

The Charting Saga of “A Well Respected Man”: An Under-Ranked, Under-Rated Kinks’ Classic

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May 2011

Background

As the eighth Kinks’ single released in the U.S.- the seventh on the Reprise label- “A Well Respected Man” was written by Ray Davies in mid-July 1966, and, in his words, “...was the first real word-oriented song I wrote.” (Hinman 2004, 61). Inspired by an incident at the first-class Imperial Hotel in Torquay, Devon, where Davies was asked by a hotel guest to play golf and vehemently refused, “A Well Respected Man” became a biting satire of the monotony and hypocrisy prevalent in English middle-class life (ibid). The song represented a musical shift for the Kinks, with its intro featuring Ray playing a 12-string acoustic guitar accompanying his lead vocals, followed by the crashing rhythm section propelled by Mick Avory’s powerful drumming and Pete Quaife’s punchy bass lines. Dave Davies’ adroit lead electric guitar work offered an effective complement on this song that was recorded completely live in Pye Studios (No. 2) in early August 1965, giving it an air of irresistible immediacy. (ibid, 62, 66). Ray’s earnest vocals, devoid for the first time of any attempt to sound American and exuding a stoic English perseverance, conveyed an intriguing narrative that was anchored by the lockstep rhythm section: the measured, rolling beat provided a perfect backdrop for the song’s sing-along chorus:

“And he’s oh, so good,
And he’s oh, so fine,
And he’s oh, so healthy,
In his body and his mind.
He’s a well-respected man about town,
Doing the best things so conservatively.”
(“A Well Respected Man.” Written by: Ray Davies. Published by: Kassner Music Co. Ltd)

Whereas the first three Kinks’ singles released in the U.S. on Reprise had enjoyed excellent Top Ten/Top Five national chart success from the autumn of 1964 through the spring of 1965 (“You Really Got Me,” #5 peak on *Cash Box*, 11/28/64-12/05/64; #7 peak on *Billboard*, 11/21/64-12/05/64; “All Day And All Of The Night,” #6 on *Cash Box*, 2/06/65; #7 on *Billboard*, 1/30/65-2/13/65; “Tired Of Waiting For You,” #5 on *Cash Box*, 4/17/65-4/24/65; #6 on *Billboard*, same weeks), the same could not be said for the next three 45’s, which demonstrated declining popularity. Starting with the somewhat formulaic “Set Me Free” (#23 peak on *Billboard*, 7/17/65; #24 on *Cash Box*, 7/10/65-7/17/65), this commercial

freefall surprisingly continued with the first-rate, somewhat ironic “Who’ll Be The Next In Line,” which cooled off quickly after a terrific start (#53 with a ‘star’ in only its second week, 8/14/65; eventual peak of #34, *Billboard*, 9/11/65; #40, *Cash Box*, 8/28/65; the initial B-side to the UK Pye single, “Ev’rybody’s Gonna Be Happy,” reversed due to the latter’s relatively weak charting in the UK and American radio programming pressure), and the virtually invisible “See My Friends” (#111 peak, 10/30/65, in three weeks on *Billboard*’s ‘Bubbling Under’ section). The last record, a brilliant, ahead-of-its time tune featuring a dense, mesmerizing sound, was played by only a handful of U.S stations. The latter two singles were actually selected as ‘Top 60 Spotlight’ picks by *Billboard*, which made the abysmal commercial failure of “See My Friends” all the more startling.

It should be noted that Reprise Records, founded in 1960 by Frank Sinatra, was sold to Warner Brothers Records in early 1963. The merged labels were known as Warner-Reprise, with the astute Mo Ostin continuing as head of the Reprise side. According to *Billboard*, at the start of 1965 the Warner-Reprise group had ten full-time regional promotional representatives strategically placed throughout the U.S., with four of them stationed in the critical Northeast area (New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore), making them “...the largest full-time promotion corps of any comparable company.” (1/16/65,10). Warner-Reprise also used independent promotion men to cover other markets.

As a testament to the marketing prowess of Warner-Reprise, it is striking that the first three Kinks’ Top Ten hit singles had achieved superb major market penetration rates of 100% (defined as achieving initial airplay in the total number of major markets reporting, hereafter referred to as MMP), generally within three to four weeks of their releases. Additionally, even the downward trending “Set Me Free” (86%) and “Who’ll Be The Next In Line” (75%) still had high MMP numbers. The latter record still managed to attain airplay within four weeks in four of the eight major markets reporting, with two others registering within five weeks; the cities where it was shutout from receiving any airplay were Detroit (WKNR), which had also passed on “Set Me Free,” and Pittsburgh (KQV). However, despite the best efforts of Warner-Reprise, they hit the proverbial brick wall in promoting “See My Friends” with radio stations: its abysmal MMP rate of 0 (zero) per cent doomed it on the national charts- it was never given a chance. Notwithstanding the limited commercial appeal of this groundbreaking song, it should have done better commercially, suggesting that there may have been powerful, insidious forces working against it.

Further adding to this downward spiral was the group’s disastrous U.S. tour (6/18/65-7/10/65), which was sabotaged by incompetent management, shoddy promotion, and overall poor attendance; the marketing problems stemmed primarily from one promoter on the West Coast. The group’s understandable refusal to tolerate union harassment and financial exploitation by concert promoters led to their unofficial blacklisting by the AFM (American Federation of

Musicians), which would prevent them from touring again in the U.S until October 1969 (Hinman 2004, 57-61). The physical altercation between Ray Davies and an official with the AFTRA (American Federation Of Television & Radio Artists) union in Hollywood in early July 1965 might have had unintended consequences far beyond that moment (ibid). One can only speculate about the ramifications of these negative developments on many U.S. radio stations in the future.

