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**'Dead air' can be a D.J.'s undoing**

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"I got letters . . . sometimes . . . asking why I play songs such as that," Garrison Keillor, the disc jockey, said the other day on his early morning show on KSJN-FM. He'd just played "Okie from Muskogee," which is not a song you hear every day on educational radio.

Keillor explained he played the country and western song because he wanted his station-supporting listeners to know that "low life and sleaziness" are out there, warning that "once sleaziness gets its greasy fingers on you it never lets go."

Keillor had an example of just that. Rock, an American studies graduate student, came home from a seminar and found his wife, Carol, a concert pianist, stretched out on the couch. She was wearing crimson slacks and a low-cut chenille blouse and was reading cheap Hollywood magazines and drinking wine. "It was not a fine wine," Keillor said seriously.

Rock knew right then, Keillor concluded, that his marriage was finished, that "sleaziness had struck in his own home."

That's pretty low-key humor to cope with before coffee. It may even have "real significance," he social commentary, have multiple layers of meaning. Keillor was an English major at the University of Minnesota, and you know how they are.

His music selection, too, is unfit for the pre-thought hours of day. Mozart, Rolling Stones, Norwegian folk instruments, Merle Haggard are mixed one after the other in a way that tempts you to seek pattern and scheme—if just you could wake up.

Keillor's style is soft-spoken, hesitant. He talks the same off the radio as on. "It's hard for me to talk even to one other person," Keillor says. "It's hard for me to talk on the radio. I hate it."

His show is filled with long pauses, the dreaded "dead air" against which young disc jockeys are warned. "I've listened to tapes of my show and I've noticed it. I don't know how to get rid of it," he says. He claims his thoughts are disorganized.

"It's a time of day when I am always conscious of myself thinking. Like a machine that doesn't work very fast. Like a vending machine that doesn't fill up your

Fresca fast enough. I keep wanting to say, I'm thinking. I'm thinking. There's a thought coming to me if I wait long enough."

Outlets for those thoughts, however, frustrate the 30-year-old Keillor.

Radio isn't it, he says.

"Radio, as I have imagined it, does not really exist. The medium of radio is in such a low state it almost doesn't exist at all," he says.

"People get into radio and find they have nothing to say. I think sometimes I've said things (long pause), but it doesn't seem to justify itself. I can't see spending the rest of my life sitting in a studio playing records. It's not a thing for a grown person to do. Sitting in a room by yourself talking is a ridiculous existence. There's something stupid and ridiculous about it. It's embarrassing."

Keillor is also a poet and a writer. He's written for "The New Yorker."

Sept. 30 he and three others are doing a show at the Walker Art Center, his second. He describes it as "home entertainment," featuring "amateur music, amateur humor, dramatic readings, interpretive renderings of works."

Why the Walker, where things usually just hang on walls or sit on the floor?

"The Walker Art Center is the home of Good Taste. It is where as we're talking they're deciding what kind of furniture the stores will be selling in 1980, they're deciding what architecture will look like. It will be a world of Good Taste," he says.

"This," he continues, "is a bad taste show. It's not a real pro show, and the Walker is an all-pro show."

"Good taste is not a compliment coming from me," he went on, in case the point had been missed. "The Walker every once in a while looks out at Minneapolis and has an exhibit dealing with urban design. I find a very totalitarian spirit that moves through that idea. I have seen models of a well-designed Minneapolis, and I wouldn't want to live there. It all looks the same to me. It's all impersonal."

"People should come to appreciate sleaziness. And people do. Everyone of us in our hearts."

But too much of it can ruin your marriage, right, Rock?