

the magazine the COOL KIDS read!

YOU IDIOT

#1

In this issue:

Fighting the War
on Drugs With
Video Games!

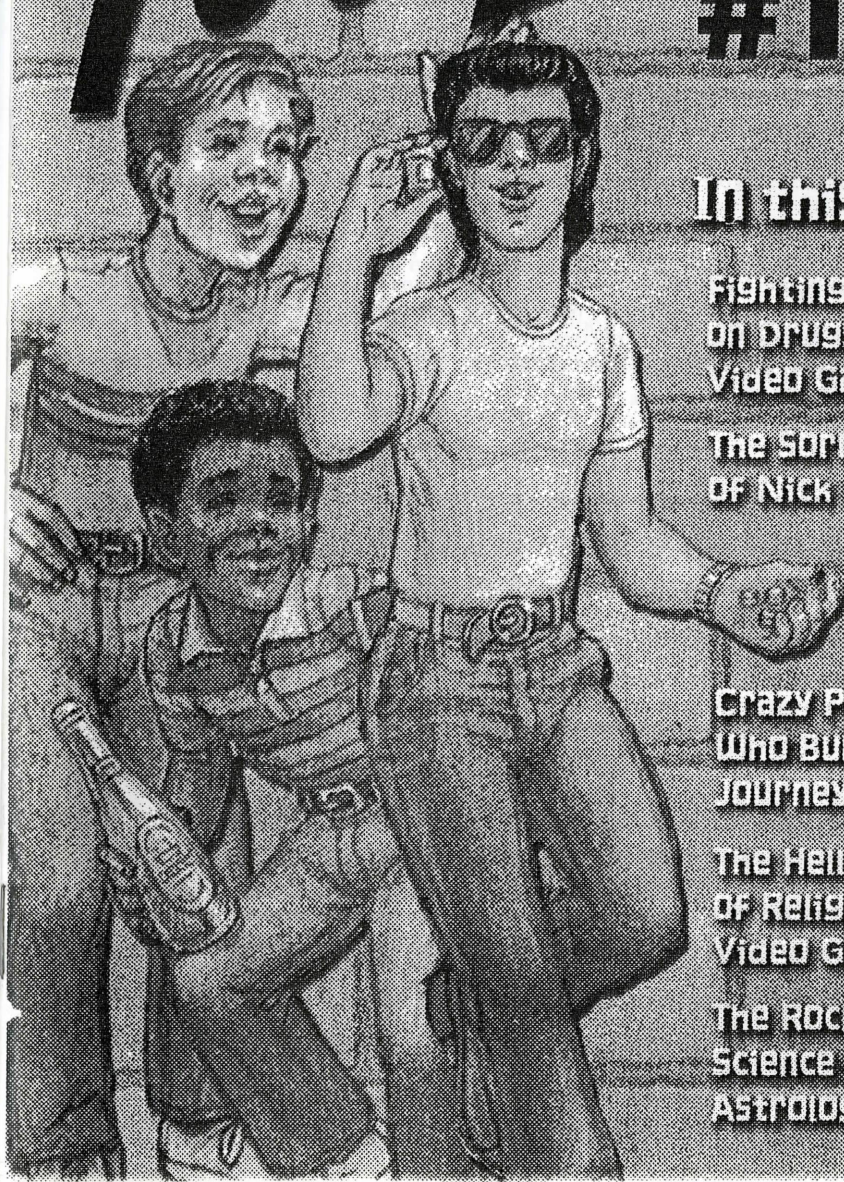
The Sorry Saga
of Nick Carter!

Crazy Preachers
Who Burn
Journey Albums!

The Hellish World
of Religious
Video Games!

The Rock-Solid
Science of Cat
Astrology!

\$1



You Idiot!

Debating the Obvious since 2002

I came up with most of the ideas for this zine at my job, a horrid mind-deadening temp assignment. While doing steady monotonous data entry for long stretches of time, my mind would wander and I'd think about various stupid themes to write about. Sneaking on the internet for a few minutes at a time, I'd do research on some of these topics.

I ended up using two main ideas for most of the zine: looking at bad video games, and reviewing bad books. While on the internet at work, I'd read about some of these shitty games, and also discovered that you can get a free program called an emulator that allows you to play them on your computer. So I downloaded all of the awful-looking games that caught my eye, played them a bunch, and wrote stupid lengthy articles analyzing them. The book reviews are of bad books I've stumbled across at thrift stores, in dumpsters, at library sales and so on.

This is not exactly eye-opening, hard-hitting research. If this was a political zine, the depth of the articles would be something like "Hitler was a bad guy" or "People die in wars". The subtitle seen above, "Debating the Obvious", is pretty accurate. You won't have any startling new insights after reading this, walking away with "Gee, I never looked at things that way before... preachers who burn heavy metal records ARE kind of creepy". So then, you might ask "What's the point of this?" A valid question. I just want to make it clear from the start, then, before you get any farther: There Is No Point To Any Of This.

Cool? Alright, read on.