On a more positive note, the group's "Kwyet Kinks" EP (NEP 24221)-featuring "A Well Respected Man"- was released by Pye Records in the UK on 17 September 1965, and by the end of October, it had vaulted to Number One on the UK EP charts (10/30/65). This EP would go on to spend a remarkable seven weeks at Number One, in addition to five weeks at Number Two; it would rack up an amazing 32 weeks on these charts, with all but one in the Top Ten (9/25/65-4/30/66; starting on 4/16/66, the EP chart was reduced from a Top Twenty to a Top Ten).

American Charting Analysis

Against this mixed backdrop, Warner-Reprise released "A Well Respected Man" in the U.S. on 3 November 1965 (Reprise 0420). On a somewhat unpromising note, *Billboard* did not give the record a 'Spotlight' review, just listing it as a low-rated 'Hot 100' pick (issue published 11/06/65, with a 'street date' of 11/04/65); this evaluation was quite puzzling. Contrary to previous experiences, when the Kinks' singles had been added quickly by influential stations in major markets such as Detroit (WKNR), New York (WMCA), and Los Angeles (KRLA, KFWB), as well as in the medium centers of Miami (WQAM) and Minneapolis-St. Paul (KDWB, WDGY)- stations in the latter two cities had actually beaten WMCA in New York by over ten days with "You Really Got Me"-, this time those same outlets strangely refrained from 'going on' the new record: their silence was almost ominous. Again, one could contend that this was a result of radio reluctance, derived from the relatively disappointing chart performance of the previous three Kinks' singles, as well as unwarranted doubts about the song's hit potential. The fact that crucial stations in major markets 'stayed off' a single with such obvious commercial hit potential was remarkable, almost unprecedented.

Fortunately for the Kinks, Ken Griffin, program director (PD) and DJ at WPOP in Hartford, Connecticut (34th -largest radio market; 2nd-rated station) added "A Well Respected Man" to his play list on 12 November 1965 at #37- the first outlet in a medium center to do so. By this time, Hartford had become a pivotal medium market used by record companies to launch pop singles; if they showed promise, they were exposed to larger centers. Shortly afterwards, stations in the medium markets of Milwaukee (19th-ranked; WRIT; one of seven 'W-RIT Disc-Coveries,' 11/14/65) and Grand Rapids, Michigan (63rd-largest; WERX; one of five 'Hollow's Happenings,' 11/22/65) each made the new Kinks 45 a future pick hit. Even though the record sank without a trace on WRIT, it still received valuable airplay

and exposure (the surveys from WERX in the following weeks have not survived).

Most significantly, DJ Jerry McFarland at Cleveland's (11th-ranked) market-leading WKYC started playing "A Well Respected Man" during the week of 12 November: this station's request phones literally rang off the wall! As a result, the single smashed into the WKYC survey at a lofty #7 on 19 November. Meanwhile, back on WPOP in Hartford, the Kinks had climbed up to #28 (11/19/65), while New Haven's (64th-ranked) WAVZ added the record to its rotation (#60, 11/14/65). In addition, Hartford's leading outlet, WDRC, first charted the Kinks' new release at #42 on their Top 60 (11/22/65); PD and assistant general manager Charles R. Parker had witnessed the record's solid gain on his rival's survey, and could not afford to miss out on this promising tune. WDRC had a strong history of playing and charting earlier Kinks' singles, with the first three on Reprise all going Top 5: "You Really Got Me" had charged up to #2 for two weeks (11/23/64-11/30/64); "All Day And All Of The Night" hit #5 for three consecutive weeks (1/18/65-2/01/65); while "Tired Of Waiting For You" peaked at #4 (4/12/65). Notably, WDRC played and charted "Who'll Be The Next In Line" for five weeks, although it only had managed to climb to #34 (8/23/65).

This heavy airplay in the major Cleveland center and the medium markets of Hartford and New Haven propelled "A Well Respected Man" into the *Billboard* 'Hot 100' at a 'starred' #84 on 27 November, after it had been 'Bubbling Under' the previous week (#109, 11/20/65). *Billboard* generally assigned more weight to airplay than sales in the lower half of its Hot 100. On the strictly sales-based *Cash Box*, the record slowly rose from #100 (11/20/65) to #93 (11/27/65). Such early national chart activity was remarkable considering that it was driven by just a handful of stations, with only one of them in a major market.

On Cleveland's pivotal WKYC, the Kinks continued to receive strong requests and airplay, to the extent that two weeks after their single's stunning debut, they hit the top spot for two consecutive weeks (#1, 12/03/65-12/10/65). This excellent survey performance also reflected a surge in the record's sales in the Cleveland area, facilitated by Carl Maduri of Cleve-Disc Distributors: within three weeks, "A Well Respected Man" had shot up on the city's retail record charts, to a strong #6 (12/04/65), peaking at #3 prior to the holidays (12/18/65; as published in *Billboard*; backdated one week by this writer due to logical publishing delays).

Meanwhile, back in the original starting city, "A Well Respected Man" blitzed up the Hartford surveys, reflecting strong requests and sales: on market leader WDRC, it hit #1 on 13 December, in only its fourth week of charting, while rival WPOP had tracked it at #2 (12/10/65). Elsewhere in Connecticut, the single continued to move up the New Haven surveys, reaching #30 in its fourth week (12/04/65).

This robust airplay and, even more importantly, growing retail sales of “A Well Respected Man” in both Cleveland and Hartford triggered an immediate national reaction on *Cash Box*, which awarded it two ‘bulleted’ gains during the first two weeks of December: #73 (12/04/65), followed by a solid #63 (12/11/65); ‘bulleted’ moves reflected strong upward momentum in a record’s sales. *Billboard*, which lagged behind its rival in recognizing sales activity for its ‘bottom fifty,’ only gave the Kinks two un-highlighted moves during the same period (#74, #71). This latter condition was exacerbated by the limited number of stations that had begun playing the single, especially those in major markets. As many stations throughout America regarded *Billboard* as the leading national trade, and typically waited until a record had registered explosive, ‘starred’ gains into its Top Forty/Top Thirty before adding it to their play lists, this was a critical obstacle. This situation on *Billboard* further delayed the progress of the Kinks’ single on both local surveys and the national charts: it was a classic case of ‘Catch 22.’ Incredibly, the MMP rate for “A Well Respected Man” remained at a low 11% one month after its release.

