

EIR Interview

INTERVIEW: DAVID GROSSMAN

Media violence: giving children 'the skill and the will to kill'

Lt. Col. David Grossman (ret.) has co-authored a new book, Stop Teaching Our Kids to Kill: A Call To Action Against TV, Movie & Video Game Violence, with Gloria DeGaetano (New York: Random House, 1999) (reviewed in last week's EIR.) Jeffrey Steinberg and Dennis Speed heard Colonel Grossman speak at a conference on "Shock Violence," sponsored by the New Jersey Psychological Association, in Princeton, New Jersey on March 4, and then interviewed him by phone on March 7.

A former U.S. Army Ranger, Colonel Grossman now helps to train military, police, and emergency rescue units throughout the United States. He is a former professor at West Point and the University of Arkansas, and he is now the director of the Killology Research Group, in Jonesboro, Arkansas.

Steinberg: I'd like to start out by asking you about a new book that you've co-authored, called *Stop Teaching Our Kids to Kill*. It's a very provocative title. Can you give us a summary of the book, and tell us something about what prompted you to write this book?

Grossman: Well, my first book is on killing. It's being used as a textbook worldwide—it's about enabling killing, in the way the military does it. And, at the end of that book, I put a short section on how the techniques that the military uses to enable killing, are being used indiscriminately, without the safeguards, on our children.

And, that really, really generated an enormous amount of attention. The book is being used as a textbook in law enforcement, and in military communities, and in peace studies programs around the world. It just draws in topics from different directions.

Well, then I ended up living—I retired from the Army in

February 1998, and in March 1998, two boys, 11 and 13 years old, gunned down 15 people in my hometown. In the absence of anybody better qualified, I was one of the trainers of mental health professionals on the night of the shootings, and helped do the debriefings of the teachers, the next morning, 18 hours after they'd been in the kill-zone of the largest schoolyard massacre in American history.

And, after what happened there, I found myself to be pretty motivated to make a statement about that. I ended up speaking at a couple of peace conferences. I had an article that was incredibly well-received, an article of mine, called "Teaching Our Kids To Kill." I just got an e-mail today that says that the German translation of it has 40,000 reprints sold. It was printed in *Christianity Today*, *Hinduism Today*, *U.S. Catholic*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*; and translated into eight different languages. Just *Christianity Today*, alone, as of last summer, has sold 60,000 reprints of it. It really laid the foundation for us to understand that this is a topic that people are open to.

We started writing this latest book. My co-author, Gloria DeGaetano, who is one of our nation's leading media literacy experts, had written a previous, wonderful book on this topic. And, then the Littleton shootings happened, about a year later, and we were in the process of marketing the book. All of a sudden, the level of interest in this topic just skyrocketed. We were able to sell it to Random House, their Crown Books division, and they've been very, very supportive. I got the first royalty statement that came out in mid-October, and just in October-November-December, we'd sold about 20,000 hardback copies—which is not too bad. We are continuing to crank along at a real high rate. I just looked it up on Amazon.com, and we're about number 1,700 out of 4 million titles in the world: That's not too shabby.



Lt. Col. David Grossman (ret.), co-author of Stop Teaching Our Kids to Kill: A Call To Action Against TV, Movie & Video Game Violence, warns that children are being trained to kill, just like in the military, but without the safeguards.

We're out there touching some lives and making a difference with this book, and we feel pretty strongly about it. Certainly, I was honored to read the review that *EIR* wrote on the book, and I certainly appreciate your very kind and perceptive words about it.

Steinberg: In the opening chapter of the book, you state, pretty definitively, that every major serious study, medical and otherwise, that's been done for the last 25 years or so, shows that there is a very high correlation between exposure to violence in the media, and the rate of growth of violence in society. Could you say something about that?

Grossman: It's important to point out, up front, that we're talking about visual violent imagery; that, the written word can't be processed until age 8, and it is filtered through the rational mind. The spoken word can't be processed until age 4, and it, too, has to be filtered in the forebrain before it trickles down to the emotional center. But, these violent visual images: At the age of 18 months, a child is fully capable of perceiving and imitating what they see. And, at the age of 18 months, these violent visual images, whether they be television, movies, or video games, go straight into the eyes, and straight into the emotional center.

The body of research on this is simply stunning. And, we

catalog it in the back of our book, in a chronology of findings on this topic. The American Medical Association [AMA], the American Psychological Association, the Surgeon General, the National Institute of Mental Health—it just goes on, and on, and on. There's a major Unesco study on the topic. Just last week, I got an International Committee of the Red Cross study on the topic, identifying how a worldwide culture of violence—and especially some horrendous barbarism in war—appears to be directly linked to media violence. As the United Nations study put it (not a direct quote), but essentially what the Unesco study said in 1998 was, that a worldwide culture of violence is being fed by media violence. And, in particular, American media violence is being exported, like some Colombian drug lord, exporting death and horror, to put money into the hands of a few.

It's so pervasive, it's so overwhelming, that those who argue against it, are like those who argue that tobacco doesn't cause cancer.

Now, there is a body of research out there, that is *horrendously* irresponsible; essentially, this group of individuals, who are funded by the media, who have sold their *soul*—it's kind of like the people who deny that the Holocaust happened. And, it's pretty scary.

You and Dennis just happened to be in a conference there, in New Jersey, when we had a closing panel. I had presented that morning, and this one guy stands up, and says: You can't prove media violence makes violent crime, and it's never been demonstrated, and it's not true. Well, that was the New Jersey Psychological Association, which is a member of the parent organization, the American Psychological Association.

In 1992, the national body of the American Psychological Association said, "The scientific debate is over." In 1999, the American Psychological Association said, to argue [that media violence does not cause real violence], is like arguing against gravity. So, for the man to stand up, in front of this—the New Jersey Psychological Association—and claim it, is like standing up at B'nai B'rith and claiming that you can't prove that the Holocaust happened, and it never happened.

