

## **INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

For the second consecutive year, New York's AM radio stations with news talk formats have employed very few if any non-whites as talk show hosts. That's the findings gleaned from our survey of the four AM "news talk" radio stations, **WABC** Radio; **WEVD**; **WNYC**; and **WOR**, conducted this past month, which updates and reiterates our findings from a year ago of the same radio stations.

Three of the four radio stations surveyed—WABC, WEVD, and WOR—had no non-white talk show hosts on their schedules. And the other, WNYC AM, had only token non-white representation—a single black/female—among its roster of talk show hosts.

This year, only two of the four stations responded to our survey with answers and explanations—**WABC and WOR**—the other two, WEVD and WNYC, did not respond. Last year, only WNYC failed to report and respond directly to our survey. Nevertheless, we gathered information about these two radio stations' employment profiles from their websites. During the course of our survey, WEVD, owned by the Forward Association, was sold and is changing to a sports format.

## **RADIO STATIONS REPORTING NO MINORITY TALK SHOW HOSTS**

WABC News Talk Radio once again had no non-white news talk show hosts on its entire 24-hour, seven-day schedule. They have employed in the past year, and the year before, only white talk show hosts. This is particularly revelatory since in the past year WABC had opportunities to hire. It chose to array its programming schedule with only white talk show hosts. WABC AM Radio's schedule of talk show hosts, as of July 2001, follows:

Weekdays: 5:00 AM-9:00 AM

**Curtis Sliwa** "The Curtis & Kuby Show"  
**Ron Kuby**

Weekdays: 9:00 AM-11:00 AM

**John Gambling**

Saturdays: 6:00 AM-10:00 AM

**John Gambling**

Sundays: 11:00 AM-1:00 PM

Weekdays: 11:00 AM-11:45 AM

**Tom Martino** "The Troubleshooter"

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## **WABC AM TALK RADIO SCHEDULE—CONTINUED**

Weekdays: 8:55 AM; 11:45 AM; 6:55 PM

**Paul Harvey**

Weekdays: 12:00 PM-3:00 PM

**Rush Limbaugh**

Weekdays: 3:00 PM-6:00 PM

**Sean Hannity**

Weekdays: 6:00 PM-9:00 PM

**Steve Malzberg**      “The Buzz”  
**Richard Bey**

Weekdays: 9:00 PM-11:00 PM

**Steve Malzberg**

Weekdays: 12:00 AM-1:00AM  
Weekdays: 11:00 PM-12:00AM  
Saturdays: 12:00 AM-1:00AM

**Dr. Laura Schlesinger**

Weekdays: 1:00 AM-5:00 AM  
Saturdays: 1:00 AM-5:00 AM

**Art Bell**

Sundays: 12:00 AM-1:00 AM  
7:00 PM-9:30 PM  
Saturdays: 9:00 PM-12:00 AM

**John Batchelor**      “Batchelor and Alexander”  
**Paul Alexander**

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**WABC AM TALK RADIO SCHEDULE—CONTINUED**

Saturdays: 4:00 PM-9:00 PM

**Lynn Samuels**

Sundays: 9:30 PM-12:00 AM

**Matt Drudge** “The Matt Drudge Show”

Saturdays: 1:00 PM-4:00 PM

**Mike Gallagher** “The Mike Gallagher Show”

Sundays: 9:00 AM-11:00 AM  
4:00 PM-7:00 PM

**Bob Brinker**

In addition to the regular talk shows (above), all hosted by whites, WABC AM Radio carries “The Health Show with Dr. Dean Edell.”

WABC Radio’s management would disagree with our characterization of its all-white talk show host employment profile. Indeed, WABC AM Radio’s program director Phil Boyce reported that WABC employs two non-whites as talk show hosts, **Babita Hariani**, who he identified as “Indian”, and **Joel Santisteban**, who was identified as “Cuban.” We do not dispute the identification of their race or ethnicity. On the WABC website, however, Babita Hariani is identified as a **reporter**, not as a host of a regularly scheduled news talk program. Moreover, Mr. Boyce’s contention that Ms. Hariani is a “co-host” of The John Gambling Show was not borne out by either its own website or by our daily monitoring of that morning talk show. The John Gambling Show is exactly that. Unlike Curtis and Kuby, Batchelor and Alexander, and Malzberg and Bey (who are identified on air and on the website as co-hosts), WABC AM Radio’s website identifies Babita Hariani as “Morning News Reporter.” Moreover, her profile does *not* describe her as “co-host” of The John Gambling Show or as “co-host” of any other talk show on the WABC schedule.

We also discounted the representation given us from WABC that Joel Santisteban is a talk show host in the same category as the others on its roster of talk show hosts. For whatever reason, Joel Santisteban was not on the website’s roster of WABC NewsTalk talk show hosts. In any event, as a “sports talk” commentator, Santisteban is limited in his “NFL Gameday” venue to the sports ghetto.