In a positive trend, this Kinks’ single demonstrated resiliency in its original centers of support. Even though it had exited the WKYC surveys in Cleveland after the first week of January 1966 (#15, 1/08/66), it still enjoyed steady retail sales in that area: a #15 mark (1/15/66), followed by a #19 ranking (1/22/66). Likewise, on Hartford’s WDRC, it remained in their Top 10 during the first part of January (#7, 1/10/66), and stayed in that Top 60 through the end of the month (#36, 1/31/66). Similarly, on New Haven’s WAVZ, after peaking for two weeks over the holidays at #6 (12/26/65-01/02/66), the Kinks’ record remained in that Top 20 for almost as long (#18, 1/16/66).

A significant development that boosted the Kinks’ fortunes and broke up the stagnation on *Billboard* was the emergence of “A Well Respected Man” in the major Chicago market (2nd-largest), as well as in the influential medium market of Columbus, Ohio (36th-ranked), and other medium markets in the first two weeks of December. Landmark 50,000-watt WLS in Chicago, led by PD Clark Weber, started playing the record during the week of December 3rd. The single gained further momentum when WCOL, a pivotal station in Columbus, first charted it on 13 December (#37). Columbus was viewed as a “prototypical U.S. city” in terms of advertising and demographics, and a viable testing ground for new records. (Denisoff 1986, 206). Undoubtedly, WCOL had reacted to the record’s success on WKYC in Cleveland. Additional airplay support was established in the medium markets of Oklahoma City (51st; on KOMA, #37, 12/02/65); Birmingham, Alabama (46th-largest; on WSGN, #27, 12/10/65); and Tucson, Arizona (71st; on legendary KTKT, #40, 11/26/65). By this time, the record’s MMP figure had doubled to 22% with two major centers onboard (Cleveland and Chicago), although this rate was far below the Kinks’ norm.

The above additions, especially those in Chicago and Columbus, combined with the single’s ongoing success in Cleveland and Hartford, caused *Billboard* to give

it a 'starred' gain to #57- a major fourteen-spot rise- for the week of 18 December, while *Cash Box* moved it into their Top Fifty, with another solid gain, to #49. This renewed national momentum, coupled with the single's appearance on the WLS 'Silver Dollar' survey at #40 (12/17/65) and sharp move on WCOL to #23 (12/20/65), meant that the 'holdout' major market stations could no longer ignore "A Well Respected Man": the Kinks were about to achieve a strategic charting breakthrough.

As a result of these positive events, a new wave of major market stations on the East Coast, West Coast, and Midwest added the single to their play lists over the holiday season. Undoubtedly the most crucial 'add' occurred in New York City (the top radio market, covering the tri-state metropolitan area), where the usually bold 'Good Guys', led by superb PD Ruth Meyer at WMCA, tabbed it as a 'Sure Shot' on 22 December. Within days, this 'under the radar' record was picked up by Boston's (6th-largest) WBZ (#24, 12/25/65) and WMEX (#22, 12/31/65)- certainly a reaction to WMCA's move, the single's marked success in Hartford, and its breakout in the Springfield, Massachusetts area (46th-largest). There, leading station WHYN likely had added it by mid-December, and charted it at #3 on New Year's Day, followed by #1 (1/08/66; it had also ranked "You Really Got Me" at #1 for two consecutive weeks, 11/21/64-11/28/64). While full survey data from the Washington, D.C. area (9th-ranked) has not survived, it was highly probable that top-rated WEAM had already gone on the record by this time, as this outlet would rank it at #10 shortly afterwards ((1/01/66). Likewise, 2nd-rated WPGC also probably had added it (#8, 1/08/66); lower-rated WYRE already had made it a 'Predicted Hit' (12/25.65). Based on later sales rankings (#16, 1/15/66), it was highly probable that Philadelphia's (4th-ranked) pop leader, WBIG, also had started playing this Kinks' tune over the holidays.

On the West Coast, powerful KYA in San Francisco (7th-largest)- the first station that had broken the Byrds' "Mr. Tambourine Man" earlier in the year- charted the Kinks' single on Christmas Eve at #27. Other prime dominoes fell when Detroit's (5th-ranked) pioneering WKNR added it before year's end (#30, 12/29/65), followed by KXOK in St. Louis (10th-largest; #34, 1/01/66). Miami's (23rd-ranked) influential WQAM had also selected it as a 'Pic' (12/25/65), while further north in Orlando (68th), WLOF already had gone on it (#37, 12/17/65), as the record zoomed all the way up to #9 in only its second week (12/24/65). Back in Columbus, the Kinks would rise to #14 in only their third week on WCOL's Top 40. In the Southwest, Tucson's KTKT ranked it at #12 in its fifth week on their survey (12/24/65).

The effect of these major and medium market additions was decisive on the national charts for the Kinks. On *Cash Box*, where "A Well Respected Man" had shown the most highlighted gains, it stood at #38 with a fourth consecutive 'bullet' on Christmas Day. After a minor four-spot rise to #34 on New Year's Day 1966, it regained its momentum and climbed to #28 on 8 January 1966. Similarly, on *Billboard*, where it consistently had been ranked lower, the record made two

double-digit 'starred' gains at the beginning of 1966, landing at the same spot as on the rival magazine (#28, 1/08/66). The reinforcing airplay and rising sales in the seven new major markets, as well as in prime medium centers such as Seattle (20th-ranked) -the single was listed at a rising #12 in that area's retail sales charts on 1 January 1966-, Miami, and Columbus, had given "A Well Respected Man" a new lease on its chart 'life': the Kinks now had a realistic shot at achieving a Top Ten national hit. Prior to mid-December, such a goal had seemed like a pipedream. Radio stations in major, medium, and secondary markets now had validation to add the single to their play lists, as it had earned national Top Thirty status the hard way, after eight weeks of tough, steady plugging.