Steinberg: The guy should have had his Ph.D. confiscated on the spot!

Grossman: I certainly think he should have! And, it's like this, guys: If you ask the tobacco industry about the link between tobacco and cancer—up until very recently—what would they do? They'd deny it. They'd lie. In the face of the Surgeon General and the AMA, they'd lie. They'd bring out their pet scientists, their stooge researchers on a leash, and try to deny the undeniable.

Well, in the same way, if you were to ask the media industry about the link between their product—television, movies, video games—what would they do? They would lie. In the face of every major scientific and scholarly body in the world, they'd bring their pet scientists, their stooge researchers on a

leash, to come out there and claim otherwise.

But, it truly, truly, is as though somebody was trying to claim that the Holocaust didn't happen, or that tobacco doesn't cause cancer. And, it's pretty sad stuff.

Steinberg: Let's take up the question of the point-and-shoot violent video games. I was very struck by some of the examples that you gave in the book, that some of the training simulators that are being used by the U.S. Army and by the majority of law-enforcement agencies are virtually identical to some of the most popular arcade violent point-and-shoot video games. Tell us how this works.

Grossman: One of the things you've got to understand is this: We discovered, in World War II, that the majority of our soldiers were not able to kill in combat. And, the fundamental flaw was in our training. We gave them wonderful weapons. We had magnificent Americans. We put them in the front lines, and we had trained them to shoot at bulls-eye targets. Now, when no bulls-eye appeared in front of them, the training failed them! The vast majority of the time. Under stress, with fear, and other dynamics, the training simply failed them.

What we know today, is, that if we want a soldier to be able to use the weapon that we've issued him—I mean, God forbid, that a soldier, a police officer, should take a human life—but, if we give them the weapon, then we have to acknowledge a responsibility to give him the ability to use that weapon. We realized that shooting at bulls-eye targets was not where it was at. If we take a pilot, we don't just suddenly put him in an airplane, and have him fly that airplane after having him read a manual about it. We put him in flight simulators first. Even in World War II, we had a vast array of data about simulators, in which they could rehearse, rehearse, rehearse the action.

Well, we realized that what we had to do was create killing simulators. And, instead of bulls-eye targets popping up in front of our soldiers, we needed man-shaped silhouettes. Now, these are extraordinarily effective training devices. In recent years, we realized that, we don't even have to use a real gun; it's useful, it's effective to use real guns on real ranges, and we still do that, but it's quite expensive. There's a lot of lead, there's a lot of environmental problems. We need vast acres of land, we need lots of money. And, we began to realize that we can just simply use simulators.

Now, these simulators, again, are vivid depictions of human beings, and you're practicing shooting at human beings. You're imitating the act. You understand, that there is a vast chasm, between being a healthy American citizen, and being able to take a human being's life. And, in order to cross that chasm, you've got to put a stepping stone—some kind of intermediate step, in which you rehearse, rehearse the action, and wrap your mind around the act.

Well, we've got these devices now, we use for the military. The Marine Corps licensed the right to use "Doom," as

a tactical training device. The Army took the Super-Nintendo—remember the old Duck Hunt game? We replaced the plastic pistol with a plastic M-16, and, instead of ducks flashing on the screen, it's man-shaped silhouettes.

Now, we have several thousand of those that we use as training devices around the world. These are effective.

Now. What I tell people is this: The goal is, to allow our soldiers to respond properly. If our soldiers cannot fire, or if our soldiers are *frightened*, bad things are going to happen. Same thing with our police officers. So, I submit, that this kind of training is a needful thing: If we acknowledge that we have a need to give soldiers and police officers weapons, then we have a responsibility to give them the skill and the will to use those weapons.

But, good people can disagree on that. The thing that nobody should disagree on, is the fact that, if you're even remotely troubled that we provide these kind of killing rehearsals—killing simulators—to soldiers, and police officers, how much more infinitely *horrendous* is it, that we provide them indiscriminately to *children*?

I was called as an expert witness by the government for the McVeigh case. I never had to go to the stand. I did some consulting, put together a couple of papers for them. What had happened was this: The defense was trying to claim that the military and the Gulf War had turned Timothy McVeigh into a killer. The reality is, that the data are just the opposite: The returning veteran, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, is less likely to be incarcerated than a non-veteran of the same age. And, certainly, the off-duty police officer is infinitely less likely to be incarcerated than a non-police officer of the same age and sex.

There are powerful safeguards. What are the safeguards? Well, number one, we do it to adults. Number two: The discipline, the discipline, the discipline, that's ground into your soul. The point is, that these same video games—the law-enforcement community uses what's called the FATS trainer, Fire Arms Training Simulator. They spend many, many hours in front a large-screen TV with human beings in front of them. And, when that human being commits an act, under which, by the law, it is legal and necessary to shoot, then, and only then, does that law enforcement officer shoot. And if he hits his target, the target drops; if he misses the target, the target kills him.

As I said, these are powerful devices that have great safeguards built into them, in which the goal is to teach under what circumstances you can shoot. And, we'll talk later about the Amadou Diallo case, and how important it is, that we *refine* this training to better levels. And, this overkill dynamic used to happen *a lot more often*.

The point is, the law-enforcement officer stands up with a FATS trainer, and he holds a gun in his hand, he pulls the trigger, the slide slams back, he feels the recoil; if he hits the target on the screen, the target drops; if he misses the target, the target shoots him.

Like a pilot in a flight simulator, like a child in a fire drill—whatever is drilled into them, is coming out the other end. And, the result is simply horrendous, in the irresponsibility of this industry to provide children with law enforcement- and military-equivalent training. It is the psychological equivalent of putting an M-16 or a Glock pistol in the hands of every child.