-Nate

Also Available:

You can also pick up one of my other zines if you feel so inclined. Pick Your Poison, shown below, is mainly stories, not quite as ridiculous as the zine you're reading now. I also have the Cholesterol Junkie Companion, a compilation of the zine I did while in high school. That one's a little closer in style to You Idiot. Contains teacher reviews, Choose Your Own Criminal Adventure, harassing an online He-Man fan club, a few scholarly research articles, and so on. That's a buck as well. Also, by the time you read this, Pick Your Poison #3 and #4 should be out-- those are a dollar each as well.

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Pick Your Poison #1 - \$1.00

The first set of stories about this crazy kid I knew growing up named Rick, plus other general stories about: growing up, drinking, shoplifting, watching people change around you, die around you, cops killing dogs, New Orleans on new years eve, robberies, fake coke and cough syrup, getting fucked up on paint thinner and other bullshit I can't remember. Worth a buck. 48 pages



Pick Your Poison #2 - \$1.00

The continuation of the Rick saga. Read as we get kicked out of school, try to rob a mall, get busted shoplifting. Gasp as Rick runs away across the country, escapes from rehab, and continues to battle his weary parents. Plus other stuff about cops, smoking dope, stupid jobs, going to jail, and so on and so forth. What else are gonna spend a buck on?. 48 pages

Just Press Start To Win the War on Drugs!

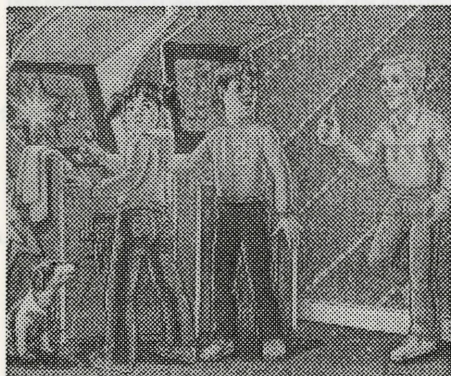
During the 1980's, Nancy Reagan, the first lady, came up with the slogan "Just Say No" to combat teenage drug use. This stunningly powerful phrase must have caused drug lords across the globe to shout "Oh no! We are doomed!" and contemplate shutting down operations in defeat; after all, once children realized that doing drugs was *optional*, use would disappear with a satisfying 'Poof'. It appeared that Pot, Coke, PCP, and all their sinister buddies were now pitifully outmatched in the War on Drugs.

America was once again destined for victory; Ronald Reagan would soon be able to hold a press conference and declare that the terrifying era of marijuana smoking was over.

So Nancy began appearing on commercials during Saturday morning cartoons to spread her message of Just Saying No. She even had a guest appearance on *Different Strokes*. However all of this was not as effective as hoped... I mean, take a look at Nancy Reagan; wrinkled harpies are not the sort of thing that kids are going to listen to. What, then, *would* kids listen to? The answer, of course, was video games.



Above: "Listen to me, children. I am Hip!" "Mommy, that rotting zombie is scaring me!"



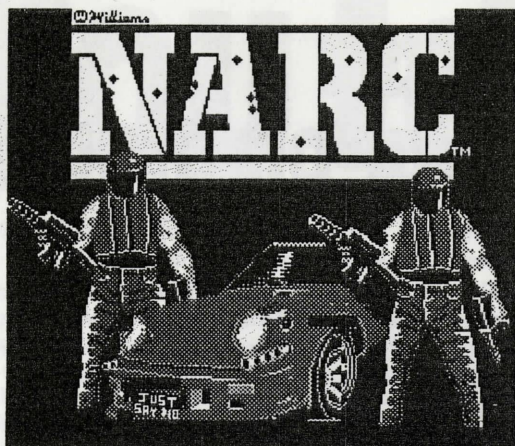
Above: "Man, we suck. Maybe we-- hey, a joint!"

Arcade games across the country began to say "Winners Don't Do Drugs" at the end of each game. Was *this* effective? The advice would generally pop up after you were killed, which might lead someone to think "Well, winners may not do drugs, but I just fucked up in this game again, so I guess I'm a loser. Time to give heroin a shot" (Side note: Damn, that's catchy. If I ever become an advertising exec and get hired by someone to improve heroin's image and increase sales, that will definitely be the catch phrase I go with: Heroin: Give It a Shot) Besides, at least for me, when I was little kid and I looked

around at people who did drugs, some of them were definitely winners. So it appeared that this catch phrase would not end the drug problem by itself, either.

But other games boldly went beyond mere sloganeering and devoted their entire premise to combating drug use in one way or another. I will examine three of these: NARC, Raid 2020, and Wally Bear & the No Gang.

My experiment called for me to get incredibly stoned, play the aforementioned games, and then see if any of them made me want to stop doing drugs.



NARC: No One Had the Guts Until Now

First up was NARC. I smoked a couple of bongloads, and quickly discovered that since I don't really smoke weed anymore, my tolerance had plummeted to meek levels, leaving me so stoned I could barely hold the controller. But I carried on, determined to deliver my findings to you, dear reader. Perhaps I would discover that reform lies not in 12 steps or methadone clinics, but in 8-bit

video cartridges.

In NARC, you mostly just go around killing hunchbacked junkies and stuff. What is the message children are supposed to leave with? That if they do drugs they will end up as hunchbacked junkies, or that they should go out and kill existing hunchbacked junkies to decrease the drug problem? I wasn't sure, but either way the junkies were getting the better of me, consistently pummeling my NARC ass. I mean, shit, they actually THROW SYRINGES at you.

