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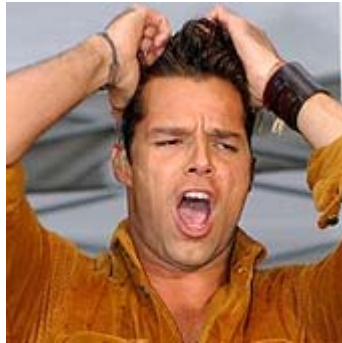
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Libraries Don't Want Ricky

Labels dump unwanted CDs as price fixing settlement

Overloaded

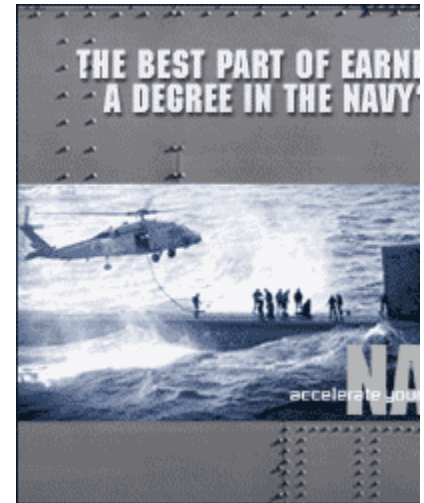
Ordinarily, a box of 171 free CDs in the mail might make a librarian extremely happy. But not Craig Buthod, director of the Louisville Free Public Library in Kentucky. His new discs included *Martha Stewart Living: Spooky Scary Sounds for Halloween*, Lee Greenwood's *American Patriot* and six copies of Ricky Martin's *Sound Loaded*. "It's better than a poke in the eye with a sharp stick -- but not much," says Buthod. "I'd have to say this looks like leftovers."

Buthod's library received the CDs as part of a \$143 million price-fixing settlement between the world's largest music companies and forty-three state governments. Accused of colluding against record stores that lowered prices (a charge that music-industry lawyers denied), record labels and distributors agreed in 2002 to donate \$76 million worth of CDs to school districts and libraries nationwide.

Washington, Indiana and Kentucky were the first to receive the shipments, in June, and so far most recipients aren't thrilled with the bounty. Washington's Puget Sound Educational Service District's 25,600-CD allotment included 1,355 copies of Whitney Houston singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and 609 of Michael Bolton's *Timeless: The Classics*.

The settlement stipulated that record labels prepare lists of a "diversity of music" from which states' attorneys general selected CDs. Brad Maione, spokesman for New York Attorney General Elliot Spitzer, says, "We understand concerns expressed and are fine-tuning the process. If it wasn't for the settlement, they wouldn't be receiving anything."

Still, many librarians praise the free stuff. None of the three branch libraries in Oldham County, Kentucky, even has a music collection -- and the CDs are a "good start," says director Susan Eubank. Judy Covell, collection manager for Washington's twenty-seven-branch Timberland Regional Library, is pleased to add Johnny Cash,



Tammy Wynette and Herbie Hancock titles to her library's collection. Of course, the library also has to find shelf space for about sixty copies of Jessica Simpson's *Irresistible*.

STEVE KNOPPER

(Posted Jul 15, 2004)



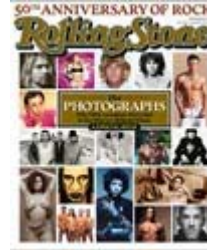
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RS MUSIC STORE : Top 10 Songs for 49¢

- | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | "Goodies" | Ciara | SHOP |
| 2 | "Breathe, Stretch, Shake" | Mase | SHOP |
| 3 | "American Idiot" | Green Day | SHOP |
| 4 | "1985" | Bowling For Soup | SHOP |
| 5 | "Eight Easy Steps" | Alanis Morissette | SHOP |

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