

An Open Letter to WUMB

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In years gone by, Scott Alaric delivered an excellent hour of folk music history each Saturday afternoon. Alaric's show was tightly scripted and highly polished, as only a weekly hour can be. As Alaric's health began to fail, the station and Brendan Hogan, the morning DJ, decided to expand Alaric's methods to the morning show on weekdays. Starting one January about 2020, Hogan's formerly-superb show lost its way.

Before the change, Hogan typically played 13 or more tracks an hour. His excellent voice brought listeners what they needed: naming the artists and tracks after they play.

Since the change, he has been noted to play as few as 8 tracks in an hour, a reduction of up to 40%. Hogan spends the extra time talking about the history related to the song, both before and after it plays. Not being well-scripted, his unpolished commentary is peppered with such as "um." And just when I cannot stand it anymore, he often breaks to advertisements: Summer Acoustic Music Week, tracks coming up later in the show, others shows, etc. It's worse than that. Hogan clearly selects his tracks to support his talk. All the other DJs – even the Murder the Beatles self-promoter – make better track selections than Hogan.

For example, one week, I noticed Hogan blathering on about Robert Johnson, but I didn't notice any special music. The third time this happened, I stopped what I was doing and listened to the tune when Hogan got to it: a simple song with simple guitar strumming and unimpressive singing. If this man was such a star, select something impressive – performed by somebody else, if necessary!

The final straw for me was around 15 May 2025, when Hogan played a track with the refrain "If you ain't gonna do me right, I might just do you in, ain't it a shame." There is way too much abuse of women, without playing a song that appears to legitimize such thinking. I now avoid Hogan. I plan to wake to my own extensive music collection on weekdays, via USB, as soon as I get a new Internet radio.

Music selection from other DJs on WUMB is definitely better, but there is a problem station-wide. I don't recognize most of the selections from this century. That's because the station does not repeat them often enough during the same time slot to drive them home. Listeners depend on radio to introduce and repeat

new music – to get us singing along, buying the music, and exploring further tracks on our own. That almost never happens to me these days. WUMB should focus on one song per album, just like tried-and-true top 40 radio of the past. DJs who play multiple or obscure tracks from an album are not doing the listeners any favors (only perhaps stroking their own egos).

Thanks for your consideration of these important matters. Long-time contributor,

Pete Matthews Jr