

So who's Boss?

WROV felt born to run with new Springsteen single before K92

By BRIAN O'NEILL
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THE song was titled, appropriately enough, "War." K92, the Goliath of Roanoke Valley radio, had been telling its listeners for days that it would debut Bruce Springsteen's long-awaited live single "War" at noon Friday, Nov. 7.

Over at WROV AM, the disc jockeys wanted to play David to K92's Goliath. But they didn't have the rock.

Then, Friday morning, it arrived. An eight-song sampler from the biggest rock album of the year, "Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band Live — 1975-85," came in the mail — about two hours before K92 was scheduled to go to "War."

WROV put it on the air at 11 a.m., an hour before K92.

"We weren't expecting to get it at all," said Mike Bell, operations director at WROV.

When the record arrived unexpectedly, station owner Burt Levine said, "The first thing I asked was, 'Is there a restriction for a release time?'"

There wasn't. That's what he told the Columbia representative, who called to say he had gotten a complaint from another station, Levine said.

Columbia Records had worked out a weekend of record giveaways with K92. Nobody in the Roanoke

market was supposed to play that record before noon Nov. 7, WROV was told.

But when the Columbia representative found out the company had not noted the embargo on WROV's package, Levine said, "He was very nice."

Rich Bloom, promotion manager for the mid-Atlantic branch of Columbia Records, plainly was irritated when reached Tuesday, however.

K92 "understood exactly how we wanted to promote the record, when we wanted to promote it, and they stuck to the guidelines we requested of them," Bloom said.

As for WROV, "I have no comment about that radio station."

Jan Jeffries, K92's vice president and general manager, said, "Anybody who reads the trades or talks to any record company would know" of the restrictions on the Springsteen record.

WROV "must have little if any contact with the record companies."

Jeffries said he wasn't worried about the smaller station anyway.

"It's not like we got upset or anything, because we didn't."

Levine implied it was no big deal to him, either.

"It's been many years since we were concerned about being an hour or two minutes before another station. It's not relevant. It hasn't been for many years." But when pressed about how it felt to beat the giant to the punch, Levine acknowledged, "It was fun. It was lots of fun."