract a large listenership, but there are lots of folks offering off-terrestrial talk shows who will now be able to grow their shows more easily.

Someone like Tom Leykis with an already-huge online following is a big winner here. Smaller fish who have been doing talk on the `net just for fun will find out just how far the buzz will carry them. I assume there'll be a way to easily program and select podcasts so they'll get a boost as well.

Then there's music-based entertainment. Had this situation existed even ten years ago, I'd contend that broadcast would remain squarely in the driver's seat (if you will), because of the combination of constantly changing newer music and professional edge. Arguably, FM may no longer have the advantage when it comes to either. Over top 40's five-plus decades, the format has ceded the "new music leader" image to others. When it comes to simply playing the hits, anyone from a mega-group-owned major market powerhouse to a teenager on a computer in his bedroom can now do it and do it well. For drivers, finding music they enjoy with minimal interruptions (read, commercials) just got easier. So did finding DJ-aided music with talent that's allowed to not just talk but entertain: so many great jocks who were cast off from terrestrial into the Internet wild have been waiting in the wings to return to our presets.

On the music side, there are also hundreds, perhaps thousands of specialized programs and formats that will now get equal footing with everything over the air. Many of those shows are archived for enjoyment at the listener's discretion, and I'd have to think that like podcasts, they'd also be easily programmable for in-car listening. While none of these shows are likely to make the bottom of any page of a ratings analysis, taken together they could certainly pull shares from the biggest music stations.

Now let's tackle the biggest question of all from a business standpoint. How will this change impact how advertisers reach listeners? Sure, existing FMs and AMs will continue to be the biggest kids on the block, just not as big as they were. The most prominent Internet-originated services, most of which already have advertising, will get stronger. What about everyone else? Will agencies find that other stations/services suddenly showing up on the radar are worth altering a media plan for? Will Home Depot see the value in basement oldies or any home grown format that attracts enough of their target demographic?

Clearly, the move by terrestrial's top station owners to create 'national formats' which are music-intense and sound the same everywhere is being done in expectation of "all-stations-equal" radio in automobiles. They want to own these brands before the online versions of every major format become more widely available to consumers. From that angle, it's probably a smart strategy, but taken together with all the jockless formats online to become radio user friendly, it begs the question: Is the listener better served? Do most of us really want more choices with even less emphasis on not just the human factor but without humans serving as entertainers and tour guides? Every year research comes out saying two things that don't mix all that well: listeners want DJs that entertain them, and want more of their favorite music without interruption. Can any music service from any origin ever satisfy both needs?

I guess we're about to find that out.



Does

Anyone

Remember

Laughter?

During the 1990s, when "Seinfeld" and "Friends" were TV ratings champs, the good news was they raised the bar for comedy. The bad news was, they raised it so high that comedy stopped being funny. (Or is it just me?)

With the exception of CBS' sitcoms (such as "The Big Bang Theory" and "How I Met Your Mother"), the art has moved away from 'live audience' taping (and recorded laughter) and toward sometimes unscripted slice-of-life half hours ("The Office," "New Girl") where you bring your own laughs, if that is there's anything that makes you laugh.

I understand scripted shows are supposed to reflect the key demo in order to attract advertisers, and that the art of comedy must continue to evolve as it reflects the changes in our lives and society. But does that necessarily mean that we're not supposed to laugh as much, especially when it rings true to the point of depressing us? That's certainly the deal with HBO's comedies, especially the critically adored "Girls." When was the last time a show nominated for an Emmy in the comedy category had no laughs?

Or is it simply that putting "Girls" in the more sensible drama category gives it less chance of being nominated? Let's be real here. What rule says that if it's 30 minutes it's a comedy and if it's 60 a drama? Compared to "Girls," "The Sopranos" was comedy; so much of it really was played for laughs. But no way would it ever have been considered anything but a drama by the Television Academy.



I can't hear anyone laughing either.

Here's how topsy-turvy things have become. Most of our current laughter-in sitcoms are produced for kids and tweens (Disney Channel's "Good Luck Charlie," Nickelodeon's "Wendell & Vinnie") while most of our animated cartoons are produced for adults ("Family Guy," "The Simpsons"). That's not to say the cartoons aren't funny, they are. And, in their own way, so are those kid-coms; at least when you watch, you know what you're gonna get.

Which is more than I can say for the current crop of adult-targeted half-hour comedies, most of which are too busy being edgy to be funny. Food for thought: maybe the older the sitcom, the funnier, because life was simpler: all we wanted was to laugh and lose ourselves in the fun lives of others. Maybe now viewer expectations are higher: we want to be challenged, and to look in on those whose lives aren't much better, maybe worse, than our own.

This isn't to say the pendulum might not come back around. Maybe better times ahead will inspire funnier shows. And maybe those shows will be seen somewhere else, like on YouTube or FunnyOrDie.com. Either way...I miss laughing out loud while watching TV.

And the hits...

...**THOSE OTHER HITS, I MEAN** And now, the sports. They're changing and so are the needs of the fans.

Let me get to the point: from all that I see, I believe region-based competition is outdated. The finals of any sport should pit the two proven best teams against each other regardless of

what division, league or part of the country they're in. Especially given that most players on any team probably don't make their homes in the city of the team they're playing for.

This said, seeing as baseball season is upon us, I decided to come up with an alternate post- (and regular, as it turns out) season strategy, seeing as MLB seems to be open to tinkering lately. Here it is.

- Shorten the regular playing season by one series, maybe two. Here's why...
- The 18 teams with the best win-loss record overall make the cut for the post-season. This gives more teams something to play for and more fans something to go to games for. The lower four of those 18 play in two post-season qualifying games, the two winners of which join MLB's version of the 'sweet 16.'
- Those remaining 16 play each other in a best-team-vs.-worst best-of-three series during what would have before been the last weekend of regular season play. More games for TBS, TNT and Fox to carry.
- Then, it's the same as it is currently, except which teams play each other among the remaining eight in a best-of-five series is again based on an overall best-to-worst record ranking (and other measures, if there are ties, such as division wins), regardless of league. So this replaces the old league division series.
- Then, the four teams left standing play two best-of-seven qualifying series, again who playing who based on regular series record, best vs. worst. And those two winners face each other in the World Series.

2020 WORLD SERIES



Why not?

Making the match-up possibilities truly unlimited at every turn will make for a more exciting post-season. If the Yankees and Red Sox are indeed the two best teams during a season, why shouldn't they play each other in the World Series? And if this works – if fans go for it, attendance zooms and ratings go up – then perhaps the NFL can take a lesson and do the same. And so on.

LAST, AND PROBABLY LEAST...

* "The CHRONICLER" in Thursday's *Billboard Top 40 Update* (subscribe free at <http://www.billboard.biz/newsletters>)

* "The Rest Of The Week..." Saturday 6am-1pm and Sunday 10am-3pm ET at <http://wrnradio.com/streaming/>

* Follow me at <http://twitter.com/#!/@Restoftheweek>

* Friend me on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/richappel7>). While there, if you like the weekend show, join the group "Fans of The Rest of the Week with Rich Appel on WRNJ" (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/323136847786834/?fref=ts>).

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