

Violent Video Games Are Mass-Murder Simulators

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I'd like to talk to you about violent crime and the causations of violent crime. And what I want you to realize is, we have to think of violence like we would think of heart disease. It really is a soul-disease, if you will. And many things cause heart disease. There's obesity, overweight—does that cause heart disease? Yes. Does a high-cholesterol diet, or stress, or lack of exercise, or genetics—do all those things cause heart disease? Yes, we know they do. If you take all the existing factors, and add tobacco to it, the result is an explosion of heart disease, anywhere in the world.

Well, in the same way, I want you to ask yourself, what causes violent crime, or causes people to kill. Well, poverty, gangs, drugs, availability of guns, child abuse, family breakdown—these are all important factors. But what we *know* is, that if you take the existing factors, and add the media violence—television, movie, and especially now the video-game violence—the result is an *explosion* of violent crime in any nation in which it takes place.

In America, since 1957, per-capita violent crime has gone up approximately six- to sevenfold. Now, the first thing you have to realize is, you have to ignore the murder rate, because medical technology saves more lives every year. What you have to do, is you have to look at the aggravated assault rate, the rate at which Americans are trying to kill one another off. And that has gone up between six- and sevenfold—per capita, now, we're allowing for population growth in all these data.

It's Not 'All About Guns'

A lot of people say, "Well, you know, it's all about guns." I testified before the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House, and keeping guns out of the hands of kids is a terribly important responsibility that everybody from the NRA [National Rifle Association] to the ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union] agrees on. When I testified before the Senate and the House, a man by the name of Jack Valenti testified with me. Mr. Valenti [head of the Motion Picture Association of America]

stood up in front of Congress, and said, "This is not happening in other nations. It's all about our guns. It's because the guns are there."

Again, guns are part of the issue, but the two killers here in my hometown, in Jonesboro, Arkansas, at the age of 11 and 13, used an acetylene torch to try to break into a gun case. When that failed, they stole a car, drove across town, and used a crowbar to break into a law-enforcement officer's gun safe. What I want you to realize is, that 15, 20 years ago, nobody would have had a gun safe, and today that's the norm.

The killer in Paducah, Kentucky broke into a locked cabinet in a locked garage in the neighbor's house. I was a consultant in that case, and I tell you, that that boy went to an extraordinary measure to get the guns that he used in that case.

Additionally, the killers in Littleton, Colorado had adults commit felonies to get the guns that they used in that situation.

We are doing a better and better job of keeping the guns away from kids, and we must continue to do so. But the kids are going to extraordinary measures to get those guns.

As I said, Mr. Valenti stood up and said, "It's all about guns. It's not happening in other countries." And Mr. Valenti's kind of a slow learner, because both times I stood up and testified after him, before the Senate and the House, and explained how this *is* happening around the world.

In America, we've had a six- to sevenfold increase in per-capita violent crime since 1957. In Canada—in Canada, you know, you've got a great nation. You've got all those gun laws, you've got that semi-socialistic, paternalistic government, you've got almost zero racial problems, and you've got the cold weather that drives all the riffraff down to the United States, you see. So, in Canada, since 1964, per-capita violent crime has gone up fivefold. Attempted murders have gone up sevenfold.

Across Europe and around the world we see the same phenomena. In the last 15 years that we've got Interpol data, per-capita violent crime went up fivefold in Norway and Greece, it went up fourfold in Australia and New Zealand. Per-capita violent crime in those same 15 years tripled—tripled—in Sweden, and approximately doubled in seven other European nations. Meanwhile, in that same time frame, we saw murder double in India.

Violence and Television

Now, here's an interesting phenomenon—and we're going to come back to it over and over again. Television was placed in every village in India in the late 1960s and the early '70s. Fifteen years later, the murder rate doubled in India. Anywhere we saw television appear, around the world, Western television—you see, in India, their favorite show was [a police thriller] "Starsky and Hutch," and other such things. Anywhere that American violent media appear, 15 years later, the murder rate has at least doubled.

Now, when we start thinking of the impact of the violent video games, and the toxic material that's coming over the



The “new violence” has been sparked by the so-called Information Society, with a proliferation of violent video games that teach children how to kill. Shown here: an assortment of advertisers in Computer Gaming World.

Internet, when we think about that 15-year delay, you need to ask yourself very, very carefully, what the world is going to look like 15 years from now.

