

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL O'RIELLY**

Re: Acerome Jean Charles, Boston, Massachusetts, EB-FIELDNER-17-00024504

Addressing the scourge of pirate radio has been important to me and this Commission. It's been well-established that unlawful, unlicensed broadcasts can interfere with public safety and aviation transmissions, as well as the operations of licensed broadcasters, who pour enormous effort and resources into serving their local communities. The illegal operators also put listeners at greater risk by neglecting key broadcaster responsibilities, such as providing emergency alerts. Further, protecting the integrity of the Commission's licensing of the electromagnetic spectrum is one of the Commission's most fundamental duties and must remain a priority.

Today, we take enforcement action against two long-standing and well-known pirate broadcasters in the Boston market, and I want to commend all the Commission staff from the Enforcement Bureau who have worked hard on these cases, both here in Washington and in the field. I had the privilege of visiting our Boston office last fall, and I am very grateful to that team for their incredible diligence in tracking and investigating these unlawful broadcasts.

One aspect of pirate radio that has certainly been surprising, over the many years I've worked with our enforcement staff on this issue, is the support some pirates receive from advertisers and others, including politicians. Boston has, historically, been a particularly troublesome market in this respect, with pirates operating seemingly unabated, and with the full support of certain patrons. While the consent decrees and accompanying fines that we issue today are very low compared to other Commission enforcement actions, I am hopeful that our actions will be effective in ending these problematic broadcasts and deterring future ones, both in the Boston market and across the country. And, with the recent PIRATE Act being signed into law by President Trump, the Commission will have even more tools at our disposal to end these broadcasts. Future pirate radio operators should expect to face much more extensive penalties.

I once again thank all the staff involved and am hopeful that other pirate broadcasters will take notice. This Commission is coming for you.