

Fugitive radio

Can Quebec's most dangerous shock jock circumvent the CRTC? Don't bet on it



Pierre LEMIEUX

In 1787, Grigori Aleksandrovich Potemkin, governor of Crimea, led his boss and former lover Czarina Catherine II on a tour of the province. The story (or the legend) is that, in order to impress the Czarina with his administration, he had fake villages with only house fronts—"Potemkin villages"—erected along her route.

On March 17, 2006, Jeff Fillion launched his new Internet radio station, radiopirate.com, exposing again the Potemkin village of "Canadian values."

Remember the battle. On July 13, 2004, the CRTC ordered CHOI-FM, a Quebec City radio station, to stop broadcasting because host Fillion had violated a regulation "prohibiting abusive comment that tends or is likely to expose a person or a group to hatred or contempt [in order] to insure that Canadian values are respected." Large demonstrations were held in Quebec City and Ottawa. CHOI appealed the censors' order to the Federal Appeal Court.

The court judgment was rendered last September, and totally supported the CRTC's claims that broadcasting is a privilege. "Actually," said the learned judges, "there was no censorship since the remarks that were complained about were made and disseminated on public airwaves." In the meantime, Fillion and others at CHOI had been condemned by a civil court to pay hefty damages for libel; and Fillion had been fired by CHOI (or had resigned, according to the station's official position).

Although Patrice Demers, the owner of CHOI, projected the image of a tough guy geared up for a big fight for liberty, he now admits that Fillion was let go because of "his incapacity to stay within the limits of the law." He does not deny the rumours that he may sell the station to solve his problem with the CRTC. Even Fillion has been partially tamed by his brush with the censors.

CHOI is now waiting to see if the Supreme Court will hear an appeal, and their brief is actually quite strong on liberty principles. But the short story is probably that the state has won.

In our global Potemkin village, everybody is supposed to be nice and quiet and smiling when dealing with officially protected groups and

state-enforced taboos. As Robert Wright says in his politically correct bestseller, *Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny*, a requirement of our times is "not saying hateful things about whole national, ethnic, or religious groups, or even about other people." Smile and obey. Despite the First Amendment, Howard Stern had to migrate to satellite radio to avoid the heavy fines imposed by the Federal Communications Commission.

Behind the Potemkin facades of the New Age, the reality is very different. Politically incorrect jokes proliferate in real society. Despite official feminism, most women remain feminine and seductive, and boys are still boys. "Canadian values" need the protection of armed cops. And the more the state tries to socially engineer and control life, the more violent some subcultures become. Shock jocks are just bringing this chasm into the open.

How long will it be before the rulers extend their control to satellite radio and the Internet—and radiopirate.com, where Jeff Fillion can say what he is forbidden to say on state-controlled radio and television? Fillion thinks it can't happen, since he can put his servers wherever he wants. He doesn't realize it's not his machines the state would go after, but him personally.

I confess that I don't like the raw populism, the bad jokes, and the lack of culture of the Howard Sterns and

“WHAT JEFF FILLION DOESN'T REALIZE IS THAT IT'S NOT HIS SERVERS THAT THEY'LL COME AFTER—IT'S HIM

Jeff Fillions of this world. Yet, their revolt is refreshing. And the ones who really deserve hatred are those who, with their frigid self-righteousness and their small frustrated lives, are forcing us into their love concentration camps.

At the time I was mulling over writing this column, I stumbled upon a scene that I found tragically emblematic of our pure, hygienic, oppressive, statist society: outside a Université de Montréal building, a young man in a wheelchair, for all his handicapped access and the lip service paid to his condition (provided he behaves), had been forced out in the cold to have a smoke with a friend. They were both smiling. 