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### **WOR Radio 710**

**WOR Radio General Manager Bob Bruno reported that the station employs not a single non-white talk show host, and hasn’t employed a non-white talk show host for the entire period of the survey.** (Last year, WOR also had no non-white talk show hosts). As a radio station in a major media market, WOR has an extensive, full-day program schedule, especially during weekdays:

Monday-Friday: 5:00 AM-9:00 AM  
Saturdays: 5:30 AM-10:00 AM

**Ed Walsh** "The WOR Morning Show"

Monday-Friday 9:00 AM-10:00 AM  
10:00 PM-12:00 AM

**Dr. Joy Browne** "The Dr. Joy Browne Show"

Monday-Friday: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

**Joan Hamburg**

Monday-Friday: 12:00 PM-1:00 PM

**Arthur Schwartz** "Food Talk With Arthur Schwartz"

Monday-Friday: 1:00 PM-3:00 PM

**Daria Dolan** "The Dolans"  
**Ken Dolan**

Monday-Friday: 3:00 PM-6:00 PM

**Bob Grant** "The Bob Grant Show"

Monday-Friday: 6:00 PM-8:00 PM

**Joan Rivers** "The Joan Rivers Show"

Monday-Friday: 8:00 PM-10:00 PM

**Dr. Ronald Hoffman** "Health Talk"

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**WOR AM TALK RADIO 710 SCHEDULE—CONTINUED**

Tuesday-Saturday: 12:00 AM-5:00 AM

**Joey Reynolds** "The Joey Reynolds Show"

**WEVD NewsTalk Radio 1050**

From morning into night into morning, daily, WEVD has broadcast only white talk show hosts. Its all-Caucasian daily line-up has featured:

**Bill Mazer** (5:30 AM-10:00 AM);

**Dan Patrick** (1:00 PM-4:00 PM)—a sports show;

<b><u>Ed Koch</u></b>	(4:00 PM-5:00 PM);
<b><u>Sam Greenfield</u></b>	(5:00 PM-7:00 PM);
<b><u>Lionel</u></b>	(10:00 PM-11:00 PM);
<b><u>Alan Colmes</u></b>	(11:00 PM-2:00 AM);
<b><u>Jim Bohannon</u></b>	(2:00 AM-5:30 AM)

### **WNYC AM Radio**

This listener and corporate-sponsored public affairs station this year again failed to respond to questions about the racial/ethnic profile of its talk show line-up. Its CEO, Laura Walker, who is Caucasian, did not bother to even acknowledge receipt of our survey, for the second year in a row. A graduate of Wesleyan University—nicknamed “Diversity University”—Ms. Walker offers no explanation or apology for the apparent paucity of non-white talk show hosts on WNYC’s local schedule. This lack of responsiveness stands in stark contrast to her station’s touting her credentials as a CEO with “leadership [and] vision.” We got the information we needed from WNYC’s website. From WNYC’s website, we’ve ascertained that WNYC-AM appears to have just one non-white local talk show host, an African-American woman, **Jo Ann Allen**.

WNYC’s other local talk show hosts are **Richard Hake** (“Weekend Edition”); **Mark Hilan** (“Morning Edition”); **Brian Lehrer** (“On the Line”); **Leonard Lopate** (“New

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York & Company”); and **Kerry Nolan** (“Weekend Edition”). In addition, **Soterios Johnson** is listed as “mid-day host” of WNYC News. Interestingly, WNYC does not object to identifying Mr. Johnson’s ethnicity on its website. Under Soterios Johnson, it says “Before you ask. . . It’s Greek. And so is Johnson. . .”

### **CONCLUSIONS**

For the second consecutive year, we have discerned a pronounced pattern of racial exclusivity and/or tokenism practiced by New York’s four major news talk AM radio stations. With the sale of one—WEVD—there will be no net loss of minority talk show hosts in the New York metropolitan area simply because WEVD did not employ non-white talk show hosts. Indeed, its management has informed us that to its memory it has **never** had a single non-white talk show host on its schedule.

We find and conclude, for the second consecutive year, that the mainstream, majority-owned AM Talk Radio stations are broadcasting only or mostly Caucasian talk show hosts daily. Therefore, they are not taking seriously their responsibility for equal employment opportunity, much less practicing inclusive, racially-diverse hiring. This is in stark contrast to other major media outlets in the New York metropolitan

area—television, and newspapers, in particular, where racial diversity in the newsroom among news anchors, writers, editors, and opinion staff is now routine.

This continued underemployment of non-whites raises serious questions about the leadership, priorities, and direction of AM talk radio in the New York metropolitan market, one of the biggest and most diverse markets in the nation. The racial data provided or ascertained by us of the talk show hosts on AM talk radio stations is a wake-up call, because station managers offer feeble or no excuses for the glaring absence and/or persistent underrepresentation of minority talk show hosts on majority-owned radio stations.