It was kind of boring, getting beat up over and over again by gangs of dope-sick degenerates. But even if the gameplay *had* been exciting enough to lure kids over to the anti-drug side, this game has other issues. For example, the title itself poses a potential problem. You might be able to convince kids that drugs aren't cool--- I mean, good luck, sucker, but I suppose it's *possible*—but you're gonna have a really rough time convincing them that it's cool to be a NARC unless they're a fucked up kid to begin with. Identifying ones self as a NARC is generally an invitation for a brutal ass-beating, especially at a young video-game-playing age.

Regardless, unlike the other two games I look at, NARC was actually pretty popular (more so on the arcade version rather than the Nintendo version I played). However, we are interested not in how much kids enjoyed the game, but rather in the effect it had on them in regards to perceptions towards drugs.

And what were these effects? Well, I remember kids I knew when I was younger who both enjoyed this game, and also enjoyed doing drugs. So it didn't work on them evidently; they didn't rush out to enlist as troops in the War on Drugs. And me? My stoned ass grinned stupidly at the game; I felt no intense desire to sober up and throw my roommate's bong in the garbage. I mean, the game itself was simply not very good and when it was done I had no newfound hatred of drugs and their users. In fact, I had an odd admiration for the junkies and dope peddlers in the game; they were kind of cool. I mean, like I said, they actually THROW SYRINGES at you. If that's not bad-ass, I dunno what is.

So it didn't do the trick for me either. Time to give Wally Bear a try.

Yo! Here's some excerpts from the NARC instruction manual. Get ready to bust 'em!



We at Acclaim are pleased to present NARC, the first video game for the Nintendo Entertainment System(R) with a strong anti-drug message.

NARC takes gamers through the supreme, larger-than-life war on drugs with exciting, colorful characters such as Max Force, who wages "justice" against a number of sordid enemies. And although the fast-paced action in NARC is sometimes extreme, it conveys what may often be harsh realities of the drug environment. Nevertheless, it is a fictitious representation of how the battle against drugs may be won. Playing NARC is one way to express a stand against drugs. The real test, however, is in your actions. So, spread the word that doing drugs is no longer "cool," and join Acclaim, Max Force and Just Say No International, in working to become the drug-free generation. Happy gaming.

*Ha- notice how Acclaim says that drugs are "no longer" cool? That means they admit that at one point they **were** cool! Sweet.*

Then the manual shows a letter meant to brief you on your mission.

TO: Max Force and Hitman
N.O., Corps 1

RE: PROJECT NARC

Dear Sirs,

As you may well know, our position in the war on drugs has gotten worse. Much worse. The N.O. has currently identified several groups of known offenders. Dealers, pushers, mobsters, gangsters--even psycho clowns--they're all in on it. They seem to have an unlimited supply of weapons. Government reports claim that the entire operation is being directed and financed by a Mr. Big--who, it seems, runs the largest underground drug trafficking and terrorist organization in the world. We'd send in the army's special operations division, but that would just send up flags. We need to act more covertly. Which is why you two have been chosen to go in there and spearhead this operation. You will have to cover a lot of territory. Mr. Big's people are everywhere! What's more, the action doesn't stop at the street. You'll catch them down in their underground drug labs (destroy as much of that poison as you can) and up in the top floors of classy, highrise hotels. N.O. and the entire country are counting on you. Good Luck.

Here are a few of the above-mentioned "harsh realities" of the drug war that are found in NARC, as reported later in the instruction manual:

MUTANT BUGS--Believe it or not: deadly attack insects. They travel in swarms. Jump to stomp on 'em!

BEVON FACE--He'll try and sell you anything. And if you don't buy? He's always got his semi-automatic plus some spare dynamite...

I always get a kick out of the characters in anti-drug videos, books, and so on that will KILL you if you don't buy their dope. Bad ass.

The manual concludes with:

BUST "EM!

This country's had all it can take of these destructive drug lords, dealers and pushers. The time has come to get rid of them. So, get in there and knock off this noxious drug ring--once and for all. And return the country to a haven of apple pie, motherhood and video games. Acclaim Hotline (516) 624-9300

I called up the Acclaim hotline to see what kind of success they had with NARC in ending the drug war, and returning to the haven of apple pies and motherhood, but couldn't get through to anyone.

Wally Bear and The No Gang

There are no hunchbacked junkies in Wally Bear and the No Gang, no actual violence or any other semblance of entertainment in fact.

You assume the role of a skateboarding bear who's trying to convince his animal buddies that doing drugs isn't "cool", and they should Just Say No when in contact with them.

Either I suck at video games, or this game is tough cuz I couldn't get very far. Wally speeds off from his parent's house on his skateboard (looking pretty zoned out and stoned, I must say) and has to dodge these birds and pitbulls every few feet. If you touch the pitbull, you're dead. The pitbulls kept killing me, so I didn't get far enough to warn the rest of the animal kingdom about drugs. While Wally lay on the pavement getting torn apart by a rabid pitbull, his easily impressionable animal buddies surely collectively shrugged across town and began hitting the crack pipe.