While the Kinks cast their gaze on the national Top Ten as 1966 dawned, there remained several more major markets, one giant station, and a few more medium markets that they needed to 'go on' their single. The first piece of this final chart puzzle was the huge, 3rd-ranked Los Angeles radio market, one whose stations were generally in the vanguard of playing new pop singles with hit potential. They had strangely been silent regarding "A Well Respected Man," refusing to play it during November and December 1965 when it had struggled to gain national chart traction. It was a major mystery why it took Ron Jacobs, 'Boss Radio' KHJ's astute PD, so long to finally add this Kinks' single to his play list: after all, it had been his station that wisely had flipped an earlier Kinks' UK single, "Ev'rybody's Gonna Be Happy," and started playing its B-side, "Who'll Be The Next In Line" - essentially forcing Reprise to reverse the single's sides, making the latter into the A-side in the U.S. (KHJ 'Boss Hit Bound,' 7/16/65). Once KHJ, a Bill Drake-Gene Chenault formatted AM station that used a tightly-controlled Top 30, moved on "A Well Respected Man," making it a rather late 'Boss Hit Bound' pick (1/05/66), longstanding market leader KRLA fell in line, charting the record at #37 (1/08/66), while 3rd-rated KFWB added it eleven days later (#26, 1/19/66).

At the same time as the top two LA stations finally started playing the Kinks' rising single, KDWB in Minneapolis-St. Paul (15th-ranked market) also first charted it, at #38 (1/08/66); rival WDGY followed suit one week later (#37, 1/15/66). It was unusual to see the latter two stations on the same timeline as their LA counterparts, as there generally would be a 3-5 week delay between them (of course there were exceptions). Shortly afterwards, another major market station holdout, KQV in Pittsburgh (8th-ranked center), an ABC affiliate, caved in and added the Kinks' record to its play list (#38, 1/11/66). It probably had not helped that the single had struggled on another ABC affiliate, WLS in Chicago: in a rare case of disappointment, the record was only at #18 in its fourth week of charting (1/07/66), and seventh week of airplay. Amazingly, an extended ten weeks after its release, "A Well Respected Man" finally had scored a MMP figure of 100% (eleven major markets reporting).

All that remained on the sidelines then was the 50,000- watt monster in New York, the #1 station in the nation's top market, WABC- another ABC outlet. WABC normally waited for smaller (5,000-watt) WMCA to break records first in the core five boroughs of New York City before going on them. Otherwise, Rick Sklar, the iconic PD of WABC, would watch for explosive movement from a single into the national Top Thirty. Within two weeks, the Kinks had climbed to #22 on the 'Good Guy's' 'Fabulous 57' survey (1/05/66), and were poised to zoom up to #10 (1/12/66). Sklar and his music committee clearly saw the mounting chart evidence, both locally and nationally, and added a "Well Respected Man" to the 'All American' survey at an unprecedented debuting mark of #14 (1/11/66): normally, only the Beatles were able to accomplish such survey feats (albeit, on a much faster timeline). All the pieces were now in place for the Kinks to make a serious run at the U.S. Top Ten: did they have enough momentum to make it over the line? Was there enough time left for a single that had been on the American market for ten weeks?

Throughout January and the first half of February 1966, "A Well Respected Man" generally scored impressive gains on the surveys of the aforementioned 'second wave' of nine major markets, and additional medium centers, penetrating the Top 10 as well as hitting the Top 5 in several instances. For example, on Detroit's WKNR, the record blitzed to a peak of #5 (1/19/66) in only four weeks, and was still in that station's Top 10 as February began (#7, 2/02/66); this area's retail sales rankings showed the Kinks at #7 at about the same time (1/22/66). On the West Coast, despite a sluggish start on KYA in San Francisco, the single hit #8 by mid-January in its fourth week, while it stood at #6 on the retail sales charts near the end of the month (1/22/66). Further up the coast in the Northwest, in Seattle, the record was ranked at #10 on the retail sales charts in early January (1/08/66), which undoubtedly was a result of strong airplay from leading station KJR (surveys missing). Despite the Kinks' late start in LA, their single peaked at #5 on both KRLA (2/12/66) and KFWB (2/16/66); on emerging KHJ, it crested at #6 (2/19/66). This area's incomplete retail sales charts showed the Kinks at #8 just after mid-February (2/19/66), suggesting that they might have climbed even higher, and corroborating the stations' survey rankings.

Elsewhere, in the heartland, the Kinks' single experienced less success in the major St. Louis market: after its debut on landmark KXOK at #34 (1/01/66), it remained stalled at the same spot for the next two weeks, and surprisingly, was only at #31 by the end of January (1/29/66). The record then managed to climb to #18 (2/05/66), peaking at a lackluster #12 (2/12/66) before fading out of the KXOK surveys: after the dismal results in Chicago, these were its second-worst marks in a major center. The single's sales performance in St. Louis was even worse, as it barely broke into the Top 40 (#38, 1/22/66; incomplete data). Fortunately in Pittsburgh, "A Well Respected Man" managed to top out at #8 on KQV for two consecutive weeks (2/01/66-2/08/66) after another slow start, and spent four weeks in their Top 15.

Fortuitously, the Kinks clearly enjoyed their best survey success in the Northeast, in the major markets of Boston, Washington, D.C., and the New York metropolitan area: considering that 40% of the Warner-Reprise promotional staff was concentrated in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions, this was not surprising. Indisputably building on the earlier success in the Hartford, Connecticut and Springfield, Massachusetts areas, "A Well Respected Man" shot up to #3 on Boston's WBZ in only its second week (1/01/66)! Although WBZ surveys for the rest of January and February 1966 unfortunately have not survived, Boston retail area sales charts revealed that the single reached at least #4 (1/22/66), if not higher. Likewise, on Washington, D.C.'s top-rated WEAM, the record spent six weeks in their Top 10, cresting at #3 (1/15/66). As well, on then second-rated WPGC, it made the Top 10 for four weeks, and also hit #3 (1/22/66); lower-ranked WYRE had the Kinks pegged at #1 for two consecutive weeks (1/15/66-1/22/66). Fully corroborating these rankings, this area's retail charts had "A Well Respected Man" listed at #10 on 22 January 1966; it was quite probable that the record peaked at #6 in sales the following week (1/29/66, based on projections from later weeks for which data has survived).