Well, as we said, we saw India, with the doubling of the murder rate in that vast nation, as the direct result of television. We saw Brazil and Mexico had an explosion of violent crime in the last 10 or 15 years. And Japan. Japan is a nation with a homogeneous society, an intact family structure, universal employment, draconian gun laws, an island nation. And in 1997 alone, we saw a 30% increase in juvenile violence in Japan. So, again, what we’re looking at is a worldwide phenomenon, in which any nation which feeds death and horror

and destruction to their children, pays a tragic price.

Now, a lot of people think that if we just outlaw guns, it’ll go away. And that’s like saying, if we outlaw drugs, the drug problem will go away. If we continue to glamorize drugs—and every night the children are shown all of their action heroes shooting up drugs, and smoking marijuana—why, we know that it would be virtually impossible to prevent the demand for drugs, which will be met.

In the same way, around the world, we’re finding that it’s virtually impossible in a free society, to control the flow of guns, if there’s this *demand* for guns. I had a BBC crew in my home, here in Arkansas, just a couple of months ago, telling

me about the explosion of guns that's coming into England. You can't control all the drugs, and you can't control all the guns, and the guns are worth more, pound for pound, than heroin is. And people are buying the guns, and cases of automatic weapons are coming into England, and the city of Manchester is now referred to as Gun-chester.

You see, the point is, that we cannot permit the mass media to continue to glamorize violence and death and horror, and then think that nobody's going to want the guns, and for some reason, they're all going to go away if we pass a magic law.

What the Experts Have Said

Now, the very people that we count on to inform us about the data, are the media, the television industry. And they are systematically invested in misrepresenting this situation. The AMA [American Medical Association], the APA [American Psychological Association], the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Institute of Mental Health, the Surgeon General, the Attorney General, the United Nations or the major UNESCO study—every major scholarly and medical body in the world that's ever addressed the topic, has made *definitive* statements about the link between media violence, and violence in our society.

I was on "Meet the Press" with our Surgeon General two weeks after the Littleton shootings. They asked the Surgeon General, "Can you do a Surgeon General's report on the link between media violence and violence in our society?" They said, "You know, what the Colonel's talking about makes sense; maybe we are teaching our kids to kill. Can you do a Surgeon General's report?"

The Surgeon General, Dr. David Satcher, got this kind of disgusted look on his face, and he says, "Sure, I can do *another* Surgeon General's report. But why don't we begin by reading the 1972 Surgeon General's report that has already established that?"

Now, how many of you in the audience knew that the Surgeon General says that there's a link between tobacco and cancer? Raise your hands. Of course you do. It's on every pack of tobacco you see. Now, how many of you knew that the Surgeon General said that there's a definitive link between television violence and violence in our society? Now, why don't we know that? Why don't we know what the Surgeon General has to say about a product that we inflict upon our children? Why don't we know about the longitudinal study of 875 kids, across 21 years, that demonstrated the fact that the high-level viewers of television were four to five times more likely to be violent criminals? Why don't we know that? Why is the Surgeon General so disgusted at having to repeat studies that were done over a quarter of a century ago?

Well, the point is this: If you ask the television industry about the link between their product, and the harmful effects, they'll do the same thing as the tobacco industry. Now, ask yourself: Up until just very recently, if you asked the tobacco

industry about the link between tobacco and cancer, what would they do? They would lie. You know how you could tell the tobacco industry was lying? Their lips were moving.

In the same way, if you ask the television industry about the link between their product and violence in our society, they will do the exact same as the tobacco industry—they will lie. They will bring out their stooge researchers, their tame scientists on a leash, that come out and claim that you can't prove it. Now, I presented to the AMA, as a preliminary presenter, in their annual national leadership symposium earlier this year, and before the APA. In both of those cases, when we stood up and talked about the health impact of media violence, they did not invite the tobacco industry, or the television industry, to come in and tell "their side of the story." The AMA and the APA are convinced that there is no doubt about it: They are only frantically searching for a way to get through the incredible stonewall, by which the individuals who control the public airwaves, are preventing us from getting out vital information about the health of ourselves and our children.

Violent Video Games

Now, the most important point that I want to make today, revolves around the video games, the violent video games. What I want you to realize is, that these video games have reached a new level. All of the data, every lick and stick of the data, on movie and television violence causing violence in our society, applies directly to the video games, with bells on.

Now, what will happen is, you'll see the video-game industry say, "Well, those data don't apply to us. This is a new product." That's like saying the data on cigarettes don't apply to cigars. We know the violent visual imagery is having the exact same impact on the kids. The problem is, that this new medium, by which the kids are learning violence—and violence is a learned skill, you learn it through visual observation—but, even better than watching a training film, is partaking in a simulator.

