

Brainwashed - Andrew Liles, Banned in the U.K.

Written by Lucas Schleicher

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Record store day, held on April 16th, is supposed to be a celebration of music and the culture that surrounds it, but for Andrew Liles it's more like a sign of the times. His contribution to the celebration, a 7" picture disc titled *As if Punk Rock Never Happened*, originally featured a humorously edited version of Prince Charles and Princess Diana's official wedding photo. Pressing plants are refusing to print the image, however, and it will ship in a significantly censored form.

On the morning of April the fourth, I woke up to a very angry Andrew Liles. He told me that his forthcoming 7" picture disc was being censored due to its cover art. I immediately assumed the art in question featured nudity or something suggestive and I clicked the link he sent to see what the fuss was all about. Here's what I saw:



At first, I was completely confused. I nearly wrote Andrew back to ask him what was beneath those censor-bubbles. Then I realized that the image on the left is the original picture, the one that's apparently causing the printers to balk. When I asked why the image might be causing a stir, Andrew replied,

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"I have no idea. I think their excuse has something to do with copyright of the image, so their lawyers have advised that they not [print] it. But, I would be liable, not the manufacturer. I guess they want it censored because of the royal wedding coming up. The image was the official wedding photo of Princess Diana and Prince Charles."

The royal wedding he mentions is the marriage of Prince William to Kate Middleton, which is generating hype thanks to its 34.5 million dollar price tag. While the picture disc is described on Liles' website as a "cynical commemorative item" for the wedding, Andrew says he isn't out to attack the couple or the monarchy: I have nothing against the royal family per se, my release is just a tongue in cheek comment about society 'being so pussy' and un-punk rock, which i guess has backfired.

As if Punk Rock Never Happened will still be released, hopefully with a print of the original cover included. Nevertheless, it's troubling that an image like this one could scare anyone into censoring it. Having a laugh at world leaders and celebrities was legally protected the last time I checked, and according to the U.S. Supreme Court, parodies do not violate fair use doctrine, a fact that should quash the printer's fears about legal repercussions.

Campbell v. Acuff-Rose Music, Inc., the famous U.S. Supreme Court case involving 2 Live Crew, applies to this case just as well as it did to Roy Orbison and "Pretty Woman." In 1994, after reviewing the case, Justice David Souter delivered the unanimous opinion that Parody needs to mimic an original to make its point, and so has some claim to use the creation of its victim's (or collective victims') imagination, whereas satire can stand on its own two feet and so requires justification for the very act of borrowing.

The Supreme Court's word might not hold much legal water in the U.K., but I have a hard time believing that 300 copies of a 7" record will inflame the wrath of the royal photographer's lawyers.