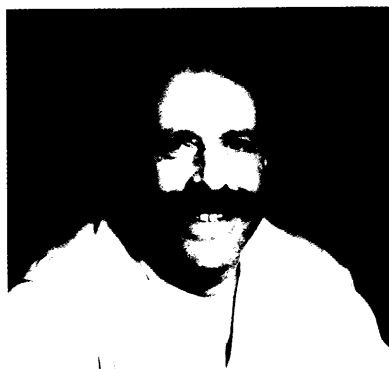


# IN HIS OWN WORDS (WELL, SORTA)

**LIP SERVICE recently had the privilege of interviewing Mercury Records' Sr. VP of Sales, JEFF BRODY. We wanted to find out why he makes the big bucks. We've made our conclusions - now you decide:**

**LIP SERVICE: Which marketing/sales techniques do you find are timeless?**



**JEFF BRODY:** Without oversimplifying, one of the most basic premises is that if people hear something they like, they will buy it. To that point, in-store play is crucial. Every record store is a mini-radio station as far as I'm concerned. Getting music into the hands of retailers and the PGD sales and marketing force as soon as possible gets people involved in the music early so they feel part of the process and take ownership of that record. Covering the basics - getting the merchandising ready, etc., is also essential. (laughing) Getting the record on the radio doesn't hurt either!

**LS: Any techniques that don't apply anymore?**

**JB:** Yes! You CAN'T go to the buyer anymore and say, "It's the end of the billing quarter, I need your help," or "Have I ever hurt you?" or "Trust me. It's a smash!" or "I need to bury it somewhere, please

help!" - those don't fly today and I really miss that, so I practice saying them to my wife!

**LS: Have you noticed any changes in distribution?**

**JB:** Basically, we went from having five major distributors five or six years ago to moving toward indie distribution because it was the "credible" thing to do. If you were an alternative band, you didn't want to be with a major and you had to go through an independent distributor to get credibility. Unfortunately, those distributors had their own set of problems. And the independent [retailers] who bought from the indie distributors couldn't pay them. To its credit, however, indie distribution did and still does break bands. Then to really do what was necessary [to make a group/artist successful], artists and managers realized that the majors are the ones they need to be with. Now it's absolutely back to the majors. You can see what's happening at the indie level as some of the independent distributors begin

**"Every record store is a mini-radio station as far as I'm concerned."**

consolidating and closing, but there is still a great need and purpose for independent distribution.

**LS: The majors have long been criticized for the way they have dealt with independent retailers. Many of these record stores "start" records, don't they?**

**JB:** They absolutely do. Mercury Records was the first record label, I believe, to work a record through the Coalition of Independent Music Stores. They have helped us on **RUSTED ROOT, THE CARDIGANS, MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSTONES** and they certainly were and still are a major influence on

breaking **CAKE**. We pay a lot of attention to them and we have our sales/field marketing departments at Mercury and PGD set up that way. **MIKE MASKA** (VP National Sales/Field Marketing) heads up our Mercury team. **MIKE** oversees our Director of National Sales, **ROB TANGEL**, who strictly deals with independent stores. And, on the urban side, we have **KATRINA SCOTT** doing the same. On the PGD side, **CURT EDDY** (VP Field Marketing) heads up the team consisting of **REBECCA CARROLL** (Dir. College Rep. Program), **PAUL DELLAFIORA** (Dir. Artist Development), and **AL JONES** (Sr. National Dir. Black Artist Development). We are very involved with and committed to the Metropolitan Independent Retailers Association and other coalitions and trying to make them stronger.

**LS: What prompted your decision to release radio-only singles on some of your new artists like THE CARDIGANS?**

**JB:** Basically, we want to sell full-length CDs and want to establish artists and do not want to play the singles game due to the situation out in the marketplace regarding that now. And we don't want to cannibalize album sales, which some of us feel is a reality and a topic of continuing dialogue and debate.

