

law, radio must not take political sides.

After World War II, the world saw what could happen when a tyrant, in that case Hitler, controlled the media, using it to convince his nation to go to war. Because of media's power, laws were put into place that limited radio station ownership and demanded that divergent viewpoints be aired. The Supreme Court set out a constitutional requirement in 1945 (before TV, cable and Internet) that stated, "the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources is essential to the welfare of the people." Radio was meant to provide a public service: the dissemination of in-

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Ties To Bush

What Clear Channel knows is that media is powerful, and having a conservative political agenda piped onto the airwaves with increasing saturation is going to have an effect on people's attitudes. And that's what the Bush Administration is banking on. While it's true the 1996 de-reg came during the Clinton administration, and earlier "reforms" came during Carter's time, the ties between Clear Channel and George Bush, Jr. cannot be overlooked.

The Texas buddies are the merger masters: Politics and business make great bedfellows. Clear Channel execs Hicks and Mays have con-

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Poor Business Practices

Not only has Clear Channel been accused of promoting pro-war rallies, but also of not playing music by artists who have spoken out against the war in Iraq. But president and chief executive of Clear Channel radio division John Hogan told *The New York Times* that that idea was "laughable." Hogan added Clear Channel was looking for a big audience, not "the most politically unified."

Clear Channel became a household name after 9/11, when it circulated a list of songs that shouldn't be played, such as "Dust in the Wind," "Imagine" and "Peace Train." A month later, Clear Channel fired the popular community affairs director, David "Davey D." Cook, of its recently acquired KMEL, after he aired the views of Rep. Barbara Lee, the only congressperson to vote against military action in Afghanistan.

Then on March 19, 2003 at the New Jersey Performing Arts center, Ani DiFranco, one of several artists slated to perform, was told to keep quiet about the war and to make sure the others performing did so as well. But Clear Channel now claims that directive came from

promote 13 out of 18 recent pro-war rallies held across the land, the company, now under fire, claims those rallies were done by individual stations after conservative talk show host Glenn Beck called for them. Yet the rallies were promoted on Clear Channel's website.

And Cumulus, which owns many country music stations, banned the Dixie Chicks from 40 of its stations. Cumulus CEO Lewis W. Dickey, Jr. says it has no pro-war agenda, it just did that in deference to its more conservative listeners. In Louisiana, one Cumulus station sponsored a pro-war rally where bulldozers ran over Dixie Chicks' CDs.

Finally, rumors abound that Clear Channel circulated a memo to its station managers saying the war in Iraq would raise the fears of the American people and that that emotion could be used to their advantage.

Robert Dove, General Manager of all Eugene and Albany Clear Channel radio stations since January 2002, however, says he never saw such a memo.

Dove adds that unlike other Clear Channel stations, at KDUK the station is "100 percent programmed by us. Nothing comes from Clear Channel."

But the story is different on the AM dial. Dove says KPNW carries syndicated talk shows, all of them politically conservative, although he points out they come from "a variety of sources." Lars Larson comes from Portland, and "Rush Limbaugh and Dr. Laura Schlessinger come from Premiere in L.A." But Clear Channel owns Premiere. Dove quickly adds, "But we're not required to carry it. Nobody forces you to take programming that doesn't fit your radio station. You're looking for programs that will get you the best ratings. Lars Larson and Rush have proven ratings."

The ratings game affects all radio stations that sell ads, leaving public radio the only entity free of that concern. KLCC General Manager Steve Barton says Clear Channel-owned commercial station managers, while having some freedom in what they do, are "significantly constrained. They don't set all their own priorities." Also, as a corporation with shareholders to report to, Clear Channel's "sole reason for existing is making money for its owners."