Now, these video games are simulators. There are flight simulators, that teach you how to fly. And there are murder simulators, whose only redeeming social value is that they teach you how to commit the act of murder. If these things were rape simulators, we would not tolerate letting our children play them. And yet, we sit and watch our children play endless hours, practicing blowing people's heads off.

Now, people are going to say, "That's just kids playing games. We played caps when we were kids." You all remember playing caps? We had toy guns. And I said, "Bang, bang, I got you, Billy." And Billy said, "No, you didn't." So, I smacked him with my cap gun. And he cried, and he went to his mama, and I got in *big* trouble. And you know what I learned? I learned that Billy is real. And when I hurt Billy, bad things are going to happen to me.

Now, in the violent video games, I blow Billy's stinkin' head off in explosions of blood, countless thousands of times. And do I get trouble? No. I get points.



CounterStrike

The home page of the CounterStrike video game, 2007. Colonel Grossman has been writing on the role of video violence in programming children to kill since the 1990s. It's one thing when policemen or soldiers are trained by these shoot-to-kill technologies, he says, but it's quite another when they are used to turn children into zombies.

Do you understand: The purpose of play, is to learn *not* to hurt members of your society, and members of your own species. In a basketball game, or a football game, when one of the players is hurt, according to the rules, the play stops. That what makes professional wrestling so dysfunctional.

Now, if you're an adult, and you enjoy media violence, that's fine. I'm an adult. I like to drink a beer, I like to shoot a gun, I like to smoke a cigar, I like sex—I like all those things. If you give any of those things to my grand-babies, you're a criminal. You understand? The things that we enjoy, as adults, it's okay. But if you take the things as adults, that you enjoy—guns, pornography, tobacco, alcohol, sex, cars—and you give them to kids, you're a criminal!

Now, if you want to play violent video games, and you want to let your kid do it; if you want to have a drink of beer and let your kid have a drink; if you want to shoot a gun and let your kid shoot a gun, that's your business. But, if I want to make money selling guns, or beer, or pornography, or tobacco, or violent video games to your kids, then that just became your business.

Military-Quality Training Devices

Now these violent video games are identical, as Mr. LaRouche has said, to military-quality training devices. They make killing a conditional response. I would refer you to my website, at which I have three encyclopedia entries that I've written, and my entry in the *Oxford Companion to American Military History*. I would also refer you to my book *On Killing*, and my new book, *Stop Teaching Our Kids To Kill*. On

Killing is being used as a textbook in West Point, and in universities across the world. My website is Killology.com, and on that website there are all these extensive mainstream, peer-reviewed scholarly articles of mine, demonstrating how the military has learned to turn off the safety catch in human beings.

You see, in World War II, we had a problem. And the problem was, that the vast majority of our soldiers would not fire. We had magnificent soldiers. We had magnificent weapons. The problem was, that we had crummy training. And in the training, we taught our soldiers to fire at bull's-eye targets.

Now, what is the fundamental flaw in teaching your soldiers to fire at bull's-eyes. Well, as most of you figured out, we have no known instances of any bull's-eyes ever attacking any of our soldiers. If you want a soldier to be capable of killing a human being, he must rehearse on a human being. Anybody that's been in the military in the last 40 years, or law-enforcement training in the last 30 years, what you learn to shoot at, was *not* a bull's-eye target, but a man-shaped silhouette that pops up in your field of view.

You see, if I wanted you to fly a plane, I'd have to put you in a flight simulator. A driving simulator isn't close enough. Under stress, in the plane, your experience in the driving simulator isn't close enough, and it won't transfer to the reality. I've got to put you in the most realistic flight simulator I can.

And in the same way, if I want you to pull the trigger and kill a human being under stress, I have to put you in a killing simulator. In the military, in the law-enforcement community, the conditioned stimulus is a man-shaped silhouette that pops up in your field of view. Conditioned response—you have a split second to engage the target, you hit the target, the target drops. Stimulus-response. Stimulus-response. Stimulus-response. A few hundred repetitions of *that*, and then when an enemy soldier pops up in front of our guys in Vietnam, boom—we shot, and we shot to kill. And we raised the firing rate approximately fivefold; five times more individual soldiers, left to their own devices, in Vietnam, were willing to fire than in World War II, because of the training.

Now, a bull's-eye is completely different from a human being. Firing at bull's-eyes doesn't transfer to that skill. There's a vast chasm between being a healthy human being, and killing another being—and most people cannot cross that chasm. And firing at a bull's-eye doesn't help. But, firing at a man-shaped silhouette, firing at a simulated human being, *that* is close enough to the reality that I can use it as an intermediate step, that it can prepare me, it can rehearse me, mentally, for the act of killing.