Well, go to the video arcade, and play a game called “Time Crisis.” You hold the gun in your hand, you pull the trigger, the slide slams back, you feel the recoil. You hit the target, the target drops. You miss the target, the target shoots you. This is a *murder* simulator. It is no longer a killing simulator for individuals who, reluctantly, under proper circumstances, we acknowledge, maybe have to kill. It is a device placed in the hands of children, whose only social characteristic is to give him the skill and the will to kill.

And, it’s important, too, to understand, that whatever you drill in under stress, is coming out the other end.

Back in the old days, when we had revolvers, our cops would get out on the range, we’d fire six shots. Because we didn’t want to clean up the range afterwards, we’d flip out the cylinder, drop the six expended cartridges in our hand, put the empty brass in our pocket, reload, and keep going. Now, obviously, you’d never do that in a real gunfight—you got better things to do. But, guess what? We found out that real cops, in real gunfights, would end the gunfight with a pocket full of brass—and no idea how it got there. The point is, that whatever you do in training—just two times a year, the cops would qualify—and six months later, they’re in a gunfight, and they end the gunfight with a pocket full of brass, and no idea how it got there.

Whatever you train to do, under stress, is coming out the other end. That’s why we do fire drills. That’s why we do flight simulators.

Well, when the children play the violent video games, they’re drilling, drilling, drilling—not two times a year—every night, to kill every living creature in front of you, until you run out of targets or you run out of bullets. Now, I usually stand in front of an audience, and I say to the audience, “Look, if I decide that she’s one point, then he’s one point, and he’s one point, and he’s one point, and he’s one point, and she’s one point, and she’s one point.

“Now, what’s my goal? To rack up as many points as possible.”

So, when these kids start shooting—we’re reasonably confident that in Pearl, Mississippi, and in Paducah, Kentucky, and in Jonesboro, Arkansas, these juvenile, adolescent killers set out to shoot just one person: usually their girlfriend, in one case, maybe a teacher. But, then, they kept on going! And, they gunned down every living creature in front of them,

until they ran out of targets or ran out of bullets!

And, afterwards, the police asked them. They said, “Okay. You shot the person you were mad at. Why did you shoot all these others? Some of ’em were your friends!” And *the kids don’t know*.

But *we* know. Like a pilot in a flight simulator, like a child in a fire drill—whatever is drilled into them, is coming out the other end. And we are drilling these kids to be killers, *and* to associate pleasure and reward with it! And to cheer and to mock, when the vivid depictions of human death and suffering occur in front of them. And, the result is simply *staggering* and *horrendous*, in the irresponsibility of this industry to provide [children with] law enforcement- and military-equivalent training. It is the psychological equivalent of putting an M-16 or a Glock pistol in the hands of every child in America.

Speed: There are a few things that immediately come to my mind: For example, let’s take the killing in Flint, Michigan, with the 6-year-old. In your book, you make the point that killing is *not natural*.

Grossman: Yeah. A lot of people *want* to kill, and throughout history, we’ve had a tiny, tiny handful of people who are able to kill. But, for the average, healthy member of a society, it’s not natural.

I’m an Army Ranger. They didn’t just throw an M-16 in my hands, and suddenly, I’m an elite killer. It took years of training. We don’t just create a SEAL team member. We don’t just take somebody, and put ’em in a blue uniform, and throw a submachine gun in his hand, and suddenly, he’s a SWAT team member. It takes years and years of training, to give people the skill and the will to kill.

Well, when these kids kill, we need to be asking ourselves hard questions. Because this is *new*, Dennis. This is a *new phenomenon*. In Jonesboro, an 11- and 13-year-old boy gunned down 15 people. When those kids turn 21, they will be released—there’s nothing on earth we can do to prevent it. Because there were no laws on the books to deal with adolescent killers at that age.

Now, this 6-year-old. They thought, in Michigan, they had it licked: The brought the law down to 7. They said, even 7 year olds can be classified as adults: And now, we’ve got 6-year-old killers!

And, just days after the Flint, Michigan shootings, there

was a kid in Washington, who took a gun off a high shelf, loaded, and jacked the ammo in the gun himself, and went outside, and fired two shots at a couple of kids. When the police asked him where he had learned to load the gun—thinking, I think maybe, that the father had irresponsibly given that skill—the kid very innocently said, “Oh, I learned it from TV.”

The kid in Flint, Michigan: The sheriff went and told the father, who is in prison, about it, and the father said, “As soon as I heard about it, chills came down my spine, because I knew it was my boy. Because my boy,” he said something to the effect, “had really, really, liked the violent movies.”

Now, here was a kid that was already whacked-out on media violence; whose father had sat, and watched, and cheered, and laughed, and mocked, human death and suffering. And, usually, at 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, the children are horrified by this stuff. But, if you really, really work at it, by the age of 6, you can teach 'em to like it! And that is really, really despicable.

The Japanese, in World War II, used this kind of classical conditioning, teaching people to associate pleasure with depictions of human death and suffering, to enable some horrendous atrocities. They used Pavlovian conditioning: They took their young soldiers, that had never been in combat, and had them witness these *horrendous* massacres, butchery of these innocent Chinese, British, and American prisoners. And, the young soldiers were made to laugh and cheer and mock the suffering. And, later that night, they were given the best meal they'd had in months, and the sake is shipped in, and the comfort girls are shipped in; and, like Pavlov's dogs, they're taught to associate pleasure with human death and suffering.

I'd ask, how many of your readers have seen “Schindler's List”? And, I'd ask if there's anybody out there who laughed at “Schindler's List.” I would hope not.