Where NARC attempts to end the drug war through the slaughtering of addicts and pushers, Wally Bear offers a more gentle approach—advice and catchy rhymes. As you leave your house at the beginning of the game, your parents offer some words of wisdom.

Parents: Uncle Gary Grizzly has been planning a party for you and the NO gang.

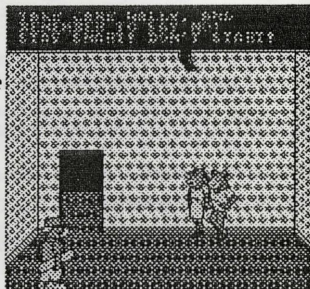
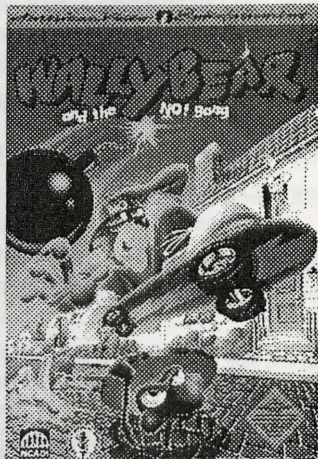
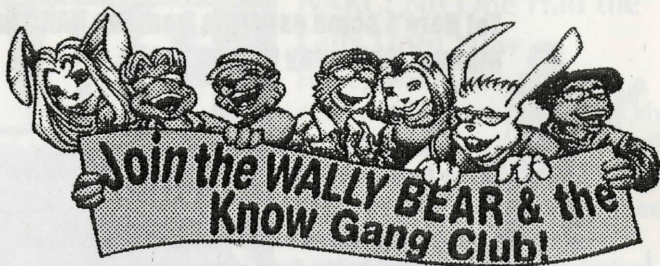
Parents: Invite all your friends and try to get there before dark.

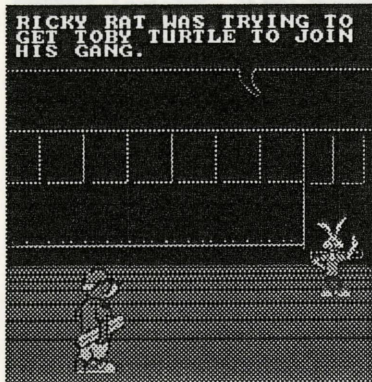
Parents: Take care and remember to say no! Stay smart! Don't start!

Wally: Don't worry mom, I'll remember.

Although I was unable to get past the first few pit bulls, some guy on the internet actually beat this game and recorded all the conversations that occur between the levels. Here they are.

At the end of level one, you have a discussion with your rabbit friend about the degeneration of Toby Turtle into a pathetic pillhead. My guess? Some kind of upper--but man, can you blame a turtle for wanting to do speed?





Rabbit: Ricky rat was trying to get Toby turtle to join his gang.

Rabbit: He said he would have to take some pills.

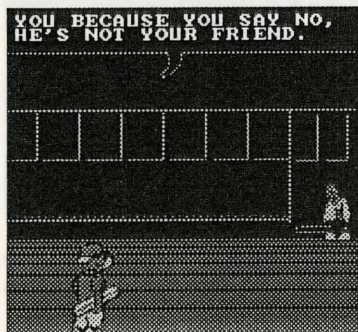
Rabbit: I tried to stop them, but they wouldn't let me on the subway.

Wally: Wait here Billy, Maybe I can help!

Man, I dunno, sounds like a pretty easy gang initiation to me. Usually you hear about gangs forcing new recruits to kill somebody or something else equally drastic in order to gain membership. But Ricky Rat's gang? "If you wanna join my crew, you've got to be willing to do these free drugs I'm about to offer you" Shit, if Ricky Rat existed in the

real world he'd have a fuckin' ARMY by now.

Anyway, Wally catches the pill-popping turtle at the end of level two and sets him straight.



Wally: Taking drugs is stupid Toby.

Wally: If someone doesn't like you because you say NO, he's not your friend.

Toby: Thanks Wally, I didn't know what to do.

Wally: You don't have to go along with the crowd to be cool. It's ok to be yourself.

The end of level three brings the grim discovery that dope sick gang-leading Ricky Rat is stealing shit from your buddies.

Poodle: Oh Wally you're just in time.

Poodle: That awful Ricky Rat stole my new radio!

Poodle: He ran into the subway before I could get through the crowd.

Wally: Hurry, Pricilla, we can still catch him!

Of course, Wally gets the radio back in the next level, and offers up some deep insight into the ethics of stealing.

Pricilla: Thanks, Wally, I saved for a long time to buy this new radio

Pricilla: I'm glad to get it back.

Wally: I'm glad too.

Wally: Ricky needs to learn to respect other people's property.

Wally: Stealing can get you into a lot more trouble than it's worth!

The completion of level five gives Wally another mission—the reform of boozing lizards.

Green Tiger: I just saw Larry lizard going into this garage

Green Tiger: He was drinking out of a funny looking bottle and acting really strange.

I did a little research about Wally Bear on the internet and discovered he's still being used by some anti-drug organization, only now in comic-book form. Here is an example of one of the brilliant, surely effective comics.



Wally: It sounds like Larry's been drinking.

Wally: I'll try to stop him before he hurts himself or someone else.