And then, in the violent video games, when I actually hold

the plastic gun in my hand, and I pull the trigger, and I feel the recoil, and when I hit the target, the target drops, not only do I learn the mental skill to kill, but I also develop the physical ability to kill—the pointing skills, the trigger control, that allowed the young boy in Paducah, Kentucky to fire eight shots, and get eight hits on eight different kids—a supernatural accuracy.

These violent video games are murder simulators. They're not just murder simulators—they are *mass*-murder simulators, because the child drills, and drills, and drills, and drills, to kill every living creature in front of him, until he runs out of targets, or he runs out of bullets.

The Effect of Drill

Now, in Paducah, Kentucky, in Pearl, Mississippi, in Jonesboro, Arkansas, we believe the boys set out to kill just one person, usually a girlfriend, and then they kept on firing, and they gunned down every living creature in front of them until they ran out of targets, or were interrupted. Afterwards, the cops asked the kids: "Look, you killed the person you were mad at; why did you kill these other people? Some of them were your friends." And the kids don't know. But *we* know. Whatever is drilled in, is coming out the other end.

Let me give you an example: Back in the old days, we trained our cops to fire revolvers out on a range. Now, because we didn't want to have to clean up that range afterwards, we'd have them fire six shots, and then stop—and we'd go "king's ex-time-out" for a minute. We'd empty the expended brass from the revolver into our hands, and then we'd put that empty brass in our pocket, we'd reload, and we'd keep going. Now, you'd never, in the middle of a real life-and-death gun fight, take "king's ex-time-out"—let me save my brass, put it in my pocket, keep going.

Guess what we find real cops are doing? In a real life-and-death protracted gunfight, they would end the gunfight with a pocket full of empty brass, and no idea how it got there. The point is, that two times a year, the cops would fire 60 shots and save their brass; four months later, under extraordinary stress, that's exactly what they're doing.

Now, what are the kids being drilled to do? Not to save their brass. They're being drilled to kill every living creature in front of them, until they run out of targets, or run out of ammunition, or are interrupted. *That's* what's happening to our kids. And the result is, the kids have got the skill and the will, to kill every living creature in front of them, until they run out of targets, or run out of bullets.

A Moral Responsibility

I want to give you a model, and then a story to wrap it up. The model, is seat belts.

Now, here's what you're going to hear, guys. Katie Couric said this to me when I was on the "Today" show. She said, "Listen, I watched all that violent stuff. I played these games, and it didn't bother me." She said, "Well, why

should I worry about my kids?"

I said, "Katie, you know, when I was a kid, I never buckled my seat belt, and it never bothered me, so why should I buckle my kids up?" She says, "Oh!" Understand, when we were young, we didn't buckle our seat belts. But today, we buckle our babies and our grand-babies up religiously. How did we learn to do that?

Well, we knew we did something dumb, we knew we did something wrong, and we were educated, and we did the right thing. A lot of you out there, you did the wrong thing, like I did. I blew it with my boys. I've got three boys who are grown now; I blew it with them. But, I've decided that I'm going to do a better job with the grand-kids. And my model is my mom.

When I had my first grand-baby, and he would sit beside me in the seat, my mom, who was sitting in the back seat, reached down and smacked me on the head, and said, "Buckle that baby up!" I said, "But Mom, you never buckled us up when we were kids!" And she smacked me again, and said, "Don't be stupid! Buckle that baby up!"

That's exactly what we've gotta do. We've got to wake up. Listen to what the AMA, the APA, the Surgeon General, the National Institute of Mental Health, the American Academy of Pediatrics, have to say, and protect our babies, and protect our society, and begin to confront an industry that is systematically selling a toxic, addictive substance to children.

I was on "Politically Incorrect" with Bill Maher and three other Hollywood types. There was me, and four of these wacko types—it was a pretty fair balance. And Bill Maher, the people there, these Hollywood types, this is their standard line: They said, "Look, we don't like all this violence. We don't let our kids watch it. But it's what America buys, so we sell it. We're gypped by the marketplace. America buys it, so we sell it."

I said, "Guys, that's drug-dealer logic. That's pimp logic." I said, "Even drug dealers and pimps don't try to sell to little kids." I said that, "How does it feel to be functioning at a moral level beneath the NRA, beneath the tobacco industry? The NRA and the tobacco industry—they accept regulation on their product when it comes to kids. How does it feel to be the only industry in America with a product that you know is harmful to children, that you continue to insist on selling and refuse to accept any regulation? Do you like looking at yourself in the mirror in the morning, and you see a pimp, a drug dealer?" Now, I don't think they'll let me back on the show.

