

**A WVIP Commentary**  
**By William O'Shaughnessy**  
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I'm a radio guy.

And I've always had great respect for disc jockey's who get up each day to strap on earphones and go in a radio station to entertain and inform.

Some of them view the instrument of communicatio over which they preside for a few hours each day as more than a jukebox.

A few even resemble social commentators and, lacking that, as agreeable companions.

In high school in Buffalo, I loved Fred Klestine and the five guys who all used the moniker "Guy King.

"And then, much later, I discovered a guy from Babylon, NY named William Bernard Breitbard, which name he didn't use. Instead he addressed the microphone as William B. Williams.

He went to work in a place called the "Make-Believe Ballroom" which was housed at an iconic radio station with the legendary call sign WNEW.

William B. became a great and wonderful friend. And it was a sad day when Variety asked me to eulogize him when he left us with the music still playing.

And then, speaking of legends of the air, I became a fan of one Michael Scott Shannon who presided over an obscure New Jersey station Z-100.

Scott is a lot more than a hippy dippy finger-snapping "Rodney Radio" disc Jockey.

In his best moments, he's also a gifted and skillful social commentator, very knowledgeable and worldly about the great issues of the day.

And so he assembled a marvelous and beguiling cast of characters to populate his now legendary Z Morning Zoo.

They played Cindy Lauper. I had no idea who the hell Cindy Lauper was. I still don't ... but I understand she's pretty talented and a big deal on Broadway.

Scott, who has become the pre-eminent Radio guy of our time was the ringmaster, the interlocutor, the glue and seasoning that drove the inhabitants of the "Zee," and his genius held it all together.

I can still remember some of the most delightful off-beat personalities from that show. Everyone on my block ... including Yours Truly ... was in love with a dame named Claire Stevens!

And the most beguiling of all, of course, was one absolutely outrageous, but endearing character named "Mr. Leonard," who wore a lime green leisure suit and cherry red pumps. HE was always getting into trouble ... like when he covered the visit of Princess Diana "on assignment for Mr. Scott Shannon" and got roused by the British Secret Service when they caught Mr. Leonard hiding in the bushes with his "Z Morning Zoo" Microphone! ("Don't you know who I am ...?")

And we remember when he charged our the radio station door in high dudgeon to "have a word" with someone who had the "audacity" to take his personal parking spot. The confrontation didn't last long, however, when Mr. Leonard found out the car belonged to Hulk Hogan!

"Oh, sorry, Mr. Hulk Hogan ... I didn't mean nothing by it when I said those terrible things to you and threatened to beat you ... I was just kidding!"

So many delightful moments ...

So much fun.

Such great Radio.

I didn't just enjoy their antics. Many nights I would stand at the "21" bar and pummel one and all who would listen with my admiration for this Scott Shannon.

Apparently, I was not alone in my enthusiasm. In a short time, the station had a meteoric rise and went from "worst to First" in the New York market.

Scott then moved on to also program WPLJ and re-invigorate WCBS-FM.

He is the best of what we are. And he is equally at home with high rollers like Ken Langone the late Jack Welch and the swells at Lost Tree in Palm Beach.

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An observation" You've heard the phrase "he's got a face for Radio."

Well, Scott Shannon, with those beautiful cheekbones and exquisite jawline indeed has a face for ... Television. But maybe, just maybe, that would ruin everything. He's so damn good at what he does.

I'm glad he's my friend.

He's a great entertainer.

And a class act in every season.

(Oh, and his daughter works in the White House for the President of the United States.)

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*William O'Shaughnessy, a former president of the New York State Broadcasters Association, was chairman of Public Affairs for the National Association of Broadcasters in Washington. He has been a point man and advocate for the broadcasters of America on First Amendment and Free Speech issues and is presently chairman of the Guardian Fund of the Broadcasters Foundation of America, the national charitable organization. He is also a longtime director and member of the Executive Committee of the Foundation. He has operated WVOX and WVIP, two of the last independent stations in the New York area, for over 60 years as president and editorial director.*

*He is the author of "AirWAVES" (1999) ... "It All Comes Back to Me Now" (2001) ... "More Riffs, Rants and Raves" (2004) ... and "VOX POPULI: The O'Shaughnessy Files," released in January, 2011. He has also written "Mario Cuomo. Remembrances of a Remarkable Man," a*

*tribute to his late friend Governor Mario M. Cuomo. His newest book RADIOactive for Fordham University Press, another anthology with interviews, commentaries, speeches and tributes was published in 2019. He is presently working on Townies, a paeon to those without wealth, influence or high estate in suburban Westchester County, the heart of the Eastern Establishment.*