Wally: Remember, even grownups shouldn't drink and drive.

I struggled through a few more pitiful attempts at Wally Bear. Amazingly, I was not heartened by Wally's heroic efforts to keep his buddies sober; instead I wished that I had more drugs at my disposal to somehow make the game seem entertaining. (Granted, the amount of drugs necessary to reach such a level would probably leave me a babbling invalid for the rest of my days, living in a bus stop, cackling "Are you there, Toby turtle?" to confused passerby)

So, just like NARC, the game had failed. Would Raid 2020 come to my rescue?



Raid 2020

The title screen for Raid 2020 shows off a poorly drawn uzi, a bottle of pills with a skull & crossbones on the side, and the slogan "Winners Fight Drugs". This is a bold new declaration—now we learn that Winners don't simply avoid drugs... they fight 'em, too! Woo-hoo! Let's hear it for Winners!

After pushing the start button you're treated to an ominous warning: "AD 2020. A plague of narcotics transcending the bounds of race, economy, and time have put a

stranglehold on America. You must destroy Pitbull, the drug kingpin who has become the overlord of this sinister empire. You, Shadow, are the last hope"

This game is really, really bad. Not bad in a funny "oh, this is so terrible it's sort of good" way, but bad in a frustrating annoying "gimmie some fucking drugs to calm my jangled nerves" way. While you're frantically running around trying to grab poorly



hidden bags of cocaine and shoot sinister looking dope dealers, you have to deal with these FUCKING insects that attack you relentlessly. This was also a problem in NARC. If these two games are any insight into the reality of the War on Drugs, then in order to win we need not air commercials, spray crops, or intercept shit at the border—we need to KILL the fucking mutant bugs! Everything else is secondary.

So I ran around avoiding the stupid bugs, grabbed a bunch of cocaine, and thought I completed the level. However, a message flashed on the screen "Good Job Shadow. Drug trafficking activity has decreased... but the pier is still infested with dealers. Go save our pier!" — Control

Stupid fucking Control. Sends me off by myself to battle cocaine-carrying cyborgs (the A-PEX #72-168, the "major drug-dealing cyborg" as the manual puts it), armed with only a pistol, not even bug spray to ward off the constant waves of shitty bugs, and still have the nerve to send me BACK to knock off the dealer or two I spared.

The game is just plain bad, no way around it, and I was sobering up so I turned it off and gave up.

Basically, all three games made me want to do more drugs, so I could completely block the portion of reality in which they reside from my mind. But was I the

exception? Were the games effective tools in decreasing the urge to become a junkie among other youngsters?

I wrote the following letter to several members of the DEA and other drug-battling organizations to find out.

Dear _____

First off, I would like to commend you on the honorable but yet sadly all-too-often overlooked job that you are doing. I can just feel it in my heart, that someday thanks to the efforts of you and countless others, we will eliminate drugs from this earth and enter a new golden age of prosperity where people's hopes, dreams, and aspirations are not tied down and shattered by the scourge of PCP and marijuana.

Yes, this is a daunting task, and it seems like certain people are getting discouraged and offering up the laughable solution of legalizing drugs. That makes me so mad I feel like I'm going to explode! It's like saying "Well, people are going to murder each other anyway, so let's just legalize it so it can be carried out in a safer, state-sanctioned environment" I mean, what kind of message is this sending to our impressionable children? People like that should go back to Russia.

Sure, it will take time to get to the point where drugs are gone, when I will be able to walk down the street on a beautiful sunny day and not smell the sickening stench of marijuana drifting out the windows of some degenerate do-nothing hippie den of depravity. But we WILL get to that point.

I know that your organization, and other similarly noble groups, are employing a whole slew of different methods to get to that point. I am writing a scholarly article on the effectiveness of some of these methods, and I was hoping you could take a quick break out of your surely busy day to answer a few questions I have.

I'm specifically examining the use of anti-drug slogans and themes in video games. Although prominent in the late 80's and early 90's, these techniques have sadly fallen out of use as of late. Today's video games typically feature snowboarding hippies or some other such nonsense, produced by companies too spineless to put "Just Say No" anywhere in their games. Kids, especially young impressionable kids, play a lot of video games, and it really matters what they see!

It was heartening, then, to see arcade games back in the day bravely reminding kids that "Winners Don't Use Drugs". I was wondering if you had any statistics in regards to the effectiveness of this slogan, or even a rough guess. Did drug use decrease amongst video-game playing kids when the slogan was introduced? Was there any reason the slogan was removed? (my guess is, it had something to do with that vile hippie Bill Clinton, as the catch phrase seemed to disappear right around the time he took office...) I'd like to think that at least one arcade-playing youth was straying down the dangerous path towards being a cocaine kingpin, but one day played a certain game that showed him the truth that only losers do drugs, and he became a worthy citizen.... Perhaps getting a job at your fine organization!

Anyway, that's what I'd like to think happened, but I'd like to hear your take on the success of that campaign.

Furthermore, there were a handful of games produced during this same period that devoted their entire premise to fighting drug use. These games were NARC, Wally Bear & the No Gang, and Raid 2020, among others. All of them were fun, hip, and I'm sure left a lasting impression on all those who played them. Do you have any information, or personal theories, on the effect these games had on the War on Drugs?

