

H O S T

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MR. JOHN ZIEGLER, thirty-seven, late of Louisville's WHAS, is now on the air, "Live and Local," from 10:00 PM to 1:00 AM every weeknight on Southern California's KFI, a 50,000-watt megastation whose hourly ID and **sweeper**, designed by the station's Imaging

FCC regulations require a station ID to be broadcast every hour. This ID comprises a station's call letters, band and frequency, and the radio market it's licensed to serve. Just about every serious commercial station (which KFI very much is) appends to its ID a sweeper, which is the little tagline by which the station wishes to be known. KABC, the other giant AM talk station in Los Angeles, deploys the entendre-rich "Where America Comes First." KFI's own main sweeper is "More Stimulating Talk Radio," but it's also got secondary sweepers that it uses to intro the half-hour news, traffic updates at seventeen and forty-six past the hour, and station promos.

"Southern California's Newsroom," "The Radio Home of Fox News," and "When You See News Break, Don't Try to Fix It Yourself – Leave That to Professionals" are the big three that KFI's running this spring. The content and sound of all IDs, sweepers, and promos are the responsibility of the station's Imaging department, apparently so named because they involve KFI's image in the LA market. Imaging is sort of the radio version of branding – the sweepers let KFI communicate its special personality and 'tude in a compressed way.

There are also separate, subsidiary taglines that KFI develops specially for its local programs. The main two they're using for the John Ziegler Show so far are "Live and Local" and "Hot, Fresh Talk Served Nightly."

department and featuring a gravelly basso whisper against licks from Ratt's '84 metal classic "Round and Round," is: "KFI AM-640, Los Angeles — More *Stimulating* Talk Radio." This is either the eighth or ninth host job that Mr. Ziegler's had in his talk radio career, and far and away the biggest. He moved out here to LA over Christmas — alone, towing a U-Haul — and found an apartment not far from KFI's studios, which are in an old part of the Koreatown district, near Wilshire Center.

The whisperer turns out to be one Chris Corley, a voiceover actor best known for movie trailers. Corley's C² Productions is based in Ft. Myers FL.

The *John Ziegler Show* is the first local, nonsyndicated late-night program that KFI has aired in a long time. It's something of a gamble for everyone involved. 10:00–1:00 qualifies as late at night in Southern California, where hardly anything reputable's open after nine.

It is currently right near the end of the program's second segment on the evening of May 11, 2004, shortly after Nicholas Berg's taped beheading by an al-Qaeda splinter in Iraq. Dressed, as is his custom, for golf, and wearing a white billed cap w/corporate logo, Mr. Ziegler is seated by himself in the on-air studio, surrounded by

(By the standards of the US radio industry, this makes him almost movie-star gorgeous.)

monitors and sheaves of Internet printouts. He is trim, clean-shaven, and handsome in the bland way that top golfers and local TV newsmen tend to be. His eyes,

which off-air are usually flat and unhappy, are alight now with passionate conviction. Only some of the studio's monitors concern Mr. Z.'s own program; the

ones up near the ceiling take muted, closed-caption feeds from Fox News, MSNBC, and what might be C-SPAN. To his big desk's upper left is a wall-mounted digital clock that counts down seconds. His computer monitors' displays also show the exact time.