Led by the 'Good Guys' at WMCA, the Kinks virtually attained the pinnacle of success in New York: six weeks in that station's Top 10, with a high mark of #2 (1/26/66). On giant WABC, which had a sophisticated system for tracking the sales of records in the tri-state New York metropolitan area for their accurate survey, "A Well Respected Man" was ranked at #2 for two consecutive weeks (2/01/66-2/08/66) and spent five weeks in the 'All American' survey's Top 5 (1/18/66-2/22/66) after a late start. It was blocked from the top spot by Lou Christie's "Lightnin' Strikes," which had knocked the Beatles' "We Can Work It Out" from #1. These rankings were fully validated by the area's retail sales charts, which had the single pegged at #4 (1/22/66), and at #3 three weeks later (2/12/66); during the intervening three weeks for which data was missing, the record most likely reached #2 for at least one week.

In smaller medium and secondary markets across the U.S., the Kinks were able to match this overall level of success achieved in larger centers in general: in most, they were able to penetrate the Top 10, while in some they reached the Top 3; in many cases, the survey data was fragmentary. On Miami's WQAM, their single peaked at #6 for two weeks (1/15/66-1/22/66), while that area's retail sales charts had it ranked even higher: #4 (1/15/66), followed by a lofty #2 (1/22/66). On smaller Orlando's WLOF, the record spent a noteworthy six weeks in the Top 10, with three in the Top 5, peaking at #3 (1/22/66). On WLAV in Grand Rapids, Michigan (63rd-largest), it was in the Top 5 during the first two weeks of January (#4, 1/08/66; #2, 1/15/66). In Arizona, the Kinks were able to notch Top 10 marks in both Phoenix (27th-largest center; #6, KRUX, 1/28/66) and Tucson (#10, KTKT, 1/14/66). Likewise, on Providence, Rhode Island's (31st-largest) WICE, they were tracked at #9 (2/04/66). One of this single's best performances in a vital medium market occurred in that of Minneapolis-St. Paul,

where it hit #2 on KDWB (2/12/66), spending five weeks in their Top 10; on rival WDGY, it matched the Top 10 charting, and crested at #4 (2/12/66).

In a similar manner, "A Well Respected Man" enjoyed Top 5 success in the medium California markets of San Bernardino (41st-largest; #4 on KFXM, 2/04/66; #3, KMEN, 2/11/66) and San Jose (25th-largest; #2, KLIV, 2/15/66). The single also climbed into the Top 10 in the secondary markets of Madison, Wisconsin (#102nd; #9, WISM) and Manchester, New Hampshire (187th; #6, WKBR). Even on the last medium market station to 'go on' their record-Cincinnati's (16th-ranked) WSAI (#35, 1/29/66)- the Kinks would peak at #10 (2/19/66. Alternately, one of the few medium centers where they disappointed was that of Columbus, Ohio, where- after a promising start- they had stalled at #14 (12/27/65-1/03/66).

Against this background of positive, if somewhat delayed and uncoordinated local survey activity and sales rankings, the rather pedestrian moves of "A Well Respected Man" on the national charts seemed quite mystifying, almost questionable in retrospect. Once again, at least on *Cash Box*, the record made two 'bulleted' gains after being at #28 on 8 January 1966: up to #17 the next week, followed by a major rise to #10 two weeks later (1/29/66). The single then moved forward one spot, to #9 on 5 February, which would turn out to be its national peak, before gradually fading on *Cash Box* over the following four weeks (#15, 2/12/66; #67, in its final week, 3/5/66).

Meanwhile on *Billboard*, the Kinks' fine single inexplicably stumbled forward, with one 'starred' gain to #19 (1/22/66), and then a moderate move to #13 two weeks later (2/05/66)- a position that would prove to be its high water mark on that magazine. The record then fell back to #17 for two weeks (2/12/66-2/19/66), before exiting the Hot 100 at #38 (2/26/66).

The local survey data and retail sales charts indisputably demonstrated that, notwithstanding the impressive surge in airplay and sales from nine major markets as well as numerous important medium centers after the holiday season, "A Well Respected Man" maintained a significant and prolonged presence in only one major market: the New York metropolitan area. While it came close to that point in Boston and Washington, D.C., it could not maintain such a high level of performance beyond several weeks. In Detroit and the prime West Coast centers of LA and San Francisco, despite achieving solid survey results, it fell short of the sustained Top Three intensity required to compensate for lost time on the national charts. This single's mediocre survey performance in St. Louis, coupled with its marked failure in Chicago, definitely hampered its national chart fortunes. Ultimately, the record had no margin for error at the end of its three month-plus chart odyssey, and was doomed to quasi Top Ten national status.

Nevertheless, the same evidence referred to above clearly indicated that "A Well Respected Man" peaked on most local surveys during the two weeks between 22

January and 5 February 1966 and warranted Top Ten national charting, thus fully validating the accuracy of its rankings on *Cash Box* of #10 (1/29/66) and #9 (2/05/66). On the other hand, *Billboard's* positions of #17 and #13 for the same two weeks were not supported by the surviving data, casting serious doubt about the validity of that magazine's rankings and methodology. Even allowing for the inevitable lag in time between airplay and sales, which was the ultimate Top Ten driver on the U.S. pop charts, and that publication's cutoff's for airplay (four days before an issue's effective date) and sales (six days), its ratings for this Kinks' single appeared extremely suspect, at least for those two weeks.