Thank you again for your time and all the wonderful work you have been doing.

Hope to hear from you soon,

Nate Gangelhoff

Publisher, Just Say Not to Pot

As of "press time", I had only received three responses. They all included somewhat surprised words of thanks: "Mr. Ganglehoff, First let me take this opportunity to thank you for your kind remarks about law enforcement and our continuing war on drugs. It is always a pleasure to hear kind remarks such as yours and to know that there is support for the jobs we are doing." and: "Thanks for the thoughtful email. It is good to know that there are committed people out there trying to do the right thing."

As for their opinions, they were mostly optimistic "As for my personal opinion, I believe that these anti-drug slogans are an effective prevention tool for youth at the lower age scale.". However, even these law enforcement officials go on to admit: "The results seem to be uncertain regarding the effectiveness of these slogans on pre-teens and teens, and there is even some evidence that the slogans may have an opposite effect on them."

Shit. The sad, surprising conclusion we must then come to is that anti-drug messages contained within video games do not necessarily lead to the eradication of drug use. What now? Telling kids they can "just say no" doesn't work; reminding them that the winners of the world refrain from drug use isn't effective either, and even making entire games devoted to keeping kids off drugs doesn't seem to do the trick. How can we win this War on Drugs? Hmmm... perhaps the recent well-thought out and completely logical "Terrorist organizations get their critical funding from pot-smoking teenagers" ads that ran during the super bowl will win the war once and for all!



The Hellish World of Religious Video Games

As we just saw in excruciating detail, there have been a number of video games that had drugs as their main theme. Now let's turn our attention to another theme: religion. Of course, as everyone knows, drugs are much cooler than religion, so it would stand to reason that video games about drugs would be cooler than those about religion. But are they? Let's take a look.

First, a brief background. The main, and perhaps only, player in the religious video game market was/is the company Wisdom Tree.

I will give the original Wisdom Tree team some credit, because it seems like their games were more of a scam to make money than honest religious conviction. Originally, the company was called Color Dreams, and their main claim to fame was that they produced games not licensed by Nintendo. You see, greedy monopolistic Nintendo had some sort of deal in their system where games would only work if they contained a certain chip. Companies producing games were forced to get this from Nintendo, basically paying an extra fee. This practice essentially eliminated the possibility of third parties making games... until the crafty wizards at Color Dreams found a way around it. (Sorry if that explanation was confusing or slightly inaccurate in the details... I'm technologically incompetent)

So Color Dreams had found a way to make games for cheap, but the problem was that their games were pretty fucking rotten. *Raid 2020*, mentioned earlier this issue, was a Color Dreams game, and most of their other offerings were similarly wretched.

The games weren't getting good reviews, and an angry Nintendo was threatening stores who carried Color Dreams titles, which hurt distribution greatly. Color Dreams was backed into a corner, but came up with an ingenious plan to get themselves out.... Become a religious company named Wisdom Tree!

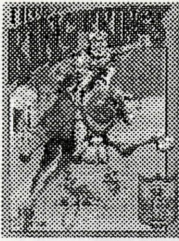
The new games were equally bad (in fact, a number of them were exactly the same as old Color Dreams games, with a change to a religious theme and the addition of Bible Trivia), but now they sold well. Here's why.

First off, while Nintendo could aggressively slam Color Dreams, it would look bad for them to be attacking a supposedly innocent Christian company, so they backed off. But beyond that, the new Wisdom Tree wouldn't even really need the old distribution methods anyway. As a former employee of the company puts it "Christian book stores number about 9000 at any given time, and they all wanted to have our games. That's even more stores than Toys R us". And, of course, there were hordes of creepy Christian parents across the country who finally had games they would allow their well-on-the-way-to-being-creepy children to play. Truly a brilliant business move on the part of Color Dreams.

The games, of course, were still god-awful, only now the term "god-awful" worked on a couple of different levels. But although I never went to church or Sunday school, my guess is, as bad as these games are, they probably would seem like a blast compared to the rest of the church-going process. After spending a morning hearing about how you were going to hell, the announcement "OK, children, now you can play Bible Adventures for the next half an hour" would be music to your ears, akin to "Alright, sir, I am now going to stop pouring battery acid in your mouth, and start gently kicking you instead". Or something.

The funny thing is, you can still order all these games from Wisdom Tree, and they still charge like 45 bucks for them! Nowadays you could stumble into a used video game store with 85 cents and leave with a formidable Nintendo collection... besides a few exceptions, the games aren't worth anything anymore. Of course, the people who are ordering Wisdom Tree games—pastors, deranged wealthy religious parents, etc—have no idea this is the case, and probably think they're getting a good deal. Those crafty fuckers at Wisdom Tree know a scam when they see one.

Anyway, here are a few of the games Wisdom Tree released.



King of Kings

One of the things WT did to make their bad games seem like bad *religious* games was to throw in Bible Trivia at random spots in the game. For example, while playing King of Kings, I was struck by an enemy. At this point in most video games, you lose some "energy" or "life" or whatever, but in King of Kings, a question suddenly flashes onto the screen: "And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were ____ and Elias... (Luke 9:30). A: Goliath B: Pharoah C: Moses" Man, I would have been so fucking mad if my parents had bought me this game when I was a little kid.

