

Brainwashed - Payola: Another Way Major Labels Fuck Everything Up

Written by Jon Whitney

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This past week, Sony BMG agreed to pay \$10 million in fines over their illegal Payola practice. Payola is as old as the recording industry itself and is basically another way big business labels fuck everything up for the rest of us.

Payola essentially means that the rich labels will buy radio stations and video outlets loads of gifts, tossing money at the DJs and programmers to play their bands' music. Historically these gifts include drugs, hookers, expensive toys, and other gifts that disposable commercial radio employees can only dream of getting on their low salary.

And it works!

Take Franz Ferdinand, for example - a band cited in this recent investigation. Anybody with half a brain and isn't completely tone deaf realizes how unoriginal and awful they really are. However they have become popular - not by the merits of their music, but because large sums of money has been spent wooing radio people to get their stuff into heavy rotation (see the [Washington Post](#)).

What this lawsuit shows is who are the real winners and losers in this major label game. Commercial radio DJs get mountains of cocaine and laptop computers, NY Attorney General Eliot L. Spitzer gets some free publicity on the eve of his Gubernatorial campaign, \$10M goes to a philanthropic charity, but the payola money and legal fees will all directly or indirectly come out of Franz Ferdinand's recoup cost so the band will never see it.

Payola will not end. Labels will just find better ways to hide it.

Additionally, there will also be no end to complete idiots like Franz Ferdinand, for agreeing to sign to a major label.

More importantly, commercial radio will continue to be compromised artistically as they flood the airwaves with music that has been bought by the majors. It's becoming increasingly hard to believe that there has *ever* been a genuine hit record on the Billboard charts in the entire history of the recording industry.

It's painfully irritating to know that the RIAA have been spending millions on filing lawsuits against kids who share their music but have consistently turned a blind eye to the illegal practices of their biggest shareholding members.

It's time for these pigs to lose their jobs and their companies.

Once again, we here at Brainwashed encourage the continuation of the Major Label Boycott. Do not buy major label releases, do not encourage their sales, do not participate in their game, do not fund these illegal practices, do not feed the lawyers' fat pockets.

Encourage your friends and family to think twice about the music they're supporting and the high ticket prices for stadium-venue events. Encourage other publications and radio outlets to

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take some time and thought and pursue more independent label releases and artists.