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Weekend Special: "The Last Word"

Here are some final comments on last week's ongoing discussion of consultant **Holland Cooke's** recent *Daily Kos* op-ed on whether or not conservative Talk radio hosts' comments could provoke violence:

"Greetings from Stockholm, Oslo and Copenhagen where I am delivering a triple city Keynote to Scandinavian RadioDays," writes media consultant and voice imaging 'god' **Nick Michaels**. "I just wanted you to know that your Newsletter and Holland's comments were the subject of discussion with some British, Swedish and other international broadcasters. The Dixie Chicks were right and so is Holland Cooke. History vindicated the Dixie Chicks. What kind of person is against fairness and civil discourse? An intolerant bully with no room for anyone else's opinion. If the shoe fits!"



Phil Tower, GM of the *Allen Hunt Show* and veteran Talk programmer wrote: "What's clear to me is that Talk media is a big tent, with room for a wide range of political and non-political voices. There are a number of successful national Talk brands that are not easily labeled as politically left or right — think **Dave Ramsey**, **Phil Hendrie** and **Allen Hunt**. Shows that can still excel at presenting topical, timely and engaging subject matter without being branded as political or inflammatory."

Former **KSTP/Minneapolis** PD and talk host **Joe O'Brien** — now Director of Radio for **South Dakota Public Broadcasting** under his given name,



Joe Tlustos — writes, "Holland Cooke has the same freedom of speech brandished by the ocean of Talk Radio



hosts/executives that have risen up against him. This was either brave or foolish (or both) of Holland, as it will likely cost him a lot of dollars and clients. However, I applaud his courage to call it as he sees it. Some hosts are practicing their own ideological crusade each day they go into a studio. There are even a rare few who are thought-provoking and entertaining, and genuinely reflect the world around them with authenticity and creativity. However, it is plain as day a significant number of Talk Radio hosts are in it for the money and/or the power, and will do whatever is necessary to move the needle, with little or no regard to the wreckage they either cause or leave in their wake. Notice I didn't differentiate between "conservative" and "liberal" hosts...there are equal-opportunity offenders all along the ideological continuum. It is rare to find a true talent in this industry. It is all too common to find court jesters, unoriginal clones and flame throwers. As a broadcaster, I always felt it was my responsibility to try to leave the conversation in a better place than where I found it."



Former **CNN News** VP **Jerry DeMink** sums up his thoughts saying, "Funny how Cooke's News/Talk 'cred' is questioned, yet his article has garnered a lot of watercooler talk and commentary, pro and con. Ideological litmus tests will send millions of Americans to go looking for — or stay with — their local NPR affiliate. Like him or not, Obama won the election with a majority of the vote. Anyone programming to that crowd?"

Finally, we'll give Cooke the proverbial "last word" on the past week's cyber-dialog: "Your coverage prompted an important dialogue within our industry," says **McVay Media's** News/Talk specialist. "Many who commented seemed to be *reacting* rather than *responding*, which is human



nature. Conventional wisdom is comfortable. Still, every voice in this conversation contributed. The most fundamental misunderstanding among feedback you shared was that I'm suggesting that speech be less free. I'm saying just the opposite. I advocate what some who disagreed with me called 'prior restraint' — but, that's a legal term. I'm urging prior *self*-restraint. If we're more thoughtful about the possible consequences of what we're saying, we'll invite the government less to 'help us' choose our words. Call me an optimist, but I still hope that Talk radio can offer more than its caricature as being only about politics. Listeners are coping. Radio can help, if we're not just a one-joke act."

Thanks to the many **NTS MediaOnline Today** daily readers who contributed to a spirited and interactive discussion. **Not yet a subscriber?** Sign up in the box at the upper right.

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