



October 4, 2004

Donald B. Crawford, President

### **THE STAND** **FOUR LETTER WORDS**

The Federal Communications Commission, our Congress both Senate and House, and even our President are on the warpath with regard to obscenity and profanity. No one is really sure what the definition of either obscenity or profanity is, but everybody seems to have their own definition. These two elusive, but now significantly important concepts, are on the lips (pardon the pun) of everyone, but murky, unclear and ill-defined. The definition seems to be I AM NOT SURE WHAT IT IS BUT I KNOW IT WHEN I HEAR IT.

Take the four letter word damn. That has a religious connotation which has to do with the eternal fate of a human being. Or it can also mean (another spelling but the same word) a big strong structure that blocks water. The use of one may be part of the definition of profanity, while the other is quite acceptable. If you heard the word used, how could you be sure you understood precisely what the speaker intended rather than what you the hearer understood? If the word damn were used, it would be necessary to determine that both the talker and the hearer intended and understood something profane. Very subjective, and rather risky business, don't you think?

If using the word damn is hypothetically profane, what about darn. Darn is used as a substitute for damn but, so far, has not appeared on anybody's list as a bad (profane) four letter word. But why not? If it means the same thing, and if the user intended darn to be like damn, and the hearer understood that darn meant damn, why isn't darn profane? Surely the judges of the FCC and jurys (the Senate and House), some of them at least, could determine that darn is as bad as damn. If a fine of \$500,000 is issued for using damn on the public airwaves, why not the same \$500,000 fine for using the word darn? Surely the government can use the money!

And then there is that euphemism DOGGONIT. That is slang for damn, and some use it as a substitute for damn with a first word of that slang expression omitted, the word which refers to the Almighty! If the Almighty were coupled with the word damn, that would be profane, would it not? Using the word G--Damn should be worth a half a million dollars to the government, should it not?

Or more slang, like darn-it. Or dad-blast-it. Or even dang. Dang might be worth a \$500,000 fine on air, don't you think? Why, once I even heard a teacher use the slang word drat. That might sound like damn, or a substitute for damn, don't you think, and if so, maybe drat is worth \$500,000 to the FCC!

## The Stand-Four Letter Words

October 1, 2004

Page-2

THE WHOLE EXERCISE IS ABSURD! Who then is wise enough, but Solomon of old, to determine what is obscene and what is profane. What is profane to one is not to another. You may not be offended if you hear the word damn standing alone, but you might be offended (and should be if you are a Christian) if you hear the word G--Damn. The former would get no fine in your judgment and the latter should be worth \$500,000 to the government. George Carlin once had a list of his famous seven dirty words. Why those words were the dirty seven, and so many others omitted is a mystery to Carlin and many others. Whatever is profane or obscene, the government should never go there. No government agency, including and especially the FCC, should be allowed to determine the definition of obscene and profane. If we allow that to happen, that will be one long, long list.

Frankly, the First Amendment of our great Constitution, prohibits anyone, including and especially the Congress, or its agencies from making any law, or any rule or regulation which in any way prohibits free speech. The language used by Howard Stern on radio is the most vulgar, crude, immoral, down and dirty of any on radio. I have heard him several times and immediately turn him off, as you can. But the First Amendment prohibits anyone or anybody, including the FCC, from censoring what he says in any way. Freedom of speech means just that, freedom to say whatever you wish, whenever you wish, however you wish without fear of retribution. Although I find the language he uses repulsive, I would champion his right to use that language without censorship. No matter how many radio stations Howard Stern is on, I do not have to listen, and neither do you. WE CAN TUNE HIM OUT! But he has the right to say what he wants to say.

If the government can define and proscribe what it deems to be obscene and profane, it is but a short step to the next form of censorship which could well be religious language or expression. Censorship could also extend to any form of communication which is considered politically incorrect today, such as an attack upon or even disagreement with the concepts of homosexuality. And, who knows what else! Hear then the words of the First Amendment:

“CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW RESPECTING AN ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION, OR PROHIBITING THE FREE EXERCISE THEREOF, OR ABRIDGING THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, OR OF THE PRESS.”

Congress cannot abridge the freedom of speech or of the press, pure and simple. Meaning does not get any more simple or straight than that, does it? You can be certain there will be protest and legal challenges to any law, rule or regulation which ultimately abridges free speech. There is no America without free speech, even if that means we have to endure stuff called obscenity and profanity.

The next time you hear something you think to be obscene or profane, please do remember that you do not have to listen!

DBC/dw