Ironically, this had not been the case during the preceding weeks, as the airplay and sales of "A Well Respected Man" accelerated throughout the country. As an example, for the week of 22 January, the record's average market-weighted sales ranking, based upon retail sales data from fourteen top centers, was #19: it was rising in nine centers, eight of which were major markets, declining (Seattle) and stagnant (Cleveland) in two, while it had not yet registered in three (Chicago, St. Louis, and Baltimore). Its average market-weighted station survey (airplay) ranking, encompassing information from eleven top centers, was #12: the single was ascending in eight cities, descending (Chicago) and stalled (St. Louis) in just two, while it had yet to emerge in Cincinnati. A joint sales (75%-weighted) and airplay ranking based on these statistics was calculated at #17. This vindicated the single's rankings on *Cash Box* (#16) as well as on *Billboard* (#19).

After this point, *Billboard's* rankings deviated from the available evidence. For instance, during the week of 29 January, the record achieved an average market-weighted sales ranking of #13 based upon data from fourteen centers. Incredibly, this figure included atypically low numbers from Chicago (#33) and St. Louis (#38); if the 'drag effect' from these two cities was modified by half, or 'curved,' the overall ranking would have improved to #11. Likewise, for the same week, the average market-weighted station survey ranking for this Kinks' single was #9, based upon surviving data from ten top cities: it was ascending in nine of them, and had climbed into the Top Ten in five- New York (#3), Detroit (#5), San Francisco (#9), Washington, D.C. (#5 consensus), and Miami (#6). The result of calculating a combined position from these sales numbers (75%-weighted) and the survey/airplay data (25%) was a realistic #12. Yet implausibly, *Billboard* calculated a dubious mark of #17 during the same week for "A Well Respected Man." On the other hand, *Cash Box* was right on the mark, moving up the Kinks' record to #10.

In persistent fashion, the Kinks' single continued to surge upward into the Top Ten for the week of 5 February 1966, based on both sales projections-carefully interpolated from data for later weeks, because that week's and the next was not available-and surviving station survey data. The record's estimated average market-weighted sales ranking was #9-perfectly matching its position on *Cash Box*-while its average survey position was #8; a combination of the two-weighted

as described above- yielded a #9 mark. Once again, *Billboard's* ranking- based on a combination of sales data and airplay ratings- of only #13 was questionable in view of these precisely calculated results, which were confirmed by the single's rating in *Cash Box*, which solely utilized sales information in determining its rankings. Furthermore, *Record World* had "A Well Respected Man" peaking at #10 (specific date unknown).

Inevitably, "A Well Respected Man" lost momentum in the final three weeks of February 1966, although it showed remarkable resiliency on the regional sales charts and radio station surveys. Following its aforementioned crest, during the week of 12 February, the single's estimated average market-weighted sales ranking dropped to #16-almost identical to the #15 mark posted on *Cash Box*- while its average station survey position slipped to #11. The average weighted yield using both metrics was #15; on this occasion, *Billboard's* #17 spot was at least close. The latter magazine's practice of using both sales and airplay data in computing its rankings received a ringing endorsement for the week of 19 February, when the record's average rankings in regional sales (#19, based on actual data) and airplay (#13, based on station surveys) yielded a joint ranking of #17- exactly where *Billboard* positioned it. Alternately, sales-based *Cash Box*- without the benefit of the airplay factor-dropped the Kinks' single to #31, a full twelve spots lower. For the following week (2/26/66), the surviving evidence yielded average market rankings of #29 (sales), #18 (station surveys/airplay), and #26 (combined). The comparable national rankings were both about twelve spots lower than the evidence indicated, and relatively close to each other: #38 on *Billboard*, #41 on *Cash Box*. Finally, for the week of 5 March 1966, the Kinks' record hit the bottom in average regional sales (#40), and fell to #27 in survey ratings, thus yielding a joint number of #37. To its credit, *Cash Box* still maintained "A Well Respected Man" at #67, while *Billboard* totally dropped it from the 'Hot 100.'

The Kinks had managed to spend an extraordinary sixteen weeks on the *Cash Box* Top 100, and had been on American radio for over eighteen weeks since their single's release in early November 1965. Incredibly, KDWB in the Twin Cities continued to chart it through early April 1966 (#39, 4/02/66), after WSAI in Cincinnati last tracked it in mid-March (#29, 3/12/66), although many stations tended to drop a single from their play lists after it was headed down, under the Top 20. The popularity of "A Well Respected Man" was accurately reflected in the year-end 1966 'Top 100' lists compiled by a number of radio stations, including Washington, D.C.'s WPGC, which pegged it at #67, while powerful WABC in New York had it ranked at an outstanding #33 for the year. Nationally, true to form, *Cash Box* ranked it at a realistic #52, whereas *Billboard's* original 'Top Records Of 1966' (published 12/17/66)-which did "not necessarily reflect total sales"- paradoxically listed it at #100. In a subsequent revision, *Billboard* dropped the record from its 1966 'Year End' chart. While that change may have been more accurate strictly in terms of *Billboard's* own weekly rankings and proprietary data, it is this writer's contention that the magazine's compiled data, together with

its processing, and therefore weekly positions were-except for perhaps six out of fourteen weeks- flawed and questionable based on the surviving regional sales reports and station surveys.

Canadian Charting Analysis

While the Kinks also had enjoyed excellent chart success for their first four hit singles released by Pye in Canada- smashing all the way up to #2 on the *R.P.M.* 'Top 40 Play Sheet' with "Set Me Free" (8/2/65)- results soured after that. "Who'll Be The Next In Line" (Pye 785) never charted on Vancouver, B.C.'s bold C-FUN, and peaked at only #19 on rival CKLG (8/21/65-9/4/65) in seven weeks of charting. Nationally it topped out at #25 on *R.P.M.* (9/27/65) after only four weeks, following its selection as an "*R.P.M. Former Extra.*" The haunting, progressive "See My Friends" (Pye 789), released in November 1965, literally sank without a trace, just as it had in the U.S.: it was ignored by both Vancouver stations, and failed to make the *R.P.M.* Top 40.