King of Kings, like a lot of Wisdom Tree titles, actually consists of three mini-adventures. You could say "what a deal, three for the price of one", but mathematics does not work that way when dealing with things of such rotten quality.

The first adventure, "The Wide Men" has you riding around on a camel that spits shit. You trudge along occasionally encountering enemies, occasionally encountering bible trivia. The second game, "Flight to Egypt" is basically the same thing only now you're riding a donkey! What a splendid twist!

The third and final offering is "Jesus and the temple", where you rush off in a frantic search for the missing baby Jesus. This one is particularly frustrating, and I quickly found myself yelling "Goddamnit! Fuck you Jesus!" which probably was not the intended reaction.



Bible Buffet

A bizarre title that combines the slow pace of a board game with the monotony of poorly designed puzzles and the annoying concept of bible trivia. Oh, and food, too.

You start out on a big board game that has different lands based on food—Pizza Land, Vegetable Land, and so on. You spin the spinner and move the appropriate number of spaces; depending on where you'll land, you'll either play a short level where you dodge creatures themed after the current level (pieces of pizza, pieces of fruit...); or you'll be treated to a question testing your knowledge of The Good Book.

Again, these occasional biblical questions are the only thing in the entire game that justifies the word 'bible' in the title. I can picture the development process for this one.

A blind drunk Wisdom Tree programmer rolls out of a puddle of his own vomit, realizing in horror that he promised a group of preachers a new game by the next day; their advance payment allowed him a weeks worth of cocaine and hookers, but now he's gotta deliver the goods. But what sort of religious game could he possibly come up with in the next 12 hours? Noticing the half eaten slice of pizza encrusted on his shirt, he springs up and begins designing a food-based game.

Twenty-five minutes later, he lets out a sigh of relief as he finishes the game. The feeling of victory is cut short when he remembers "Oh, yeah, it's gotta be a religious game" He grabs what's left of the Holy Bible the company had left in the bathroom once toilet paper had ran out, and tears out a few random pages. After making up a few questions based on what he reads, voila! The game is complete and ready to be played at Sunday schools across the nation. The programmer kicks back and uses the torn bible pages to roll up a nice fat joint.



Sunday Sunday

Another one with some pretty half-assed religious content (see sidebar). In Sunday Sunday, you attempt to get to Sunday School on time. Yep, that's the plot, that's the goal. I can just picture kids fighting over this one "Me next!"

This cartridge also includes two other "games". The first is Fishfall, where you are a hand at the bottom of the screen--- you attempt to grab fish that fall towards you and then throw them back up into a bucket. Simple and pretty stupid. So how did Color Dreams hawk this one off to all those preachers as being a religious game? By adding on the top of the screen the quote "And he saith unto them 'Follow me and I will make you fishes of them' Mathew 4:19" Pretty sneaky.

The third game isn't really a game... it's a nauseating karaoke thing where lyrics scroll down the screen to the tune of hideous beeping and off-time bass beats. By a band called "4Him", the song is called "The Ride" and it's damn hard to listen to, but it's even worse when you picture a classroom full of little zombie-like Sunday school kids singing along to the scrolling lyrics

and inane beeping like some kinda fuckin cult: "The Lord alone is in control of this big scream machine" (yes, actual lyrics)

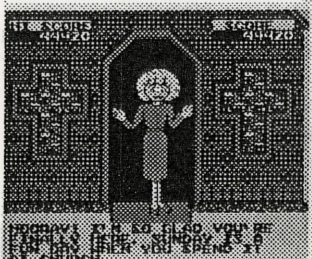
Once the song mercifully ends, the screen says "Press A to Go to Main Menu. Press B to Hear Song Again" I doubt anyone faced with this dilemma has ever chosen the latter, but if so then my faith in humanity has truly been shattered. (see sidebar for more info on the band 4Ride)

Other games include Bible Adventures, Exodus (where you play Moses, and your weapon is the ability to shoot the letter W at enemies. W? Why, of course—the Word of God. What better weapon could there be?), Joshua, Higher Ground, Spiritual Warfare, and so on. They all have the basic Wisdom Tree formula: crappy cartoony graphics, frustrating controls, high-pitched music, ludicrous plot-lines, and a shred of religion.

Just as the anti-drug games made me want to do drugs, these religious games made me want to turn to satan, since perhaps his side makes better games. Check out Wisdom Tree for yourself at www.christianlink.com/media/wisdom



Above and below: the two endings



Sidebar: Menace Beach and Sunday Funday

Here's an example of the half-assed extent Color Dreams went to in reinventing themselves as a Christian company. In the original game, Menace Beach, "Demon Dan" kidnaps your girlfriend, and you skateboard out to rescue her, battling ninjas along the way. Sunday Funday is the exact same game, with different characters and a plot change. And what is that new plot? Now you're skateboarding not to rescue your girlfriend, but to **get to Sunday school on time**. That's up there as the dumbest fucking idea ever for a game, but yet it's pretty brilliant on the part of Color Dreams. I mean, there's nothing anywhere to do with Christianity, or the bible or anything, just the fact that the place you're trying to get to is a church. I wish I had thought of that. I'd just re-do every video game ever made, change the goal to be a prompt arrival at church, and then sell them by the millions to naive preachers and Christian parents across the land. "Yes, Father, the idea behind this game The Demonic Skull of Fucking Doom, is that you are a flaming skull who's...trying to get to church!" "Very good, my son. Here is my wallet"

