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## Book Review

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# A Lying Apology For Video Violence

by Don Phau

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### **Killing Monsters, Why Children Need Fantasy, Super Heroes and Make-Believe Violence**

by Gerard Jones

New York: Basic Books, 2002

272 pages, paperbound, \$15

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Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. wrote in a Sept. 24 article, that “the greatest single internal danger to our republic today, is the habits which have been built into our popular culture and economic thinking under the recent three-and-a-half decades shift.” He also wrote, “A population addicted to the quasi-psychotic pseudo-science of video-games, were better suited to the role of the Roman-imperial-style cannon-fodder of global perpetual warfare.”

*Killing Monsters* was written to provide such “pseudo-science.” One of its Satanic purposes is to convince a parent why a five- or six-year-old should be turned into “cannon-fodder.” The author spews forth one lie after another, yet the book has won “popular acclaim” and has been released in paperback. The *Library Journal* wrote that author Gerard Jones “thoughtfully explores the positive developmental aspects of fantasy, and called the book “highly recommended.” Praise also came from media department heads at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Columbia University, as well as a senior vice president of ABC-TV.

As for Jones’ own credentials: He wrote comic books and Hollywood screenplays, with credits including Batman, Spiderman, and Pokémon. The latter violent cartoon series, he writes, is just “a story of growing up.”

The book’s liner notes first caught my eye. For example: “After years of research with psychologists, educators, parents, and children, Jones argues that young people love fantasy violence not because the media indoctrinates them, but because it gives them coping skills they desperately need.” But what are these “coping skills”? The answer follows: “Instead of banning head-bonking TV shows and gory games like ‘Doom,’ we should harness the tremendous power of fantasy to help our kids better navigate the world around them.”

The author cites a stable of “psychologists” and “educators” to back up his lies. For example, the book’s Foreword is written by Lynn Ponton, MD, author and psychiatrist who writes of a therapy session in which one of her patients—a boy named Jonathan—loved playing video games. She tells how he “blew up buildings, fired up blazes, and crashed airplanes. . . . Killing games gave Jonathan control over events where he and others felt none and, perhaps even more important, they gave him control over his own feelings. With these games Jonathan no longer felt helpless. He was not scared of others or his own feelings.”

With such a beginning, it didn’t surprise me that three-quarters of the way through the book, author Jones launches an attack on Lt. Col. Dave Grossman (ret). Grossman is the author of *On Killing: The Psychological Costs of Learning To Kill in War and Society* and *Stop Teaching Our Kids To Kill*. He, and the LaRouche movement, have led an international campaign to expose the “entertainment” industry’s systematic teaching of young children, through violent movies and video games, how to kill.<sup>1</sup> Jones’ book is Hollywood’s answer to the LaRouches and Grossman. The “answer” turns the truth upside-down.

Jones harks back to his college psychology courses where he, like most Baby-Boomers, was indoctrinated in the school of Sigmund Freud. Citing Freud and Bruno Bettelheim, Jones writes how suppression of sexual desires leads to mental problems. He then promotes “sexual liberation,” writing that “the best solution now began to suggest, more compellingly, that sexual repression was the problem and that open acceptance of sexuality was a more effective way to deal with it.”

Taking off from Freud, Jones proposes that instead of suppressing media violence, it should be encouraged. He tells the story of a woman named Mary, who became mentally disturbed after her father died when she was 15 years old. She tells how she fell in with a group of kids, writing that “nearly all of them had suffered some kind of trauma or mistreatment that the music or movies or underground comics spoke to. Because of that we were able to develop a real empathy for each others’ pain and anger. . . . I cannot say strongly enough how important violent entertainment was to making me who I am.” Today Mary is working for one of the foundations of George Soros, the multi-billionaire whose hedge funds and foundations are overseeing the genocide of millions of people in poor countries around the world. Mary’s work is “researching the criminal justice system, studying the uses of higher education in prison, helping convicts reconnect to society.”

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1. See review of Grossman’s *Stop Teaching Our Kids to Kill: A Call To Action Against TV, Movie and Video Game Violence*, in *EIR*, March 10, 2000; “Media Violence: Giving Children ‘the Skill and the Will To Kill,’” interview with Grossman, *EIR*, March 17, 2000; Helga Zepp-LaRouche, “The Mark of the Beast: America’s Children Are in Mortal Danger,” *EIR*, March 17, 2000; Zepp-LaRouche, “After Erfurt: We Need To Ban Violent Videos Worldwide,” *EIR*, May 17, 2002; “Violent Video Games Reward Children for Killing People,” interview with Grossman conducted by Zepp-LaRouche, *EIR*, May 24, 2002.

In the second half of the book, for those readers who last that long, Jones reveals his own sick mind, writing that “video games are threatening to adults who have seen images of them, but never tried to play them. When I first saw the games, I saw animated people being blown away by the dozen. But in just a few minutes of play, I saw that the whole point of the game is suspense: ‘I’ was in constant danger and had to battle through overwhelming odds to survive. *The experience of shooting an opponent is one of relief, not cruelty.* One teenager put it simply: ‘The purpose of the blood is just so you can see if you’ve hit your target. You need to be able to tell that to play the game’ ” (emphasis added).

Precisely what Jones calls “relief” is the self-brainwashing effect of violent media and video games. He felt “relief” once he became desensitized to violence: a state of mind that, if reached by an unstable adolescent, could lead to mass murders such as those at schools in Littleton, Colorado and Paducah, Kentucky a few years ago.

Lyndon and Helga LaRouche, and Grossman, have documented the effect that such desensitization has on youth. Grossman, who has trained U.S. Army Rangers, did an in-depth study on how the student killers at Littleton were trained to coldly shoot their fellow students and teachers, through addictive playing of such video games as “Doom,” a game which had been adopted by the U.S. Marines for rifle training.

In an interview published in *EIR* on May 24, 2002, Gross-

man noted that back in 1972, the U.S. Surgeon General “made a definitive statement about violent visual imagery, all by itself, just watching a violent movie, being able to enable violence.” Then in July 2000, the first definitive statement was issued about violent video games, as the result of a bipartisan, bicameral Congressional conference, attended by the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Said Grossman, “Their specific statement was: Because of their interactive nature, the violent video games are demonstrated to be particularly dangerous; because of their interactive nature.”

Ignoring Grossman’s extensive documentation, Jones simply lies: “After a decade of these games being played by millions of kids, Grossman and other critics have provided no evidence of the effects they have predicted.” Jones then trots out one of his academic prostitutes, forensic psychologist Helen Smith, who says: “There’s no connection between video gaming and violence in the profiles of the kids I see. In fact, the lower-income kids who make up the majority of violent kids usually don’t have any interest in games.”

After 17 students and teachers were shot to death at a high school in Erfurt, Germany on April 26, 2002, by a former student who was addicted to violent video games, Helga Zepp-LaRouche called for a UN protocol for a worldwide ban on such games.

## Video-Game Violence Turns Children Into Killers

A 14-year-old boy who had never shot a gun before, shot eight classmates with eight bullets. Police were stunned. How could he do it?

The boy was *trained*, by his addiction to video-game violence. From “Pokémon” to “Doom,” America’s children are being turned into monsters, who kill “for the fun of it.”

Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche, in this 1 hour and 40 minute video, **The Mark of the Beast**, exposes the evil which is hitting everybody’s hometown—and to which most parents remain oblivious. She traces the decline of American culture since World War II, and links the insane strategic and economic policies of the financier oligarchy and its war-planners, to the mass brainwashing of youth by video and TV violence.

**Speech to Schiller Institute conference, Feb. 20, 2000.**

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