In normal fashion, Pye waited until early January 1966- two months after its U.S. debut- to release "A Well Respected Man" in Canada (Pye 792; with two different B-sides- first, "Ev'rybody's Gonna Be Happy," then "Don't You Fret; distributed by Allied Record Corporation). Apparently some stations secured early promo copies, as CKLG in Vancouver made it an 'Up 'N' Comer' pick as early as 18 December 1965, while rival C-FUN first charted it the next week (#37, 12/25/65). After giant CHUM in Toronto subsequently went on it (#48, 1/03/66), the Kinks seemed off to a promising start. Although the record was only moderately successful in Vancouver, with a #7 peak on CKLG (five weeks in their Top 20) and a #11 crest on C-FUN (only three weeks in the Top 20), it gradually built up steam on CHUM's Top 50, climbing to #15 by the end of January 1966. Almost duplicating its strong success in New York, the single then smashed into CHUM's Top 10, spending a noteworthy five weeks in it, and hitting #4 (2/21/66) in the middle of that run. Amazingly, it was still in the CHUM Top 50 near the end of March (#35, 3/28/66). The Kinks were also able to at least reach the Top 10 in Winnipeg, Manitoba (#6, CKY, 1/30/66) and Kitchener, Ontario (#7, CHYM, 2/21/66).

Despite the above success, "A Well Respected Man" inexplicably never charted on the *R.P.M.* Top 40 'Play Sheet'! One would have expected that the localized Canadian survey activity would have allowed the record to at least reach the *R.P.M.* Top 20, if not higher. This major omission on Canada's national pop music chart made the questionable rankings of the Kinks' record on *Billboard* appear miniscule in comparison. It also raised questions about the legitimacy of *R.P.M.*'s collection of sales and airplay data, as well as its methodology, before it expanded to a Top 100 format in April 1966. Otherwise, one might plausibly speculate about the effectiveness of Pye's promotional efforts on behalf of the single, as well as the efficiency of Allied's distribution in Canada.

Conclusion

The charting odyssey of “A Well Respected Man” in the U.S. perfectly illustrated the pop music industry truism that market synchronicity- the timely manner in which a single was spread across the country- was “terribly important.” (Davis and Willwerth 1975, 197). The disjointed nature in which this record was picked up by a limited number of radio stations contributed to its early sporadic progress on the national charts- notably on *Billboard*. The fact that this highly-regarded music industry magazine placed more emphasis on airplay for the lower fifty singles in its ‘Hot 100’ magnified this deficiency. On the other hand, the single’s steady ascent up the sales-based *Cash Box* ‘Top 100’ was largely ignored by many radio programmers. While it would be convenient to blame Warner-Reprise for the single’s slow, haphazard spread throughout the U.S., it is this writer’s opinion that such a conclusion would be simplistic and unrealistic. Undoubtedly, the label could have mounted a more efficient promotional campaign, especially once it became evident in early December that most major market stations were ignoring the record. As an alternative, Warner-Reprise should have aggressively pursued pivotal stations in medium markets sooner, such as those in Ohio (Columbus, Cincinnati), Minneapolis-St. Paul, Miami, and in So Cal. Unfortunately, its major market orientation was not suited to that approach, forcing it to rely on outside independent promoters. Nevertheless, this joint label had done an admirable job in marketing the Kinks’ first five singles, and had a vested interest in the success of “A Well Respected Man,” refusing to give up on it. One might argue that this record company’s ability to bring nine major market stations on board after 7-9 weeks was exemplary. Nonetheless, a case could be made that there were additional important forces that impacted the record’s inauspicious start.

The ultimate question regarding the commercial destiny of “A Well Respected Man” involved why major stations in nine of the top eleven markets, as well as pivotal stations in medium centers, refrained from adding it to their play lists for an unusual 7-9 weeks after its release. Stations in the huge and influential Los Angeles area waited an astounding nine weeks before going on the record- a delay that was extremely perplexing. Among these stations, market leader KRLA routinely broke new pop singles, and had been on the front-end of playing the Kinks’ first five singles on Reprise. The most logical explanation for this extraordinary circumstance would be that their programming directors had doubts about the hit potential of the record, a skepticism fostered by its lackluster performance on *Billboard*: after a moderately successful ‘starred’ debut at #84 (11/27/65), the single failed to receive highlighted stars during the following two weeks (#74, 12/04/65; #71, 12/11/65). Despite their protestations to the contrary, radio programmers were heavily influenced by a new record’s progress on the national charts, in terms of whether to add it to their own play lists: the more explosive its gains were, the more likely they were to ‘go on’ it. As Clive Davis,

later president of Columbia Records (1967-1973), insightfully explained, a single's loss of highlighted gains for two consecutive weeks

"... indicates that you are in trouble. The radio stations will see this as a loss of momentum.... An effect is felt. A record that loses its bullet one week can still be saved, but two weeks without a bullet leaves only true believers among the stations playing it." (Davis and Willwerth 1975, 197. The reference to a 'bullet' reflected industry jargon, even though it technically referred to *Cash Box*).

Another factor that might well have reinforced the non-committal attitude of radio stations towards this Kinks' single was the stance of *Bill Gavin's Record Report*, an influential Top 40 programming tip sheet. Although it is not known how Bill Gavin rated "A Well Respected Man," the fact that only a handful of stations initially went on the record indicated that it probably was not among Gavin's suggested weekly play list of 25 to 50 records- at least through the end of 1965: if it had been, the opposite would have been true. Considering that upwards of 150 pop records were released each week, programmers depended greatly on the *Gavin Report* for guidance in selecting new singles to add to their play list; depending on the size of a station's record rotation (Top 20, 30, 40, or 60), there usually were only 3-8 spots open weekly for new records. As Clive Davis pointed out, "...If a program director goes on a new song, he wants to be convinced that it is a chart-climber of major proportions." (ibid, 192).