Well, they played “Schindler's List” to a high school outside of Los Angeles, and they had to turn it off, because the children were *laughing* and *mocking* at what was happening. Steven Spielberg came out to confront that behavior, and to speak at that high school, and they laughed and mocked him! Maybe that's just California; maybe they're all wacko. Well, in Jonesboro, Arkansas, the shootings happened in the middle school; right next door was the high school—the big brothers, the big sisters of the little kids, who were shot to bits. And, one of the teachers there in the high school told me that, when she walked in and told her students about—they'd heard the shots, they saw the ambulances pulling up—she told her students, and their response was: They laughed and they cheered.

One little girl wrote me from Chatham High School, in Littleton, Colorado, right next to Columbine High School, there—their rival school—she said, that when they announced over the loudspeaker, in that high school that somebody had opened fire and gunned down a bunch of people at Columbine High School, she said the cheers were so loud, that they echoed through the hallways, and you could hear

them in the office, way down the corridor!

Our children are being taught to derive pleasure from human death and suffering, and that's what happened to this little 6-year-old. Now, I'd bet you money, that this 6-year-old, also played the violent video games—

Steinberg: Yes, I can confirm that, from some of the news coverage.

Grossman: And, again, why do I *know* the kid played the violent video games? I'll tell you why! Because he fired *one shot*, and got a direct hit in the base of the skull. And it takes great skill to point with accuracy. But the video games train you! And many of the video games give bonus effects for head shots. This boy—I believe that the evidence would indicate that he had played on a murder simulator; his father had obviously gotten him extremely whacked-out on media violence, on the violent video games, and now we reap what we sow, at younger and younger ages.

And the result is a tragedy.

I guess the classic example was in Paducah, Kentucky. In Paducah, a 14-year-old boy stole a 22-caliber pistol from a neighbor's house. Now, prior to stealing that gun, he had never fired a pistol before in his life. He fired a few shots, on a couple of nights before the killings, with the neighbor boy. And, then he brought that gun into school, and he fired eight shots.

Now, the FBI says that the average officer in the average engagement hits with one bullet in five. In the Amadou Diallo shooting, they fired 41 shots at point-blank range, against an unarmed man: They hit 19 times.

The guy that went into the Jewish daycare center in Los Angeles last summer, fired 70 shots, and hit five of those helpless children.

So, this boy fires eight shots. How many hits does he get? Eight shots, eight hits, on eight different children. *Five of them are head shots*. The other three are upper torso. *This is stunning*.

I trained the Texas Rangers; I trained the California Highway Patrol; I trained a battalion of Green Berets. And never, in the history of law enforcement, or military, or criminal annals, can we find an equivalent achievement! It is not some deranged Ranger, like me! It's a 14-year-old boy, that's never fired a pistol before stealing that gun! Now, where did he get that *incredible, unprecedented skill*? Well, when he committed that crime, he planted his feet—and, according to all witness statements, he never moved his feet throughout the crime. He held the gun up at a two-handed stance. He never fired far to the left; he never fired far to the right. He just put one bullet in every target that popped up on his screen.

He's playing his stinking video game! *It is not natural to put one bullet in every target!* The natural thing to do, is to shoot at your target until it drops. Anybody who's ever hunted with an automatic weapon, or has been in combat, will tell you, that the natural thing to do, is to shoot at your target, until



Clueless or complicit? The March 6 issue of Newsweek (left), which served as a promotional for video-game violence directed toward children, and the March 13 issue (right), reporting on the shooting murder of a six-year-old girl in Michigan by a classmate who played violent video games. The connection between the two should be obvious—but to many people, it isn't.



your target drops, and then go to another. But, what do the video games train you to do? One shot, one kill, with bonus effects for head shots.

This is so stunning, that there is now a \$130 million Federal lawsuit against the video-game industry. But—get this—when we're talking about legislation to control this industry: I testified before the Senate and the House, the New York State legislature, the Washington legislature, the New Jersey legislature, and just last week, I testified before the Minnesota state legislature. Well, the lobbyist from the video-game industry stood up in front of the Minnesota state legislature, after I talked, and said: Police reports say (she said the exact same thing to the New York State legislature), "Police reports say, that Michael Carneal," the Paducah killer, "had his eyes closed when he committed that crime."

Now, his first bullet went between his girlfriend's eyes. He got eight shots, eight hits, on eight different kids—five of them head shots. Now, the truth is this: Not in the police reports, but in one of the psychological evaluations, Michael Carneal says this, "I'm not sure what happened. It's all kinda confused. I think I closed my eyes for a minute." Understand? He says, "I think I closed my eyes for a minute," and the video-game industry—*despicable individuals*, like the tobacco industry—stands up before a state legislature, and says: Police reports say he had his eyes shut. They say no such thing! Every single witness statement says he had his eyes wide open, with this weird, blank look on his face.

Do you understand the kind of industry we're fighting here? As we try to reel this stuff in.

Speed: That actually leads to another question I have. Did

you hear about a case—this was in 1997. The *New York Post* covered it, and it involves the show "Pokémon." I'll just read you what the coverage said: "A Japanese TV network cancelled broadcasts"—

Grossman: Oh, I did read about that!

Speed: Six hundred children rushed to the hospitals with epileptic-type seizures, Tuesday night, after watching the program. The next morning, another hundred. There were various explanations offered for what happened, but no one actually ever quite *concluded* what happened. What comment do you have about that?

Grossman: Well, some of the recent statements on that—I think the AMA and others have looked at it—is: They created colors in frequency that basically created epileptic seizures in the kids. This industry is actively seeking—they're spending *billions of dollars* on just the right frequencies, just the right colors, just the right rapid-fire screen changes, to addict the children to these images. And they are seeking, with all their might and soul, with all the cleverness of modern science, to find just the right way to do it. And they went over the top, on that one, and—oops, they back off, now. But, something just short of that is being done every day!