**LS: Why release a commercial single on HANSON?**

**JB:** We chose to have one because this was a totally pop-driven record. We knew single sales would be incredible. That single created a tremendous amount of excitement as it built up to #1 [on the Billboard singles chart] for three weeks in a row. So we got into the singles game, because we knew the single would have a major impact on the band and the album.

*Brody pg. 9* →

## Rider Wrong: What U2 Chows Down On

Even though U2 is touring the U.S., it took a Brit to smuggle the details of what the superstars want and need (okay, not their needs) in their dressing room. **MATTHEW WRIGHT**, from London's *Mirror*, managed to get a peak at the Irish band's rider - you know, the little addendum a band includes when it agrees to play a venue, detailing the kind of necessities the members need to sustain life before they go on stage.



According to **WRIGHT**, **BONO** and the boys are real health-food fanatics, and with the exception of **ADAM CLAYTON**, teetotalers - at least when they're working. They may all agree on the music, but not one of them drinks the same brand of bot-

tlled water. But don't take it from us, just peruse the band's updated menu requirements. The menu is bound to change sometimes - 14 months munching on melba toast and feta cheese tends to get a little tedious.

**BONO**, who we all know is careful about his weight, requests a plate of crudites, including broccoli, cauliflower, celery, black olives, and carrots, with a side of ranch dressing, and a small loaf of thin-sliced miniature white bread - all of

this to be washed down with a case of Naya mineral water. Evian or Perrier won't do; it must be Naya.

**LARRY MULLEN, JR.** on the other hand, metabolizes at a much higher rate and requests three (count 'em,

three) soy-veggie burgers with squaw-bread buns and jack cheese; crisps (that's potato chips to us Yanks); and salsa with guacamole. **MULLEN** demands three bottles of Perrier water and one entire case of Snapple peach iced tea.

**THE EDGE** can be very fussy, but in this case, his menu requests are the most colorful: stuffed mushrooms with feta cheese and basil, rainbow pasta salad with a light ginger vinaigrette dressing, wheat melba toast, and one case of Snapple raspberry iced tea.

**ADAM CLAYTON**, however, attempts to bring a little bit of the British Isles with him when he chows down on finger sandwiches (sans red meat), tofu spinach salad topped with whole-wheat croutons and Dijon dressing, and to quench his thirst, a single bottle of Kendall Jackson chardonnay and an entire case of Aquafina water.

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**LS: How long will you be committed to working a band like RADISH?**

**JB:** This is a long-term project, so for as long as it takes. We never stuffed records out into the marketplace, and we planned to concentrate in Dallas and the Texas area. For three months prior to the release of the album, we had a single that we concentrated on in just the Dallas market and they were selling a couple thousand singles a week. The plan from the beginning is that this is a develop-

ing record, not a "hype" record and radio is now expanding.

**LS: Any thoughts on some of the "huge" groups of the 70's and 80's returning?**

**JB:** The thing with the groups from the 70's and 80's is that if you decide to release a record from one of these multi-platinum artists or groups and have your [sales] expectations at a reasonable level, you can have a successful record. If, on the other hand, you expect this group or artist to sell millions of records

out of the box and debut at #1 - that's not going to happen. You can have a very successful record if you keep your expectations at a tempered level AND you WORK the record, you never know what can happen.

All releases have to be tempered to what is happening in the marketplace. One of the reasons is because of the state of the retailers financially. Even if you want to go out with 500,000 to 1 million records, if that record is not set-up properly and planned - you couldn't do it even if you wanted to do it. You'll end up putting the records in the wrong place. The name of the game is to just get re-orders from the beginning.

**LS: Do you have any pearls of wisdom on the state of retail this year?**

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Hamming it up at the Hanson/Sam Goody in-store at Universal Studio's City Walk in LA (back l to r): Sam Goody's David Robeiro, Bob Munoz, Judyth Springer-Thurman, Denise Lizarraga, Phil Olney. (front l to r): Taylor, Zach and Isaac Hanson.