

## Editing Sample

### Statement by William O'Shaughnessy Re: The Silencing of Imus

*“Censorship ~~which results from corporate timidity in the face of economic boycotts intimidation or coercion~~ is just as dangerous as the stifling of creative and artistic expression by government fiat, decree, sanction or regulation.”*

“Howard Stern ... Opie and Anthony ... Bob Grant ... Bill Maher ... Chris Rock ... George Lopez ... and even – God forbid! – Rosie. We’ve always had terrible examples to defend. And Don Imus has given us another terrible example. But defend it we must.

Not the hateful and discomfoting words. But the right of the social commentator and critic (read: performer) to be heard... and the right of the people to decide.

Don Imus is a performer, a disc jockey, a humorist, a social commentator and a provocateur with a rapier sharp wit.

Unlike ~~many~~ several of our colleagues, he avoids ~~does not deal in~~ raucous vulgarity or incendiary right-wing rhetoric directed at immigrants, illegal aliens and other familiar targets of our tribe.

Throughout his brilliant career, Mr. Imus has been an equal opportunity offender ... poking fun at the high and mighty as well as the rest of us for our foibles and pomposity.

He may have ~~on occasion~~ ally gone too far during a remarkable 30-~~some~~-year career. Were his comments about the Rutgers basketball team racist or mean-spirited? Only Imus knows for sure, but we doubt it. Were they funny? No.

His mea culpa and apologies seemed sincere. We had thus hoped his sponsors and the executives ~~elders~~ at CBS, WFAN, MSNBC, and all those local affiliates ~~many stations across the country, that carry the I-Man~~ would stand up to the intimidation and pressure and continue to carry the I-Man ~~we’ve read about~~.

So many successful performers ~~who have achieved his kind of success~~ take ... and put nothing back. Imus has been extravagantly generous to a number of worthy

causes—some of it publicly known and some of it done very personally, anonymously and, **often** without fanfare.

Imus **claims** says he's been active in our profession for 30 years - actually, it's **closer to** ~~more like~~ 40 since he came roaring out of Cleveland. By our calculation, that's about 8,000 broadcasts, **with** ~~during which he has probably uttered~~ some 2,400,000 ad-libs. **Admittedly, none** ~~Not all of them as inartful, insensitive and wide of the mark as his fleeting reference to the Rutgers team.~~

~~There's no question—~~**T**his was a misfire. And it was to be hoped ~~that the~~ **executives** ~~elders at CBS and NBC would~~ **act accordingly** ~~see this for what it is.~~

**Here's** ~~I'll give you a baseball analogy.~~ **Suppose** ~~Let's say you had a pitcher, with remarkable stamina, who threw 8,000 innings: many of his pitches~~ **will miss** ~~are going to be wide of the plate, some way off the strike zone. A few may even hit the poor batter. And,~~ **during** ~~in the course of those 8,000 innings,~~ **spanning** ~~across 30 or 40 seasons, he may even bean the damn umpire on rare occasion!~~ But he's still ... a great pitcher.

With the possible exception of overnight **broadcasting** ~~work,~~ from dusk till dawn, morning drive is the toughest shift in **r**Radio. And when Imus plops those well traveled bones into a chair, straps on his earphones and throws his voice out into another **morning** ~~dawn,~~ armed only with his humor, wit and irreverence, he **may even be compared to** ~~is not, I think, unlike a Franciscan priest dragging himself up into a pulpit after 30 or 40 years to pronounce the Good News or at least make a passing attempt at Pure Truth before a sparse, sleepy congregation at an early Mass.~~

**But** ~~Imus' strives~~ **mission is not quite as noble or majestic.** ~~He has only to make us laugh~~ **or** ~~and make us think. I think—~~**T**hat's a pretty good way to make a living. And he should thus be protected from those unforgiving critics ~~abroad in the land who heaped scorn and derision~~ **upon him** ~~on the I-Man as a result of this controversy.~~

~~However it plays out, it is very much to be hoped that the contretemps will not impede or diminish this particular performer's brilliant— if occasionally irreverent and provocative— mind and tongue.~~

The guy **misfired**. But he should not have **been** ... fired.

~~I've spent an entire lifetime defending the raucous vulgarity of Howard Stern ... and even Bob Grant (after he called Mario Cuomo—the man I most admire in~~

~~public life—a disgusting name). One should remember Imus is essentially only a performer, an entertainer ... nothing more ... or any less.~~

~~As this thing has evolved ... many are growing more and more concerned about coercion via economic sanction or boycott which was orchestrated against a performer and his corporate masters.~~

~~Censorship which results from corporate timidity in the face of economic boycotts intimidation or coercion is just as dangerous as the stifling of creative and artistic expression by government fiat, decree, sanction or regulation.~~

~~That's just as treacherous as any racism, sexism or bigotry—real or imagined.~~

(original commentary, April 16, 2007)