Let me give you some of the stuff we know about TV. We *know* that there's a powerful link between television and obesity, and that's been reported in the national news, and everybody's nailed that one down. Why? Well, number one, you're addicted to TV. You truly are. It's an addictive, toxic substance, with those rapid-fire images. And the *violent* image is the most addictive thing of all to the children—they cannot turn away from it. It is, for them, vital survival data, and within

18 months, they develop the ability to scan their environment for survival information. So, number one, it's physically addictive to the kids.

Number two is the question of obesity. It's very clear-cut, that we're taking an addictive substance and giving it to children. And, they're like some kids sitting on drugs. But it's more than just that; it's more than the lack of activity. The most creative, innovative, ingenious people in America are paid vast amounts of money to convince you, and your child, to overeat. They've got just the right frequencies, they've got just the right colors, just the right screen change, to convince you to go out and consume large quantities of sugary substances—number one. What does that do? It creates obesity—an explosion of obesity. But that, also, has created an explosion of child-onset diabetes. And we know that that is *also* linked to television!

So, we've got obesity, we've got child-onset diabetes. What else have we got? Well, there's great data linking television and anorexia and bulimia. Around the world, we have wonderful little communities, that have never had anorexia and bulimia, like American Samoa. And, then Western television appears, and the twisted, distorted image of American feminine beauty comes on, and, in a *very* short period of time, we've got little girls, who are *literally* starving themselves to death in order to meet that standard.

Anorexia and bulimia, obesity—these things didn't exist before. There's a new factor, a new variable going on.

Let me give you the really hot area of research, and this is quite revolutionary, and quite new, and everything I've told you so far is solid; but now, we're into a realm that, I need to say, up front, is still being researched. But the initial data indicate that there is a *powerful* link between television and Attention Deficit Disorder. What we do is, these rapid-fire screen images are given to the kids—"Sesame Street," for example. A great show in intent, but the rapid-fire images of "Sesame Street" pound away at the kids' brain. MTV, of course, is even worse.

And, these rapid-fire images—bam! bam! bam!—are hammering the child! What happens is, the child learns to take their data in at rapid-fire imagery, like that, and they never develop an attention span! What is Attention Deficit Disorder? It is a child who never developed an attention span. Television *shreds* your attention span. What happens is, the child has spent a lifetime, rivetted in front of that TV, growing fat, and having these rapid-fire images pounded into their brain, and then, at the age of 5 or 6, we put them in school, and the teacher stands up there and says [speaks like a slow-speed recording], "T-h-e t-r-a-n-s-i-t-i-v-e v-e-r-b i-s r-r-r-rrrrr." And, the kid is sitting there, trying to change channels! He's freaked out!

And what's our answer? Drug him! Our answer is to *drug* them. We have messed those kids up *so badly*, in their youth, by doing the thing that the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Surgeon General, and the AMA, say, "Don't do it!"

And, then, when they're whacked-out, we drug 'em! And the result is horror.

That thing that you talked about with Pokémon, was just the tip of the iceberg, of the way that they're using intense manipulation of screen imagery, colors, rapid-fire imagery changes, in order to make this a *powerfully addictive substance for children*. At the *heart* of the addictive substances, is the violence, which is being fed to the kids: Like nicotine, the violence is addictive; like nicotine, it has an unfortunate side-effect, and the unfortunate side-effect is fear and violence, and violent crime.

Speed: You don't seem to buy the argument of the some of the people who were pioneering the Violence Initiative, which is the idea that there are kids that are basically born violent; or, if not born violent, by a very young age, you can separate them out, and then you can track them. In Virginia, at one point, they were actually building jails in anticipation that one segment of the population—many of them, in this particular case, African-American—were going to become violent. And they knew they were going to have a certain number of violent offenders, therefore, they were building jails for them in advance.

Grossman: Maybe, *maybe*, there is a tiny percentage of human beings who are going to be violent. But that percentage should not *change*, from decade to decade, or generation to generation. If there is some naturally occurring—and I'm saying *if*, we're not conceding that, but maybe there is—if there is some naturally occurring incidents of violence, then, that is a standard, a stable, a normal process. Like the occurrence of any other genetic process.

When you see an *explosion* of violence, you've got to ask yourself, "What is the new factor? What is the new variable?"

Understand this: When we talk about violent crime, the first thing you have to realize is, you must ignore the murder rate. Because medical technology saves ever more lives, every year. A wound that, nine out of ten times would have killed you in World War II, in Vietnam you would have survived that same wound, nine out of ten times. This last year, I've written three encyclopedia entries, in the entry to the *Oxford Companion to American Military History*, and we've laid the scholarly foundation to say this: If we had 1930s-level technology in America—think of the 1930s now: no penicillin, no cars, no telephones, for all practical purposes, in most places—if we had 1930s technology, the murder rate could easily be ten times what it is. You've got to look at the aggravated assault rate, the rate at which people are trying to kill one another off. With that as our measure of crime—we're allowing for population growth—violent crime, per capita, has gone up *sevenfold* since 1957 to the middle of this decade. It's gone down just a tiny bit, recently, mostly because of a fivefold increase in the incarceration rate, and a good economy, but we're still *six times greater per capita* in the rate at which we're trying to kill one another off, than we were in 1957.



The macabre world of video games as seen in its advertising in a recent issue of Computer Gaming World. Says Colonel Grossman, "They're using intense manipulation of screen imagery, colors, rapid-fire imagery changes, in order to make this a powerfully addictive substance for children. At the heart of the addictive substances, is the violence."

But look: In Canada, since 1964, the per-capita assault rate has gone up fivefold, and attempted murder (a classification we do not have) has gone up sevenfold. In just 15 years, according to Interpol data, per-capita violent crime went up almost fivefold in Norway and Greece; nearly fourfold in Australia and New Zealand. There was a *clean tripling* in per-capita violent crime, in these 15 years, in Sweden. And per-capita violent crime approximately doubled in seven other European nations.

