



40 Watts from Nowhere: A Journey into Pirate Radio

Sue Carpenter

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When law office receptionist Sue Carpenter first asked how she might start her own radio station, everyone laughed. Getting on the air (legitimately) in San Francisco was a multimillion-dollar ambition. But in 1995, with the help of a few subversive techies and pirate-radio gurus, Sue built her first transmitter in her hilltop San Francisco apartment and launched KPBJ, enlisting friends as DJs. A few months later, Sue landed a magazine job in Los Angeles, took her transmitter with her, and established KBLT.

From these humble beginnings KBLT emerged as one of L.A.'s best-loved radio stations, staffed with more than a hundred DJs and supported by major music labels eager to reach a different kind of audience. The station expanded its playlist from indie rock to an eclectic mix of jazz, hip-hop, electronica, and countless other styles. In the three and a half years before the FCC finally caught up with Sue, KBLT went from interviewing unknowns to hosting live performances by the Red Hot Chili Peppers -- without ever leaving Sue's apartment.

40 Watts from Nowhere is Sue's frank and hilarious account of her bizarre double life during the height of California's pirate-radio boom: journalist by day, counterculture icon by night. It's an amazing true story, one that will instantly appeal to music fans -- and free spirits -- everywhere.

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