In the final analysis, a more sinister force that might have contributed to the combination of radio reluctance and the single's sluggish start was an unofficial backlash stemming from the Kinks' negative impression on American music industry unions (AFTRA, AFM) during the group's tumultuous U.S. tour in the summer of 1965. While no documentation directly supporting this theory has been found, this writer believes that the circumstantial survey evidence discussed earlier gave it some credence. Looking back at the charting of the Kinks' previous two singles since the summer of '65, certain events occurred which, in retrospect, seemed suspicious and established a pattern. On one level, the national charting of "Who'll Be The Next In Line" appeared reasonably normal: it broke big on *Billboard* (#73 debut with a 'star,' 8/7/65), after getting strong regional airplay, first in LA (all three pop stations), then New York (WMCA), Chicago (WLS), Milwaukee (WRIT), and Hartford (WDRG), and subsequently was added by stations in Miami (WQAM), Orlando (WLOF), Providence (WPRO), the Twin Cities (WDGY), New Haven (WAVZ), and Omaha (48th-largest center, KOIL). The record's inability to convert this vibrant airplay into strong sales doomed it to being a 'turntable hit,' as it fizzled out nationally in late August- early September; it averaged a peak position of only #24 among thirteen stations in eleven major and prime medium markets.

On the other hand, what happened with this single in LA seemed strange. After being the first station to break "Who'll Be The Next In Line" as the A-side ('Boss Hit Bound,' 7/16/65), KHJ summarily dropped it two weeks later after it slipped

one spot to #29 (7/28/65). Similarly, rival KFWB gave up on it after three weeks of survey activity, following a gain to #25 (8/4/65). Incredulously, this was prior to the single's debut on *Billboard*, and right after it emerged on *Cash Box* (#98, 7/31/65). Thus, as the single broke out nationally, both these AM outlets had stopped playing it! While market leader KRLA had jumped on it one day after KHJ (#30, 7/17/65) and charted it for five weeks, it too went off the single in mid-August (#23, 8/14/65)- just as *Billboard* awarded the record its second consecutive 'star' (#53, 8/14/65) and *Cash Box* moved it up an impressive twenty-four spots to #58 (8/14/65). Although these local LA survey moves may have simply reflected a lack of requests and sales for the single, this writer finds their duration and timing highly suspicious. This early LA 'blackout' also contributed to the record's derailment on the national charts, even though that may have been inevitable.

In the case of "See My Friends," released officially on 29 September 1965 but picked up earlier by loyal WDRC in Hartford (9/20/65; unranked, listed as being "from *Record World's* 'Radio Exposure Chart'), the fact that only a handful of stations in the U.S. ever played it was both surprising and perplexing. Essentially, this groundbreaking song could not have received less exposure if it had been banned! The apparent failure of any major market stations to play it- including the trio in LA- after it had been tabbed as a 'Top 60 Spotlight' pick by *Billboard* (10/02/65) was extremely unusual, especially in light of the Kinks' proven charting history, and the strength of the Warner-Reprise promotional department (based on surviving surveys). Assuming that the record company did not bury the record by not marketing it- a move that would have been both nonsensical from a business perspective and highly improbable- this state of affairs was quite mysterious.

Against this background, the stubborn reluctance of stations in all but two major markets (Cleveland, Chicago) to add "A Well Respected Man" to their play lists for a prolonged 7-9 weeks takes on new meaning: their unusual reticence might have been caused by a 'code of silence' boycott generated by unofficial union pressure. In any event, it was telling that stations in the normally advanced LA market were one of the last to start playing the record- after it had made the Top Forty of both national trades, and well after it had gone Top Fifty. While only circumstantial, this substantial evidence suggests a clear pattern covering three months and at least two records: aside from being unofficially banned from playing in the U.S. for four years, the Kinks may have suffered from an 'underground' union blacklisting which severely restricted the radio station airplay of several of their singles. These potential negative forces might have conspired to almost ground "A Well Respected Man" to a halt on the national charts in November and the first half of December 1965. Fortunately for Kinks' fans, events gradually transpired more positively: this timeless song would not be buried commercially as its precursor regrettably had been.

It can be argued that “A Well Respected Man” would have been a Top Five U.S. hit had it not been subjected to the negative factors discussed above, besides the obvious lack of live touring support and absence of any national TV exposure. Its ability to overcome such daunting obstacles and doggedly earn a Top Ten ranking on *Cash Box* was a testament both to the song’s endearing lyrical and musical quality, and commercial appeal once it was given a chance to be heard. In the end, the music reviewer in *Billboard* and other industry experts were proven wrong, while *Billboard*’s methodology for ranking records during this single’s surge in popularity was exposed as suspect by the wealth of surviving local survey evidence and area sales charts. In addition, “A Well Respected Man” helped to pave the way for the perhaps better-remembered “Sunny Afternoon” in the summer of 1966- three Kinks’ singles later- which ironically failed to match the chart achievements of its predecessor. Significantly, “A Well Respected Man”, sometimes overlooked in discussions concerning 60s pop/rock music and the Kinks’ own history, gave the group a much-needed fourth U.S. Top Ten hit, and rescued them from the brink of commercial U.S. failure, while reinvigorating them on the American pop music scene.

“And he plays at stocks and shares,
And he goes to the Regatta,
And he adores the girl next door,
‘Cause he’s dying to get at her,
But his mother knows the best about
The matrimonial stakes.”

(“A Well Respected Man.” Written by: Ray Davies. Published by: Kassner Music Co. Ltd)

Note: Market rankings and radio station ratings cited in this essay have been based on “ Radio Response Ratings” published in *Billboard* from 1965-1966 where available; *Billboard* defined them as “radio markets.”

(<http://www.google.com/search?q=billboard+magazine&tbm=bks&tbo=1&oq=billboard>). Otherwise, market rankings have been based on data from the

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