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Disc Jockey Tells of Offers

But Most Declare Distinct Is 'Clear'

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A leading Washington disc jockey said yesterday he has turned down "offers of tens of thousands of dollars" to plug songs on his program.

He is Milt Grant, whose rock 'n roll program on WTTG-TV has a wide following among teen-agers. He said he had received the cash proposals in a period of less than four years.

Mr. Grant was one of 15 disc jockeys in the metropolitan area interviewed by The Star to obtain their reaction to a possible congressional investigation into payoffs to boost particular songs.

Follows Quiz Hearings

A House subcommittee which has completed hearings on rigged television quiz shows, meets December 9 to chart its future activity. It is expected to investigate payoff charges involving disc jockeys.

All the Washington area disc jockeys say they are not worried about any inquiry into song plug payoffs, but they said an investigation might affect colleagues elsewhere.

Each denied that he had taken any cash bribes.

Said Mr. Grant:

"My show has been a target for lots of people who want to get their records played on it. I've been approached many, many times, but I've never taken any of the money.

Washington Held "Clean"

"With some jockeys it's not whether a record is good or bad, but how much? While this attitude is very prevalent in other areas, Washington is a very clean town."

Eddie Gallaher, a long-time disc jockey on WTOP said that while some record representatives have "offered to take care of me if I would push their records, I have never taken a dime."

Mr. Gallaher said that several years ago, a man wanted

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to give him a \$100 bond to boost a record, but he added, "I told him I didn't need it and not to bother me."

He said that he did not know of any jockeys in the Washington area who take money to plug tunes. He added he believes this practice could flourish only in areas where disc jockeys are poorly paid.

Can't "Legislate Morals"

Asked if he thought a congressional investigation of the reported payoffs would accomplish anything, he replied:

"I don't think you can legislate morals. There is no business that is 100 per cent completely clean that I know of. I think the standards of the disc jockeys I know are very high."

Another well-known disc jockey, Lord Fauntleroy Bandy of WUST, said that "it wouldn't worry me if they did have an investigation and it might be a very good thing.

"I am sure that payoffs to 'dee-jays' are prevalent in the industry and that some disc jockeys are on record makers' payrolls. However, I don't know if anything like this is going on in Washington."

Mr. Bandy said that the payoffs usually occur in areas where the record spinners are underpaid. He added that there is "no question but that inferior material does get on the air."

He said that while he had received gifts of luggage and watches from record representatives these presents had not influenced his selection of songs.

Practice "Well Known"

Robert Howard, general manager of WPGC and a former disc jockey, declared that there is "no question in my mind but that payoffs to jockeys are going on in every major city in the United States in one degree or another. This is well known in the broadcasting industry."

He added that he had heard reports that this type of bribery is being practiced in Washington also, but he said he had no personal knowledge of it.

Johnny Dark, a WEAM disc jockey, said he did not think it would be worth while for anyone to attempt to bribe Washington dee-jays.

"The audience in the Washington area is so split up among the various stations that it wouldn't be practical to buy a jockey," he explained. "And I don't think any one jockey in this town has the power to make or break a record."

Other Dee-Jay Opinions

Here are some of the opinions expressed by other major disc jockeys in the Washington area:

Fred Fiske, WWDC: "Payola is nothing new in this business, but Washington is pretty clean. I was offered money once by a neophyte in the record business. I threw him out.

"Disc jockey wages are pretty high in this area. The major jockeys get from \$10,000 to about \$70,000 a year. This helps keep out corruption. Payola furnishes in areas where dee-jays are underpaid."

Felix Grant, WMAL: "I don't play the top popular records so I wouldn't be open to this type of approach by anyone. I never have run across this type of practice on the local level.

"I play contemporary jazz records of highly talented performers and this is something that has never had top popular appeal."

Dalton Favors Probe

Robert Dalton, WTOP: "I think an investigation would be a good idea. It's long overdue. I would like to see the culprits put under the spotlight.

"They make all of us look bad. If there are 10,000 jockeys in the country, more than 9,900 are completely honest. Most of them want to put on a good show and they can't do it if they play junk."

Jim Gibbons, WOL: "I have never been offered money to plug records. I think everyone would welcome an investigation because the ethical standards of jockeys are generally pretty high.

"Disc jockeys are probably among the highest paid people on radio station staffs. So they have less reason to be tempted."

Cal Hackett, WOOK: "I

think an investigation would be a good idea because disc jockeys are now under a cloud. We are regarded by some people as in the same class as smugglers or robbers.

"I believe an investigation would help improve our reputation."

Dick Denham, WINX: "A congressional investigation would be a good thing. If anything underhanded is going on, it is harmful for the business.

"Disc jockeys have a great effect on teen-agers and if these youngsters have a crook for a hero it's a bad situation."

Jules Henry, WEEL: "I think a congressional investigation would be a case of someone barking up a wrong tree. There is too much reliance on government already.

"It isn't fair to other artists to have the work of one plugged by cash payments. But this is a problem the industry should work out."

Milt Grant said he did not think such an inquiry "would help very much."

"If people want to be dishonest," he said, "they are going to find a way. I believe the Congressional committee is using items that will create wide publicity. I'm sure that there are similar practices in other industries, but they are less glamorous.

"I believe the best cure for this situation is the competitive spirit of the business. I can't play 'hyps'—records that are not happening and which are not popular."

Asked about reports that some disc jockeys are given expensive gifts in an attempt to influence their selection of records played, Mr. Grant said:

"The only gifts I have received have been Christmas presents and they have not been too expensive. I never considered them payola."