Some of these nations, like Norway and Sweden and Denmark, that have seen these doubling and tripling and quintu-

pling of violent crime, they've been keeping track of violent crime for over a thousand years. And, never, in the last thousand years, have we seen anything remotely like this. *This is unprecedented* for violent crime to just double in 15 years; it's *staggering*, for it to go up fivefold in 15 years. It's stunning!

The question you need to keep asking yourself is: What is the new variable, what is the new ingredient? And, the new ingredient is, that we are creating killers, we are creating sociopaths.

The analogy I use is to AIDS: AIDS doesn't kill people. It makes you vulnerable to be killed by other things. What

happens is, if you get AIDS, then pneumonia, or the flu, or a cold can kill you, because your immune system has been destroyed. What I call—and it's now a widely accepted term—Acquired Violence Immune Deficiency Syndrome, AVIDS. Most of us, have a natural violence immune system. If that violence immune system is destroyed, now, the things that shouldn't have killed us, will result in death: things like poverty, gangs, availability of guns, anger that generates from racism, child abuse. All of these are variables that can cause violence. But, whereas before, we should have been able to control those in a healthy organism, they're now resulting in death and horror to a degree we've never seen before.

There's a new ingredient, a new factor, in the equation that is causing death, and horror, and destruction around the world. In Japan, we saw a 30% increase in juvenile violent crime in 1997 alone. In India, in those same 15 years that Interpol was keeping track, they didn't have the assault rate in India, but they did have the murder rate: And it *doubled* in 15 years. Imagine that vast nation, in just 15 years, seeing the murder rate double. Why? Because, just a little while prior to that, they put a television in every village in India, and every night, the villagers gather together and watch, what? "Dallas." And, all kinds of strange, bizarre, American, violent footage, that has a profound impact on that community.

Brazil and Mexico: Same story. When we see an explosion of violent crime there. They export drugs to us, and we export electronic drugs to them. And, quite frankly, our exporters are just as vile as theirs are, if not more so. Ted Turner is quoted in the California House of Representatives resolution on violence, in May 1999, as saying: "Television violence is the number-one cause of violent crime in America." The president of CBS, after the Littleton shootings, he was asked if he thought the media had anything to do with the shootings in Columbine High School, and his answer was: "Anyone who thinks the media had nothing to do with it, is an idiot."

They know it! They know what they're doing! And they *continue to sell it around the world, like some drug lord selling death and horror and destruction*, just to put money in the pockets of a few. It is despicable. And, what we've got to do is, get these guys reeled in, as a civilization. Otherwise, the very fabric of our civilization is at risk.

It's Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The foundation of our civilization is providing security and safety. And if the foundation of the building crumbles, the building crumbles. Or, to rephrase what Maslow was saying: People will always sacrifice liberty for security. If the situation gets bad enough, people will do whatever they have to do, to make sure their children aren't butchered on the streets. They will oppress minorities, they will oppress the underclass, they will give up civil liberties. They will do whatever they have to do.

Steinberg: Let me go on to something that your point raises. When you gave a television interview at the New Jersey conference, I was very struck by your discussion of a kind of

hierarchy of responsibilities that law-enforcement officers—and, to a similar extent, soldiers—have, in fulfilling their particular role within society: to protect the innocent.

Grossman: When I train law-enforcement officers, across America, one of the things I tell them is this: "The single surest way to get a dose of post-traumatic stress disorder—the research is so solid, it shows it over and over again; the surest way to get a dose of PTSD—what we call 'the gift that keeps on giving,' because it doesn't just mess you up, but it messes up your unmet spouse, and your unborn children, in the years to come. Now, the single surest way to make that happen, is to commit an atrocity or a criminal act." Now, in the moment of truth, when you're under great stress, there is a desire for vengeance. And, what I teach them, is, you *must seek justice*, not vengeance. Vengeance will destroy you: and not just you, but your spouse, and your kids. Whoever you think you're avenging, did not want to pay that price. And you must dedicate yourself, ahead of time, *towards justice*, not vengeance.

What I tell them is this: "As a law-enforcement officer, you have three goals: First, and foremost, above all else is: protect the innocent." I make the analogy of the sheep, and wolves, and the sheepdogs: The sheep are kind, innocent, gentle creatures, who can only hurt one another by accident. The wolves will feed on the sheep, without mercy. The sheepdog, is the thing that stands between us and the wolves. And, the thing that makes the sheepdog different from the wolf, is that the sheepdog *can not* harm the sheep. If he does, the shepherd eliminates him.

So, step number one, for the law enforcement officer is, protect the innocent. Above all else.

Step number two is, convict the guilty. It's the goal, but never at the price of number one.

And, step number three is, draw your retirement. Okay?

Protect the innocent, convict the guilty, and draw your retirement. After you've done those first two, and you've served honorably for a lifetime, you deserve that retirement.

And, I'll tell you, the suicide rate of the average law enforcement officer, the average cop out there, has two to four times greater chance of dying from their own hands, than they do from criminal gunfire—and we're losing a lot to criminal gunfire. The average law enforcement officer, according to one body of research, has a life expectancy of over a decade less, than the average citizen. What I try to do is, provide the nuts and bolts for them to accomplish those three things, and to accept those priorities that will make it possible for them to do that.

And, that's what we must do.

Speed: In the Amadou Diallo case, one of the things that I raised in an article for *EIR*, is that one had to look at what I believe to be the problem of the "Nintendo cop," the sort of training that doesn't provide what he needs.

Grossman: I had the privilege to read that, Dennis, and I

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thought it was particularly well-written. But, I hope you'll forgive me, if I tell you that I would take a slightly different angle on that.

