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Date: Sat, 30 Oct 1999 07:45:51 EDT

Subject: Re: Coalition Wants Congress to Authorize FTC to Protect Children
fromHarmful...

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MIME-Version: 1.0

Status:

My name is Jack Thompson. I shall be in Toronto on November 29 and 30 to participate in "Hands Across the Border" to discuss our federal lawsuit in Paducah, Kentucky USA against, among others, the video game industry corporations whose first-person shooter video games helped cause the massacres in Paducah and Littleton and elsewhere.

I am gratified to report that the official within our Federal Trade Commission who is charged with investigating the video gaming industry, pursuant to President Clinton's June 1 order to "determine whether the entertainment industry markets violent adult products to children" called me yesterday and asked me point-blank for a copy of our lawsuit. He seems very keen to go down this road. I, of course, provided it to him. The pigeons have not yet come home to roost, but they are headed home.

Jack Thompson, 305-666-4366

-MURDER SIMULATORS AND KIDS@TARGETS

By John B. Thompson, Miami Attorney

In 1941, this country was in the midst of a debate over whether to enter a war. The attack on Pearl Harbor ended that debate. A similar cold-blooded attack, forever to be known as iLittleton,i has become the Pearl Harbor of America's culture war.

America's youth has been targeted for years by entertainment executives who would not expose their own children to the swill they sell to ours. iLittletoni will be remembered as the place as well as the moment in time when parents decided to strike back: to target the targeters. The battle has been joined.

Eight days before Littleton, Kentucky attorney Mike Breen and I filed a federal lawsuit against 25 entertainment companies whose products profoundly influenced 14-year-old Michael Carneal in 1997 to walk into his Paducah, Kentucky, high school and shoot eight students attending a pre-school prayer meeting. The parents of the three girls murdered that day, who are our clients, know that iWhere your treasure is, there your heart will be also.i Only the loss of money, not lives, horrifies the entertainment moguls. It is time to bring them to justice in our courts.

The facts from Kentucky are on our side: the examining psychiatrist, Dr. Diane Schetky, a renowned specialist in teen homicide, concluded Michael Carneal was responsible for what he did, that he was not mentally ill. But she concluded he was profoundly influenced to commit the crimes by three categories of entertainment: The Basketball Diaries movie, Internet pornography depicting degradation of women, and violent video games, including Doom.

Michael Carneal was targeted and he in turn willingly took the bait and targeted others. We now target those who forged the links of this murderous chain. Let's talk about their responsibility.

The Basketball Diariesi features a trenchcoated student gunning down his classmates. The scene is nowhere to be found in the autobiography by Jim Carroll of the same name. When asked why, the director said: iWe could have made a movie true to the book, but then the kids would not have seen it.i What an admission: a movie designed to be R-rated and thus not appropriate for kids, was designed for and marketed to kids by a Hollywood that knows its rating system is a harmful scam.

More targeting of impressionable kids like Carneal can be found at anti-woman Internet sites, as one of the web sites he consumed calls itself iNippleodeon.i It is no coincidence that Carneal targeted girls.

President Clinton himself mentioned our third target last month when, in the aftermath of Littleton, he told America in his Saturday radio address that iAmerica would do well to listen to Lt. Col. David Grossmani about the role violent video games play in teen shootings.

Who is David Grossman? He is a leading authority on the causal link between video games and killing. He has analyzed the Paducah school shootings, and

his conclusions are these: Carneal had no experience with a handgun, yet he walked into his school and opened fire on a scrambling prayer group of kids. He fired eight shots that hit eight different kids. Five were head shots and the other three were upper-torso shots. This is marksmanship that dwarfs what Oswald did in the Dallas Book Depository.

Further, Carneal used a shooting technique that is totally unnatural. He pulled the trigger only once at each victim and moved instantly to the next target. Experts tell us what is natural is to unload one's gun into a target until it hits the ground. This rapid-fire technique was learned by Carneal in video games like Doom, which provide the player a limited amount of time to fire a limited number of shots. Carneal learned well on a the same murder simulators used by Klebold and Harris to plan their massacre in Littleton.

Finally, and most disturbingly, these murder simulators taught Carneal to enjoy the act of killing. Humans, like all other animal species, have a God-given inhibition against killing their own.

Military experts analyzing data gathered from the battlefields of World War II found that American soldiers were only willing to fire their weapons roughly 15% of the time—even when a soldier was confronted face-to-face with enemy fire—because of this instinct not to kill. Since 1945, our military has searched for ways to suppress this inhibition and to create, through operant conditioning, a disconnect in the soldier's mind between the physical act of pulling the trigger and the awful reality that a life may thus end.

The military uses video simulators, some of them modified versions of what Carneal, Klebold, and Harris used, such as Doom, to create this disconnect. Virtual reality becomes reality, and the unthinkable becomes automatic, so that in a combat setting the trigger is reflexively pulled. As a result of this video training, the willingness to kill rate in the U.S. military in combat is now around 95%.

But Michael Carneal, along with Klebold and Harris, had training that went far beyond what the military dares do: They were taught that killing is fun, even thrilling. The military has training safeguards in place to make sure efficiency does not become bloodlust. There are no such safeguards in a video arcade. Listen to John Romero, the man who created Doom: "When we started playing, it was like, 'We have to have more blood, more violence in there.' It seemed real, but we needed to show the guys dying."

The video game industry have now struck back, sensing the danger. They claim through their paid spokesmen that such entertainment is protected by the First Amendment. The United States Supreme Court, however, ruled in March that a quadriplegic harmed by copycat violence allegedly inspired by the movie Natural Born Killers can proceed. If Hollywood can be held accountable for that sewage, then surely lawsuits against interactive murder simulators have merit.

Parents, all of your children are in the crosshairs of pop culture. Those of you concerned about violent entertainment and those of you determined to stop gun violence should agree on targeting at least one product—violent video games.

Lincoln's great biographer Carl Sandburg wrote that "Freedom is moving easy in harness." If so, then we can remain free without murder simulators. Can we remain free with them? Colorado and other states must immediately move to ban their sale to and play by children. If guns should not be in the hands of minors, then neither should devices that make them amoral marksmen.

One thing may be said with dreadful certainty: more gunfire will be heard in more schools. Future murderers are being trained this very moment in front of video screens across America.