Unknown Subject; 45 r.p.m. Recording "Louie Louie"

POSSIBLE INTERSTATE TRANSPORTATION OF OBSCENE MATTER

USA's Office, EDM, Federal Building, Detroit, Mich., advised receiving complaints concerning recording "Louie Louie", sung by the "Kingsmen". Claims were made to USA's Office, and SAC Office, Detroit, that obscene language was contained in this recording. The record was produced by the Wand Management Corporation, NYC, NY. FBI Laboratory, Washington, D.C., advised it was not possible to determine whether this recording is obscene. Complainants advised that when this record is played on 33 r.p.m. some teenagers claim they detect obscene language. USA ROBERT J. GRACE, EDM, Federal Building, Detroit, Mich., advised he is awaiting opinion from Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., regarding what action should be taken in regard to this recording.

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DETAILS:

AT DETROIT, MICHIGAN

The following investigation is predicated upon information received from Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) JAMES F. FINN, Chief, Criminal Division, Eastern District of Michigan, 809 Federal Building, Detroit, Michigan, on March 29, 1965, in that he advised he had received a telephone
call from Fuhrmann Junior High School, Warren, Michigan, advising him that a recording known as "Louie Louie" contains obscene language. According to Mr. FINN, he advised that this is a 45 r.p.m. recording, which is being played on local Detroit area radio stations. He indicated to Mr. FINN that when this record is played as a 45 r.p.m. it is unintelligible, however, when played at the speed of 33 r.p.m., the language in the record is clear and undoubtedly obscene. He advised Mr. FINN that the recording is being played as a 45 r.p.m. by local disc jockeys, but youngsters are playing the recording on a 33 r.p.m. speed so that they can discern the alleged obscene language in this recording.

On March 30, 1965, AUSA ROBERT J. GRACE, Eastern District of Michigan, 839 Federal Building, also contacted the Detroit Office of the FBI, and the Federal Communications Commission, 1029 Federal Building, Detroit, Michigan, regarding the record entitled "Louie Louie", sung by the "Kingsmen".

On March 30, 1965, B.C. contacted AUSA GRACE at his office. Assistant Engineer in Charge, Federal Communications Commission, 1029 Federal Building, Detroit, also was invited by Mr. GRACE to appear in his office to listen to this recording. The record was made available to Mr. GRACE by Michigan, and on March 30, 1965, who also appeared at Mr. GRACE's office concerning the recording.

stated that they had the record with them and claimed that this record is a 45 r.p.m. recording of the song, "Louie Louie". They stated that this record has become very popular over the radio stations which cater to the teenage "rock and roll" fans in the greater Detroit area, and is considered to be "a best seller".
They stated that when this record is played on 33 r.p.m. speed, obscene and suggestive words can be interpreted in this song. They made available a copy of the words to this song as they interpreted the song after listening to it played numerous times on the 33 r.p.m. speed. When this record was played in the Office of AUSA GRACE on March 30, 1965, the aforementioned individuals listened to it being played numerous times both on a 45 r.p.m. speed and a 33 r.p.m. speed. Mr. GRACE and [redacted] advised they were not able to discern any of the obscene language and found the record played on both speeds as being quite unintelligible.

On March 31, 1965, John C. Fuhrmann Junior High School, 5155 14 Mile Road, Warren, Michigan, telephonically contacted the Detroit FBI Office to advise that he had found a sheet of paper on a student at this school which contained obscene words to the song, "Louie Louie". He stated he questioned the student and the student told him that this is a popular song, and when played on a 33 r.p.m. speed, the obscene and suggestive words can be fairly interpreted in the song "Louie Louie". He stated that he found out that many teenagers in the Warren, Michigan area are buying this record and playing it on the 33 r.p.m. speed.