But the point is, that this is a group of individuals who are functioning at the lowest possible moral level. And we've got to understand what's happening, and we can't let them get away with it.

And I'll tell you another obfuscation that they're going to try to make. I was on a panel moderated by Larry King. And Larry turned to me, and said, "Well, you know, Colonel, the Bible has lots of violence in it, too. Should we ban the Bible, when it comes to kids?" I said, "Larry, the difference is that

the AMA has not determined that the Bible is responsible for at least half of all the murders in America.” I said, “Larry, we’re not talking about the written word. The written word can’t be processed until you’re eight years old. It goes in the eye, has to be decoded and processed in the logical center, and trickles down into the emotional center. The spoken word can’t be processed until around age four. It goes in the ear, is decoded and processed in the logical center, and it trickles down into the emotional center.”

But violent visual images, can be processed at the age of *18 months!* At the age of 18 months, the baby comprehends completely what’s on the television screen. The only thing is, that it isn’t until they’re six, or seven, or eight that they can understand that it’s not real.

Now, at the age of 18 months, it goes straight into the eye, and straight into the emotional center. It’s a powerful and profound impact.

These are the things you’ll hear people say: “Well, it never bothered my kids. You know, gosh, should we be banning the Bible, too?” You’re going to hear people say, “Well, if you don’t like it, just turn it off. Don’t worry about what me and my kids are doing. You just turn it off.”

Everyone Must Do Their Part

And to people who say that, I tell a story that came out of the shootings here in Jonesboro, in my hometown.

I was out at the school as the lead trainer of mental health professionals, on the night of what was the largest schoolyard massacre in American history—at that time. It’s since been beat by the Littleton killings. And we were out there working in that school.

Now, the counselors who were working in the hospital that day, one of those counselors came out, and she had to talk to us, she had to tell us what had happened out in that hospital that day. Now, to those people, whose solution to this problem, “If you don’t like it, just turn it off,” I tell them this story that that counselor brought to us at the school that night:

She said, they were out working in that hospital, in that emergency room, that small, small emergency room, with over a dozen families in sobbing masses. Moms and dads, and aunts and uncles, and brothers and sisters, trying to come to terms with an 11- and 13-year-boy that had just butchered their little girls.

In the middle of all of that, periodically, the doctor comes out and pulls aside two parents, and says, “I’m so very sorry, but your little girl didn’t make it. We did the best we could.”

Now, this counselor said it had been going on for quite a while, and all of a sudden, there’s this lady that comes in. She’s all alone, she’s got no friends, she’s got no family, she’s got no husband, nobody. She comes walking into that emergency room, and she sits down, and she’s just staring off into the distance.

Finally, after she’d been there quite a while, one of the counselors comes up to her, and she drops down on one knee,

and she takes this lady’s hand, and she says, “Can I help you?” She said, “The lady looks me in the eye, and says, ‘I’m the mother of one of the little girls that was killed today, and I just want to know, how do I get my little girl back? What do I need to do to get the body back?’ ”

And they explained to her, that all of the ones that had been killed today, had been sent to the state capital, 100 miles away, for autopsies. And when they were finished with the body, they’d call her, and she could tell them what funeral home to have the body shipped to.

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And you see, it hadn’t sunk in yet. And she says, “Funeral home. Funeral home. We can’t afford a funeral. We can’t even afford a funeral.”

You see, that little girl was all she had in all the world. There was no husband, there were no friends, there was no family. There was just her and that little girl, and she was going to come to that hospital, and wrap her little girl’s body in a blanket and take her home.

And for those whose solution to this problem is, “If you don’t like it, just turn it off,” my answer is, “Come to Jonesboro with your sad solution, my friend. Come to Jonesboro and tell that mother how she could have kept her little girl safe. Because every single one of the victims of every single one of the school shootings, their parents could have protected them for a lifetime, and it wouldn’t have been enough, if the parents of one of the neighbor boys hadn’t done their job.”

What we have in front of us is a joint corporate, moral responsibility, to reel in an industry that is systematically selling death and horror and destruction to our children. And around the world, as each new level of violence is sold to the kids, and at young ages, they suck this stuff up—15 years later we see the impact. God only knows what the impact is going to be of what’s being given to our kids now, but Paducah, and Pearl, and Littleton, and Jonesboro, and Springfield, are an indication of what’s in front of us.

And it’s not going to stop, until we stop teaching our kids to kill. Thank you and God bless you.