What we need to realize, number one, this business of emptying the weapon. That used to be the norm. That was the norm! Our cops were basically Barney Fife, you remember on the Andy Griffith Show? Andy Griffith was very wise, in not letting Barney have any bullets. You understand? Because Barney Fife is the most dangerous human being out there, and you put a loaded gun in his hand, and you're in a heap o' trouble.

Now, what we do, is we prepare our guys for combat. We do the FATS trainers, and we say, "Under this circumstance, when *this* stimulus is in front of you, you *may* fire! Under this circumstance, you *may not!*" And, if you drill and you drill on these things, and you shoot the wrong person, you don't graduate from the academy. And, we put them in "simunition environments," where you are firing paint pellets at one another. These paint pellets are *very* fearsome: They're coming at 200-300 feet per second, they're 9 mm marking capsules; when they hit, they hurt, bad. You're under a great deal of stress—you're inflicting pain on somebody else, they're inflicting pain on you. It's like a boxing match with pistols. What happens is, the first couple of times people do that, their heart rate is through the roof! And they're *very fearful* individuals. But, if we do more and more of this training, they become inoculated against that stress; they become cool, calm professionals.

I would say to you, that, around America, the answer is become very clear, that the answer to preventing the Amadou Diallo-type tragedies—which, remember, back in the old days, it was the norm, except the guy would fire six shots. We had two officers, they would fire six shots each; they emptied their revolvers; they go "bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang—click, click, click, click, click, click"—and then they'd stopped. Because you get scared out of your wits, and you're going to fire your weapon at your opponent until your opponent drops, or something interrupts you, like you run out of ammo.

But the major difference is—that's happening far less often—that we're giving them more ammo. They've got a 15-round magazine, and the average officer can empty that 15-round magazine in 4 seconds flat. And the average individual can't die that fast. So, you've got this bizarre circumstance, in which they need this, so, how are you going to teach them to use that? Well, the police department of a major

Western city did some very nice research. They contacted many different police departments, and they found out how many shots were fired per officer, per engagement. This is our Amadou Diallo situation. How many guys are shooting too many rounds? And, then they correlated that to in-service training, especially in-service training with "simunition" and FATS, which are our simulators—our paint-ball and our video simulators. What they found out was, that the more in-service training you did, the less number of rounds per officer fired. And, the more hits per officer: That is, when they fired, they hit their target, number one, and number two, they didn't go into this horrendous "spray and pray mode," in which, even at pointblank range against an unarmed man, less than half your bullets hit the target.

The fellow who was doing the research, called another city's police department, and asked: "Do you have trouble with officers firing too many shots?" And the other guy laughs, and says, "Yes! We call it the 'Metro Spray.' That was true a couple of years ago." He asked, "How did you prevent it?" He said, "We did the in-service training. We take every one of our cops, and we bring them through 40 hours a year of in-service training with 'simunition' and FATS."

This is the answer!

What happened in New York, was lack of training. And lack of proficiency. And, when you get a scary situation, and in this tragic situation, these officers, to a certain degree, they become four Barney Fifes, with 15 rounds each in their hands: And the result is tragedy.

How do you prevent a Barney Fife? You train him, train him, train him, with "simunition" and FATS. The result is, you've got an individual who's going to be a cool, calm, collected individual. I mean, who do you want stopping you in the middle of the night? Barney Fife, or Andy Griffith? Marshal Dillon, or Officer Wacko? And, that's what we're talking about, here.

They use a little bit of this training, but they need much, much more, and they need to be held accountable and responsible for it.

I just trained in one major Texas police department, and they don't do *any* in-service training, with this major metropolitan police department, except to get out on the range twice a year. That's unacceptable! But, they are starting to take these guys, and prepare them for school shootings, and having them do "simunition" training; and, the cops love it!

The problem is, that we're not allocating sufficient money and funding to get the training that the cops need.

And, I don't know about you, but, if I'm going to be out on the street, and there's a 22-year-old kid with a semi-automatic pistol on his hip, I want him to be trained to the gills! To perform *appropriately*. And, anything less than that is unacceptable. And, to have major police departments that aren't doing "shoot/no-shoot" and FATS and "simunition" training, at least once a year: I submit to you, it's unacceptable.

Speed: If we had had anybody in New York who had been that straightforward, at the point that this whole matter occurred, you wouldn't even *have* the kind of tensions, that you have in the city right now.

Grossman: Yes! If they would just stand up and say, "Our guys blew it! It was dumb! It was horrible!" And their answer is more training, and "what we're going to do is, we're going to train them, and we're going to prevent this from happening." That's why they're hiring me, across America, to do all of this stuff. And you're quite right, that this whole business of circling the wagons, is just tragic.

And, I appreciate your saying that, Dennis: It's well said.

Speed: Right. It helps a lot.

Now, since you've been going around the country, have you encountered a lot of people who want to do something about the video empire? That includes legislation and litigation. I wanted to know if you can tell us something about that.

Grossman: When it comes to these violent video games, a lot of people have real second thoughts about cops and soldiers having them. They have *serious* second thoughts about *adults* having them. But, the one thing, that we can *all* agree on is: that children don't need them.

I believe in an America, in which we can trust the citizens—the adult citizens. I'm an adult. I can have a cigar, I can have a beer, I can have sex, I have a car, I can have a gun. But, if you give any of that to my 9-year-old, you're *criminal*. And, that's what we realize with these murder simulators.

Now, how are we going to deal with that? Well, first off, is simply education. Remember, we have an absolutely irresponsible industry, who will stand up in front of state legislatures and misrepresent things, horrendously. So, what we've got to do, is: We've got to get people educated, number one, and certainly, that's one of the wonderful things your organization is doing.