Mr. GRACE advised on March 30, 1965, that he contacted the Dearborn, Michigan Radio Station WKNR, which caters to teenagers and plays mostly "rock and roll" records. The station manager advised Mr. GRACE he would telegraph the record company in New York City to obtain the lyrics to "Louie Louie". The Radio Station WKNR received a telegram from [redacted] Septer Records, New York City, New York, giving the correct copyrighted lyrics to "Louie Louie" and they are as follows:

"LOUIS LOUIS OH YEA AWAY WE GO
YE A YE A YE A LOUIS LOUIS OH BABY AWAY FINE LITTLE GIRL
SHE WAITS FOR ME ME CATCH THE SHIP ACROSS THE SHIP SEA I
SAILED THE SHIP ALL ALONE I NEVER THINK ILL MAKE IT HOME
LOUIS LOUIS AWAY WE GO THREE NIGHTS AND DAYS WE SAIL THE
SEA ME THINK OF GIRL CONSTANTLY ON THE SHIP DREAM SHE
THREE I SMELL THE ROSE IN HER HAIR LOUIS LOUIS OH BABY
AWAY WE GO ME SEE JAMAICA MOON ABOVE IT WONT BE LONG ME
SHE ME LOVE ME TAKE HER IN ARMS AND THEN I TELL HER I
NEVER LEAVE AGAIN LOUIS LOUIS OH YEA AWAY WE GO"
The record that made available to the Detroit FBI Office is a 45 r.p.m. recording entitled, "Louie Louie", (RICHARD BERRY), sung by the "Kingsmen". This is a Wand recording labeled 143-A 50083; on the other side of the record is a recording entitled, "Haunted Castle" (LYNN EASTON), sung by the "Kingsmen", labeled 143-B 50084. The address on the record for the Wand Management Corporation is 1650 Broadway, New York, New York. The songs "Louie Louie" and "Haunted Castle" are both sung by the "Kingsmen". Both recordings are listed as being a Jerden Production by KEN CHASE and JERRY DENNON.

The Detroit FBI Office submitted the record to the FBI Laboratory, Washington, D. C.. The FBI Laboratory in a communication to the Detroit FBI dated May 17, 1965, advised that three additional copies of the phonograph record have been submitted to the Laboratory. One of the previous records was submitted by the Tampa FBI Office, and this recording was distributed by Limax Music, New York City, New York. Another record was submitted by the San Diego FBI Office, produced by Wand, 1650 Broadway, New York, New York. The third record was submitted by the Indianapolis FBI Office, which was recorded by the "Kingsmen" entitled "Louie Louie".

The FBI Laboratory advised that because the lyrics of the recording "Louie Louie" could not be definitely determined in the Laboratory examination, it was not possible to determine whether the recording is obscene.

The New York FBI Office by communication dated May 26, 1965, advised the Detroit FBI Office that on May 19, 1965, Wand Management Corporation, 254 West 54th Street, New York City, New York, made available to the New York Office one 45 r.p.m. recording entitled "Louie Louie", (RICHARD BERRY), sung by the "Kingsmen", Wand recording 143-A 50083; reverse side "Haunted Castle" (LYNN EASTON) sung by the "Kingsmen", Wand recording 143-B 50084.
made available autostat copies of the following:

1. The words to the song "Louie Louie".

2. A letter to the President of Wand Records dated February 13, 1964, from the Federal Communications Commission, Washington, D.C., concerning complaints received by the Federal Communications Commission concerning the broadcasting of the record "Louie Louie".

3. A letter from the Federal Communications Commission, Washington, D.C., dated February 14, 1964, setting forth the complete background concerning the production of the record "Louie Louie".


The Federal Communications Commission, Washington, D.C., subsequently granted a clearance to the record "Louie Louie". She explained that for approximately two years her company has been receiving unfounded complaints concerning the recording "Louie Louie". She advised that to the best of her knowledge, the trouble was started by an unidentified college student, who made up a series of obscene verses for "Louie Louie" and then sold them to fellow students. She stated, that it is her opinion that a person can take any 45 r.p.m. recording and reduce its speed to 33 r.p.m. and imagine obscene words, depending upon the imagination of the listener.

