

# SLIMEBALL DJ WAS MY SEX PEST

Robin Katz flicked on the bedside radio and began to listen. It was a late-night phone-in, fuelled by the usual stream of ranters, ravers, and wierdos. 10% belonged in an asylum. The rest were lonely insomniacs cruising the airwaves.

Among them was a teenage boy seeking sexual advice. He said he was having problems with his girlfriend because she wouldn't sleep with him. The radio presenter's reply was blunt and to the point: "Dump Her!"

Next morning Robin Katz wrote an article about Richard Branson's Virgin Radio. She referred to Nick Abbot, the station's so called "Shock-Jock". It was published in a national newspaper:

*"It worries me", wrote Robin, "when a novice like Nick Abbot advises a male listener to break up with his girlfriend solely because she will not sleep with him. When the next caller expressed disbelief at Abbot's advice, the DJ belittled him. No one reminded listeners that women have the right to say no..."*

Nick Abbot read the article. When he saw that he was called a novice, and an irresponsible one at that, he could hardly believe it. He almost burst a blood vessel. How dare anyone criticise him, especially some woman? He was a star! OK, he might dish out the insults nightly - but it didn't mean he had to take them. Abbot decided to take revenge on Robin Katz in the way he knew best...

Robin wasn't tuned in to Nick Abbot that night, but, as his phone-in show came on the air, there were thousands of listeners all across the country who were. He began to refer to Robin: *"This is the irresponsible Nick Abbot, according to that bitch"*. He told his audience how he planned to physically abuse her.

At first Robin was unaware of his comments, but then a friend called and told her: *"A DJ's been saying things about you on the radio."* "What do you mean?" Robin asked. *"It's somebody on Virgin Radio,"* her friend replied, *"He has a late night talk show."* Robin gasped. *"You mean Nick Abbot."*

Somebody had already complained and the Radio Authority had moved swiftly. It admonished the station, saying: *"The aggressive use of the word 'Bitch' and the suggestions of violence towards women were both offensive and condoned an unacceptable and threatening male attitude towards women."*

After that, Robin didn't listen in to Nick Abbot's show again. She hoped things would die down. But, despite the warning, the disc jockey seemed obsessed with her. He continued to refer to her over the airwaves.

When he heard her voice on another programme, he got particularly excited, saying it made him sexually aroused and that she sounded like a sex toy on drugs.

*"I fantasise about her constantly,"* he said. *"It's a very special voice that Robin has, unique. And I was touched by the wrong that I had done her. So I'd like to suggest that you and me, we get together. I'm sure we could make beautiful music together. Because trust me, I haven't been able to get you out of my mind. Robin Katz, I'm asking you now, will you marry me? Or at least let me be your dog for the day?!"*

A newspaper reporter rang Robin and asked: *"Mrs Katz, will you be responding to Nick Abbot's marriage proposal?"* "Sorry? What are you talking about?" replied Robin. The reporter told her some of the things Abbot had been saying - speculating about her and challenging phone-in callers to write poems about her. Robin felt a shiver go down her spine. *"Oh my God,"* she said.

That night, as she lay in bed, she felt frightened. She imagined Abbot talking about her on the radio at that very moment. *"What if someone traces my name?"* she thought. *"Or manages to find out where I live?"* A few weeks earlier a stranger had shouted obscenities into her answering machine. Perhaps they were connected.

Next day Robin imagined people staring at her as she walked down the street. It was as if they knew her and were laughing at her behind her back. It was no good. She had to know exactly what he was saying about her.

When Nick Abbot's show came on that night, Robin turned on the radio. It wasn't long before she heard her name: *"It's the same as Robin, as soon as she wrote that stuff and was amazed that I had the audacity to say something negative about her and it. I just can't help but fight..."*

Robin contacted the Radio Authority and complained. They considered the evidence and said they would make Virgin promise not to mention her name again.

Robin still wasn't happy. That night, as soon as the phone-in began, she slipped a cassette into the machine and began to record. Every night after that she sat up, monitoring Abbot's show. She kept herself awake with mugs of strong coffee until it finished three hours later. She found herself sleeping late into the morning and was too tired to work. With no money

coming in she began dipping into her savings. Friends stopped asking her out. She became very depressed.

Often she would hear callers mention her by name, saying things like: *"I've given you a couple of poems now about Robin Katz... you promised me some crap in the post when I did my first one..."* or: *"Have you heard anything from the delectable Miss Katz?"* Robin felt as if she was being violated by an army of strange, anonymous men. She was the target for practically every wierdo in the country.

More weeks passed. Robin collected three months' worth of tapes. Then, one morning, a letter arrived in the post. Robin tore it open and began to read: "The Broadcasting Complaints Commission find Mr Abbot's comments were of a very personal and grossly insulting nature... The commission find that Ms Katz was treated unfairly." Robin sank into a chair, clutching the letter. "At last," she said. The adjudication was broadcast on air and published nationally.

Since the Complaints Commission ruling, Robin has reported Virgin twice more. In the first case, Abbot made a sexual reference about another disc jockey and the station was fined £5000. In the other, he took a call from a man discussing a disgusting sexual perversion and the station was fined £20,000.

The phone-ins to Nick Abbot's show have now been scrapped. Robin, 42, is seeking compensation. She says: *"I'm not vindictive and I didn't do it for revenge. Nick Abbot was sexually harassing me on the airwaves and I wasn't prepared to put up with it. I wanted to show that the listener can fight back."*

A spokesman for Virgin Radio told Take-a-Break, *"Virgin have been fined twice and it has cost us a lot of money, but we do support the Radio Authority and we do not believe that offensive remarks belong on commercial radio."*

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