

Nov 04, 2016 by [Adam Clayton Powell, III](#)

NBC Drops Voice of America ^[1]

WASHINGTON -- Last month, NBC announced it had bought the Voice of America, as we noted at the time. NBC planned to use the name for a weekly musical series that will premiere on the network in a few months to compete with "American Idol."

We also speculated that even sophisticated viewers here and in other countries might confuse the NBC "Voice of America" musical with that other Voice of America, the U.S. government's international broadcaster.

All of this did not go unnoticed at VOA headquarters here in Washington.

On the last business day of 2010, we received a message from the Broadcasting Board of Governors, which oversees Voice of America, to let us know they had contacted NBC to advise them the name "Voice of America" legally belongs to the U.S. international broadcaster and cannot be used for NBC's entertainment series. Somehow NBC had failed to notice that other Voice of America, which must not include in its coverage maps NBC Entertainment headquarters in Burbank, California.

So NBC has abandoned "Voice of America" and now will launch its musical series under the title "The Voice." BBG even sent a news clip confirming the change.

But could NBC lose its "Voice"? "The Voice" is the title of a horror movie, not to be confused with another horror movie titled "Voice". Oh, the horror.

"The Voice" is also a name used by a religious publisher and by newspapers in locations including New York, Washington and Michigan. Maybe "The Voice" is used by so many that it is as generic as, say, "The News."

Footnote: Last month, NBC's decision to grab "Voice of America" must have especially caught the attention of one particular BBG executive: Richard Lobo, who supervises VOA as well as Radio and TV Marti. Before his government appointment, Lobo was a longtime vice president and then station president at, you guessed it, NBC.

Disclosure: Before he went to NBC, Lobo was at CBS - and was my boss at my second summer job.