The words to the song, "Louie Louie" as furnished by are as follows:
"LOUIE - LOUIE"

"LOUIE, LOUIE...OH YEA, A-WAY WE GO
YEA, YEA, YEA, YEA, YEA
LOUIE, LOUIE...OH BABY, A-WAY WE GO

"A FINE LITTLE GIRL - SHE WAIT FOR ME
ME CATCH THE SHIP - A-CROSS THE SEA
I SAILED THE SHIP - ALL A-LONE
I NEVER THINK - I'LL MAKE IT HOME

"LOUIE, LOUIE....A-WAY WE GO

"THREE NIGHTS AND DAYS WE SAILED THE SEA
ME THINK OF GIRL CONSTANT-LY
ON THE SHIP - DREAM SHE THERE
I SMELL THE ROSE - IN HER HAIR

"LOUIE, LOUIE....OH BABY, A-WAY WE GO

"ME SEE JA-MAI-CA - MOON A-BOVE
IT WON'T BE LONG - ME SEE ME LOVE
ME TAKE HER IN ARMS AND THEN
I TELL HER I NEVER LEAVE A-GAIN

"LOUIE, LOUIE....OH YEA, A-WAY WE GO"

The letter to the President of Wand Records,
 dated February 13, '1964, from the Federal Communications
 Commission, Washington, D. C., which was made available by
 is set forth as follows:

"President
Wand Records
1650 Broadway
New York, New York

Dear Sir:

"The Commission has received complaints to the
effect that certain radio stations have, by playing one of
your records titled 'Louie Louie', featuring The Kingsmen,
"violated the federal statute which prohibits the broadcast of obscene, indecent or profane language.

"The staff has conducted an inquiry into these complaints. Before terminating its inquiry the Commission would appreciate receiving, as promptly as possible, your comments on this matter, including any information in your possession which might throw light upon either the source or the validity of allegations that the lyrics as sung by the Kingsmen were in any way obscene. We also should appreciate your comment on whether, even though unobjectionable lyrics were used in recording the song, there was improper motivation on the part of the singers or anyone associated with the production of the record in making the recorded lyrics so unintelligible as to give rise to reports that they were obscene.

"Very truly yours,

/s/Ben F. Waple

"Ben F. Waple
"Secretary"

The letter from [Redacted] to [Redacted] Federal Communications Commission, Washington, D. C., dated February 14, 1964, is set forth as follows:

Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D. C.

"RE: 8300

"Dear [Redacted]"In reference to our telephone conversation today, I am enclosing two copies of the lyrics, and also two records of 'Louie Louie'. We are sure that upon listening to the record and comparing it to the enclosed lyrics you will find them one and the same."
"Scepter Music, Inc., purchased this master (finished recording) from Craig Corporation - 1021 East Pine Street, Seattle, Washington. We understand that these five young male performers are students at the University of Washington, information concerning them is available from The Publisher of the song, who would be responsible for the lyrics is Limax Music, 618 Ridgely Drive, Los Angeles, California.

"All the people connected with the making and the sales of this record are highly reputable business people who are as vitally concerned with this matter as you are and wish to bring to justice anyone connected with the dissemination of libelous information.

"I will appreciate your comparing the enclosed record with any record you may have received. This is the only record we have distributed for sale, and our sale figures do not indicate any infringement by any outside source.

"Our record was made from a two track recording. We will be happy to play the vocal track for any of your representa- tives who would call on us, and this should clear any mis- understanding as to the lyrics on our record. They will find them to be exactly as on the enclosed lyric sheet.

"May I express our appreciation to you for your fair handl- ing of this matter.

"Sincerely,

The letter from the National Association of Broadcasters Code Authority, Washington, D. C., dated January 28, 1964, is set forth as follows:

"LOUIE, LOUIE"

"NAB's Code Authority has received a number of inquiries and complaints from member stations on the recording 'Louie, Louie' being circulated with a WAND label.

- 8 -