

Addicting Our Children To Killing

The following is an excerpt from a 1999 EIR interview with Colonel Grossman, an expert on violent video games.

Grossman: ...The most definitive study is in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, June 10, 1992, which identified the fact that anywhere in North America that television ever appeared, 15 years later [violence sharply increased]; there appeared to be an immediate cause-and-effect relationship. It is one of the most astounding epidemiological studies in the second half of this century, and it has been virtually denied.

What's going on here? The people we've entrusted the public airwaves to, have done a systematic brainwashing on this topic. It is extraordinarily difficult for any of us to grasp the fact that they are using a toxic, addictive substance, to increase their market share. The magazine, newspaper, radio, book industry, have been crippled during a time while the television industry has increased its market share. Its addictive ingredient is violence, just as the addictive ingredient in tobacco is nicotine.

And the addictive ingredient is also a deadly one. A child who watches his dad beat his mom: 20 years later, when he's under stress, and he's got a wife, what's he going to do? The same thing. Now, not necessarily, but there is a far greater probability.

Why does a child replicate that behavior? Because the behavior that they observe in the first five years of their life cannot be unlearned. If a child watches his father beat his mom, or if he watches 1,000 violent acts on TV, he is cocked and primed to participate in those actions in the future.

Not every child with access to guns is going to use those guns in violent crime. Only a tiny fraction of a percentage will. But because of that tiny fraction of a percentage society says, children have no Second Amendment right to guns. In the same way, not every child with access to media violence, in particular these violent video games, is going to become a mass murderer. But because of that tiny percentage, and because it serves no useful purpose for a society for children to have access to this violence, the time has come for us to treat these firearms trainers in the same way we do firearms....

EIR: You have spoken of the use of this training, as military training, for children's videos. What is the transfer? Were there military people who took a second career, to go into this?

Grossman: No, here's what happened. In World War II, we taught our soldiers to fire at bull's-eye targets. We learned that that was tragically flawed. No bull's eyes ever attacked someone on the battlefield. Their ability to transfer the training to the reality was limited. We realized that there is this tremendous gulf between being a law-abiding citizen, and then taking a gun in your hands and being able to take another human being's life. Not everybody can do it. In order to help them do it, you have to give them intermediate steps to cross that vast gulf.

And that's what these simulators are. We taught our people to practice shooting at realistic man-shaped silhouettes. The law enforcement community had to do the same thing. And then in the 1970s, we introduced the shoot/no-shoot program for the law enforcement community, in which you fire at rear-projection movies. Pop-up targets were simulated human beings that you shot at in the military. Then we had the rear-projection movies where you fired blanks. Now that was as far as the military or the law enforcement community went, for quite some time.

But the video community picked up on the military training. They picked up on it and began to develop games based on that same technology. But now the games went far, far out. Now we are at a video arcade where you hold a gun in your hand, and you're shooting at [images of] human beings—and this is totally industry-driven.

Then the military became aware of these games. They began to go out to civilian contractors, and took off-the-shelf civilian products—like “Doom,” from which they developed “Marine Doom.” Or, the Nintendo, Super Nintendo. The Army purchased over 1,500 of these Super Nintendo devices, attached an M-16 [automatic rifle] and turned it into a superb marksmanship-training device.

Now, these devices were the next generation. The military simulations became the next step in the law enforcement environment. You can talk to your local law enforcement agency training division, and tell them you want to use their FATS trainer (Fire Arms Training Simulator). You'll hold a mock-up of a real gun in your hand. You'll pull the trigger at a large-screen TV, and the slide will slip back, you'll feel the recoil, and when you hit the targets, the targets will fall. Understand that the law enforcement officers have to demonstrate restraint in this test.

Then go to the video arcade and play a game called “Time Crisis.” Hold the gun in your hand, feel the slide slip back, and mow down SWAT team members. Then walk next door to that game and play a game called “House of the Dead.” Then watch as you blow heads off and arms off, and get bonuses as you're blowing heads off; and on and on. And get a feel for the fact that what the law enforcement officers are using as a powerful simulator, is being given indiscriminately to our children. So, there are flight simulators, that teach you how to fly; there are killing simulators, that the military and law enforcement use, that enable you to kill; and there are mass-murder simulators.