We have concluded that racial arrogance is more likely an explanation for these patterns than mere naiveté on the part of the stations' top brass. The tin ears belong to not only hiring authorities but also to the corporate executives who have oversight responsibilities and who otherwise claim to know their communities and their corporation's social responsibilities.

A lack of diversity and/or inclusiveness at this late stage in our country's advance into the 21<sup>st</sup> century is unnecessary, inexcusable, and unpardonable. Station managers and the corporate CEOs of news talk radio stations must be alert to both the opportunities and responsibilities they have to change these entrenched racial patterns, and to hire Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and other non-whites, and not only Caucasians as talk show hosts. Any

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further delay in doing so will subject these stations' hiring to closer scrutiny and, very likely, challenge.

**Radio corporate CEOs and the civil rights community should meet as soon as possible to map out plans for correcting these patterns of invisibility, underrepresentation and tokenism.** Initiating voluntary affirmative action measures can be a signal from the station managers, and their corporate entities, that they are prepared to lead, to be visionaries, to be equal opportunity practitioners, rather than clueless, obtuse, obdurate foot soldiers of resistance to equal opportunity. They must lead in breaking with tokenism and with the old patterns and habits of racial exclusion.

Even at the majority-owned AM radio stations where there are non-white talk show hosts, tokenism seems to be the rule. There is "a" black talk show host at WNYC AM. Seldom, if at all, does a single radio station report or claim to have **Black, Latino, and Asian** talk show hosts, as well as Caucasians on their schedules. We must plumb the reasons for the paucity of non-white AM radio talk show hosts. It cannot be that there aren't talented, capable, available minorities for these coveted posts. Indeed, AM Talk Radio in New York has the advantage of being able to draw from a national pool of talent in hiring.

Whatever the reasons, the virtual exclusion of Blacks and Hispanics and Asians as talk show hosts at major AM New York radio stations—however few stations that remain with the news-talk or all-talk format—indicates a head-in-the-sand approach to the diversity imperatives of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This all-white or virtually all-white hiring is especially

outmoded, dysfunctional, and very likely discriminatory in an equal opportunity environment. Clearly, the effect of these employment patterns is discriminatory on non-whites, and is offensive to all people of good will. Such patterns are the more dramatic and suspect given the almost exclusive employment of minority talk show hosts at minority-owned radio stations. That is a separate racial track that appears to be imposed on the minority talent pool, rather than a consequence of preference on the part of non-whites seeking on-air opportunities as talk show hosts.

This pattern of *de facto racial segregation* in AM talk radio is easily and readily remediable. All that is needed—indeed required—is for the stations’ hiring authorities to do the right thing—to take prompt, corrective actions to achieve inclusionary hiring. **We recommend that they take these remedial actions, forthwith.**

### **NOTE AS TO METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

The survey instrument used was prepared by the New York Civil Rights Coalition’s Executive Director, Michael Meyers. A copy is available upon request. Its purpose was to ascertain from the management of the radio stations data on the talk show hosts on their regular broadcast schedules, and to discern in particular whether there was anything to the rumors of either a preference in hiring for whites or a pattern of exclusion and/or underemployment of non-whites. “Non-whites”

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for the purposes of this survey were defined as “African-Americans/Blacks”; “Asians”; and “Hispanics (Non-White)”. We collected data on regular talk show hosts, not temporaries or substitutes.

The radio stations that got the questionnaire—WABC, WEVD, WNYC, and WOR—were either commercially-sponsored or listener-sponsored AM radio stations with all-talk or mostly-talk formats. Excluded were the all-news stations WCBS and WINS, and any stations with “mixed” programming such as religious or sports-talk formats.

We asked the station managers to report on and assess their station’s employment profile, and to tell us as well whether in the past year (since our last survey) they had any hiring opportunities. From the completed questionnaires, and from daily listening of the shows, as well as from information gleaned from the websites of these four radio stations, we collected and analyzed the data as to the race/ethnicity of their talk show host line-ups.

### **ABOUT THE NEW YORK CIVIL RIGHTS COALITION**

The New York Civil Rights Coalition was formed in 1986, in the aftermath of the racially-motivated chase and attack on blacks in Howard Beach, Queens. The Coalition is today a not-for-profit civil rights organization, incorporated in 1991; governed by a distinguished and diverse board of directors, it exists to kindle the spirit of interracial cooperation in achieving a truly open and integrated society. The New York Civil Rights Coalition works purposefully, in schools, communities, and with other organizations, as

well as with grassroots, academic, civic, governmental and non-governmental leaders to foster equal opportunity in neighborhoods, schools, voting rights, employment, and the social and civic life of our nation.

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