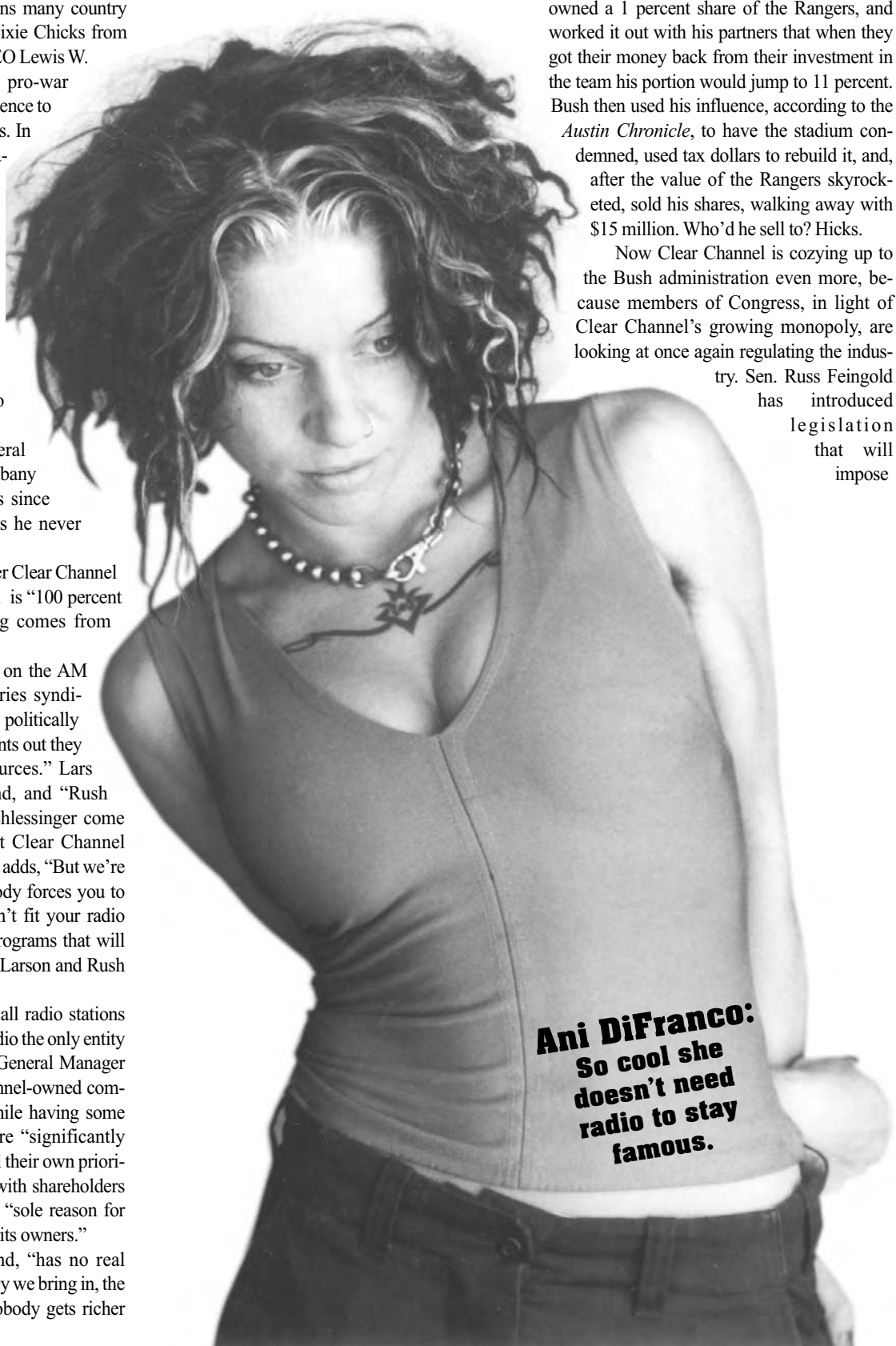
KLCC, on the other hand, "has no real profit motive. The more money we bring in, the more service we provide. Nobody gets richer

tion and open and honest discussion. I become concerned when you find media giants taking a position. In fact I think we should not take any positions because that's not what we're here for. In fact, it ruins our credibility."

tributed tens of thousands of dollars to Bush's gubernatorial and presidential campaigns, as well as more than \$100,000 to Republicans from 2001-2002.

And there's the now-famous shady Texas Rangers deal between Bush and Hicks. Bush owned a 1 percent share of the Rangers, and worked it out with his partners that when they got their money back from their investment in the team his portion would jump to 11 percent. Bush then used his influence, according to the *Austin Chronicle*, to have the stadium condemned, used tax dollars to rebuild it, and, after the value of the Rangers skyrocketed, sold his shares, walking away with \$15 million. Who'd he sell to? Hicks.

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Ani DiFranco:
So cool she
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