

RECORDS, INC., ET AL.

CONSENT ORDER, ETC., IN REGARD TO THE ALLEGED VIOLATION OF THE
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION ACT

Docket 7774. Complaint, Feb. 5, 1960—Decision, April 14, 1960

Consent order requiring Boston, Mass., distributors of phonograph records for several manufacturers to retail outlets and jukebox operators, to cease giving concealed "payola" to television and radio disc jockeys as inducement to play their records in order to increase sales.

Mr. John T. Walker and *Mr. James H. Kelley* for the Commission.
Mr. Morris Kirsner, of Boston, Mass., for respondents.

INITIAL DECISION BY J. EARL COX, HEARING EXAMINER

The complaint charges respondents, who are engaged in the offering for sale, sale and distribution of phonograph records as an independent distributor for several record manufacturers to retail outlets and jukebox operators in various states of the United States, with violation of the Federal Trade Commission Act, in that respondents, alone or with certain unnamed record manufacturers, have negotiated for and disbursed "payola," i.e., the payment of money or other valuable consideration to disk jockeys of musical programs on radio and television stations, to induce, stimulate or motivate the disk jockeys to select, broadcast, "expose" and promote certain records, in which respondents are financially interested, on the express or implied understanding that the disk jockeys will conceal, withhold or camouflage the fact of such payment from the listening public.

After the issuance of the complaint, respondents, their counsel, and counsel supporting the complaint entered into an agreement containing consent order to cease and desist, which was approved by the Director and an Assistant Director of the Commission's Bureau of Litigation, and thereafter transmitted to the hearing examiner for consideration.

The agreement states that respondent Records, Inc., is a corporation existing and doing business under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Massachusetts, with its office and principal place of business located at 790 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts, and that respondent Cecil Steen is president and treasurer of the corporate respondent, his address being the same as that of said corporate respondent.

The agreement provides, among other things, that respondents admit all the jurisdictional facts alleged in the complaint, and agree that the record may be taken as if findings of jurisdictional facts had been duly made in accordance with such allegations; that the record on which the initial decision and the decision of the Commission shall be based shall consist solely of the complaint and this agreement; that the agreement shall not become a part of the official record unless and until it becomes a part of the decision of the Commission; that the complaint may be used in construing the terms of the order agreed upon, which may be altered, modified or set aside in the manner provided for other orders; that the agreement is for settlement purposes only and does not constitute an admission by respondents that they have violated the law as alleged in the complaint; and that the order set forth in the agreement

and hereinafter included in this decision shall have the same force and effect as if entered after a full hearing.

Respondents waive any further procedural steps before the hearing examiner and the Commission, the making of findings of fact or conclusions of law, and all of the rights they may have to challenge or contest the validity of the order to cease and desist entered in accordance with the agreement.

The order agreed upon fully disposes of all the issues raised in the complaint, and adequately prohibits the acts and practices charged therein as being in violation of the Federal Trade Commission Act. Accordingly, the Hearing Examiner finds this proceeding to be in the public interest, and accepts the agreement containing consent order to cease and desist as part of the record upon which this decision is based. Therefore,

It is ordered, That respondents Records, Inc., a corporation, and its officers, and Cecil Steen, individually, and as an officer of said corporation, and respondents' agents, representatives and employees, directly or through any corporate or other device, in connection with phonograph records which have been distributed in commerce, or which are used by radio or television stations in broadcasting programs in commerce, as "commerce" is defined in the Federal Trade Commission Act, do forthwith cease and desist from:

(1) Giving or offering to give, without requiring public disclosure, any sum of money or other material consideration, to any person, directly or indirectly, to induce that person to select, or participate in the selection of, and the broadcasting of, any such records in which respondents, or either of them, have a financial interest of any nature;

(2) Giving or offering to give, without requiring public disclosure, any sum of money, or other material consideration, to any person, directly or indirectly, as an inducement to influence any employee of a radio or television broadcasting station, or any other person, in any manner, to select, or participate in the selection of, and the broadcasting of, any such records in which respondents, or either of them, have a financial interest of any nature.

There shall be "public disclosure" within the meaning of this order, by any employee of a radio or television broadcasting station, or any other person, who selects or participates in the selection and broadcasting of a record when he shall disclose, or cause to have disclosed, to the listening public at the time the record is played, that his selection and broadcasting of such record are in consideration for compensation of some nature, directly or indirectly received by him or his employer.

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Decision

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION AND ORDER TO FILE REPORT OF COMPLIANCE

Pursuant to Section 3.21 of the Commission's Rules of Practice, the initial decision of the hearing examiner did on the 14th day of April, 1960, become the decision of the Commission; and, accordingly:

It is ordered, That respondents Records, Inc., a corporation, and Cecil Steen, individually and as an officer of said corporation, shall, within sixty (60) days after service upon them of this order, file with the Commission a report in writing, setting forth in detail the