Number two, is legislation. I tell people, "When it comes to protecting our kids, even the most libertarian of us, understands we need laws." Do we need laws that say, you can't sell guns to kids? Yes. Do we need laws that say you can't sell tobacco, or alcohol, or pornography, to kids? Yes, we need those laws. And, everybody agrees. Now, can kids still get pornography, or tobacco, or alcohol, if they really want it? Sure. Does that mean the laws are no good? No, we need those laws. They're part of the solution.

The best thing that the laws do, is, they are a form of education. I put seat belts on my kids all my life. I was never

buckled up, when I was kid. How did I know to buckle my kids up? Well, it's the right thing to do. That's why I do it. How do I know it's the right thing to do? Because, if I don't do it, a cop will give me a ticket. It's the law, and the law educates you as to what is the right thing to do. And that becomes the goal.

Now, what kind of laws do we need? All we need to do, is, take the industry's own rating system, and simply enforce that. The industry has games they rate "M." An M-rated video game means "mature." What does that mean? That's a pretty vague concept. The industry says, an M-rated game is: no child under 17. In case you haven't been keeping track, MC-17, is what we call X-rated movies, nowadays. An M-rated video game is *identical* to an X-rated movie, according to the industry. Except, the pornography industry accepts regulations on their products, when it comes to kids; this industry is functioning *beneath* the porn industry; *beneath* the tobacco industry; *beneath* the alcohol industry, or the gun industry. Guns, booze, tobacco—they all accept regulation on their product, when it comes to kids.

This one industry says, that you cannot regulate their product—violent visual imagery—when it comes to kids.

So, when it comes to the violent video games, they're wrong. We can regulate those products, and we will.

You know what they say? They stand up and they say, "Look. People buy these violent things, so we sell 'em. The reason why America has all this violent stuff out there, is because Americans want it, and so, we sell it. We're driven by the marketplace."

What I say, is this: "Don't ever let anybody say that, without saying this: 'That's drug-dealer logic. That's pimp logic.'" Except even drug dealers and pimps don't try to sell to little kids.

So, we're going to regulate the video games. We're going to regulate these violent video games, just like we do with pornography, and enforce the rating systems.

There's other things that we can do: We can tax media violence. You have a Constitutional right to alcohol—it was a Constitutional amendment that repealed Prohibition. You have a Constitutional right to guns, according to most people's reading of the Second Amendment. But *nobody* says that that Constitutional right for an adult to have alcohol or guns, means that you have the right to *sell it to children*.

We've got to put taxes on this substance, we've got to regulate this substance: If we don't, we're in a heap of trouble.

We've got the education, we've got the legislation—the final step is litigation—the lawsuits. There is a \$130 million Federal lawsuit against the video-game industry, generated out of the Paducah case. Remember? Eight shots, eight hits, on eight different kids. Clear-cut video-game linkage. And, the lawsuit is progressing quite nicely.

Now, this kind of litigation, we think, is happening across America. I'll give you just one example. There was a subway tollbooth burning in New York: What happened, was a group

of kids poured gasoline underneath the back door of a subway tollbooth. They left a trickle-trail, and then they ignited that trickle-trail, and the gasoline inside the tollbooth ignited, and burned the operator over some 70% of his body. As soon as that crime happened, there was *immediate* talk of lawsuits, because that was a precise copy-cat crime of the movie "Money Train." Step-by-step, precise copy-cat crime.

The family was talking lawsuits, and then, Boom! You never heard another word.

What happened? The head of the Washington Trial Lawyers Association told me that, he believes, in that case, and many others: They settled out of court. And, what they're going to do is, they're going to pay the victims, and their family, and their lawyer, a large sum of money, once a month, for the rest of their lives—as long as they do, what? Keep their mouths shut. And, across America, these lawsuits are being settled out of court, for large sums of money. These people are responsible; they cannot tolerate the lawsuits: We have a legal obligation to hold them accountable. If you had a crib that strangled your child, if you had a gas tank that exploded in flames and burned your child to death, you'd have an obligation to hold that industry accountable.

We have the safest cars, the safest airplanes, the safest toys in the world, because, if they don't give us safe products, we sue them.

And, we have an obligation to hold these people accountable, and we need to let the average American out there know, that, if you connect the dots, and there's a media linkage to what happened, then, you have a responsibility to go after the accessories to the crime.

Now, as I'm training cops across America, I tell them this. I tell them, "Look, we're not necessarily excusing the criminal. This is not an excuse for the killer. But, if you catch a 12-year-old with crack cocaine, what are you going to do? You're going to bust 'em, right? And, what's the first thing you're going to try to find out?"

Steinberg: Who the dealer is?

Grossman: You got it! And, that's what we're talking about here. We're trying to find the accessories to the crime—the dealers, the dope dealers—and make a direct, one-to-one linkage, between violent visual imagery and a specific violent criminal act. And, when we can see clear-cut linkage, in which kids were inspired by a specific movie, a specific TV show, a specific video game—we're going to pin the tail on the donkey, and hammer these guys into the ground like a tent stake!

Education, legislation, litigation.

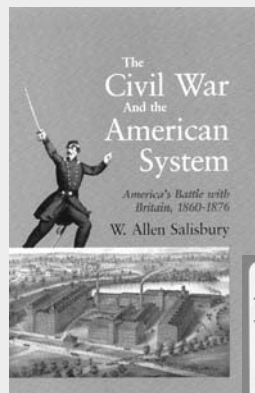
We're doing it; it's the American system. And God bless America, I think we can do it. And, I think we come out the other end of this thing, as a better nation.

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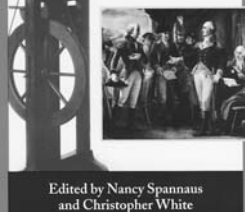


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