Sidebar: 4Him

After listening to the hideous karaoke version of the song "the ride" on the Sunday Funday cartridge, my first thought was to jam nails into my ear drums to prevent the grim possibility of ever enduring such a horrible thing again, but my second thought was "Gee, does the band called 4Him actually exist?" I figured it was probably yet another joke on Color Dreams' part in regards to their money-making "we're a religious company now" scam, ie, "we're taking these suckers 4-A-Ride". They made up some goofy vaguely religious lyrics about life being like a roller coaster, set the nintendo's music maker setting to "random annoying synthesizer sounds", and left the room laughing to go roll around in piles of money. But a quick bit of research proved this wrong—there really IS a Christian band called 4Him! Damn! There's even a website called friendsof4him.net!! I didn't bother delving too deeply into the act of researching this group; the mere confirmation of their existence was enough for me.

Satan Lurks Within Journey Albums

I was aimlessly walking around Lincoln Nebraska in the thick heat of a 103 degree day, trying to discover what the town had to offer. "Not a whole hell of a lot" was the definite front runner as I strolled down the sidewalks. I stared into a bank window, watching some deal go down in a meeting room. The three suited guys involved in said deal became kind of uncomfortable when they noticed me watching them.

I frowned, gave a thumbs down, and then left them behind to complete their evil deeds. A few blocks up I saw a man struggling on his bike. He seemed to be either blind drunk or a very poor bicyclist. After finally getting firmly on the bike, he started to take off but immediately fell over onto the grass. He was sprawled out onto the ground with his bike on top of him as I ran up. "Hey, you alright there?" I asked to no response as he struggled up and got back on. Huh. He took off again, just as wobbly. This time he made it a full 30 feet or so before wiping out again, landing hard on concrete rather than grass.

I ran up, again asking if he was alright even though now he clearly was not. He was a freaky sight, face purple, fresh blood now dripping down his cracked and haggard face. His nose looked peculiar, and had stitches, like he had just gotten surgery on it.

Ah, Lincoln, Nebraska, I thought as I flagged down a yuppie to use a cell phone to call 911.



**"Another One Bites the Dust!
Anaujiram Ekoms Ot Ediced!
Another One Bites the Dust!"**

They arrived a few minutes later and began checking the poor guy out. "Sir? Sir, can you hear me? Sir, what happened?"

The guy gazed back at all of us, confused, and spoke his first words "I fell"

"What have you been doing today sir?"

"...Bar..." he managed, falling over again.

Yeesh. I didn't want to end up like that guy. The heat was starting to get to me, and even though I was pretty sure I wasn't going to pass out on the road and

split my face open, just in case I decided to find someplace to cool down.

I eventually stumbled into a thrift store, a Christian thrift store I soon discovered after reading a few of the free pamphlets set out by the door. They had the A/C blasting and nice comfy seats for sale, so I sat myself down and scoped out the bookrack.

A sign hung above it: "If any of these books are offensive to you, please notify a staff member and we will have it removed" Huh. I wanted to test the policy, but there wasn't anything I could really throw a fit about unless I said, you know, "I'm offended by organized religion. Please remove every one of your books" but I didn't feel like being a fucking asshole.

Indeed, pretty much every book was religious in nature. The best one I found was "Why Knock Rock?" by these two preacher brothers who burned metal records back in the 80's (and maybe still do today, I dunno). I learned quite a bit. If you play "Another one Bites the Dust" by Queen backwards, it says "Decide to smoke marijuana, it is fun to smoke marijuana" I cracked up picturing Queen in the studio, devising fiendish ways to trick impressionable youth into becoming dope fiends.

Some of the lyrics they quote as examples of music's steady moral decline are hilarious. If a band sang something like, I dunno, "Kids, listen to me/Go attack your parents with a butcher knife/While screaming 'Satan Fucking Rules, Fuckers'/Then find heroin and shoot it into your eyeballs/ Molest a dog while you're at it", then, yeah, I suppose you'd expect preachers to freak out about it. But look at what these goons are quoting:

"The Cars, a new wave group, has a release written by Rick Ocasek entitled 'Since You're Gone'. The lyric goes: 'Since you're gone/I'm throwing it all away/I can't help it/Everything's a mess.'"



Above: The Dark One chilling with his minions

That's it?! Man, if I looked hard enough I bet I could find DC Talk, or 4Him lyrics that are more sinister than that. Or how about:

"In the very popular song 'Hotel California', the Eagles sing of demonic possession and power: "You can check out any time you like/But you can never leave"

Pretty much every lyric quoted in here is pretty tame... even by the standards of 1984.

The book is full of explanations for the uninformed reader, insights like "Gene Simmons implies demon worship when he lewdly extends his tongue". Well, you learn something new everyday.

At one point they mention that Sting tends to play evil characters, in movies such as *Dune* and *Brimstone and Treacle*. Sting explained in an interview "Bad guys- we're the life and blood and salt of the earth." In regards to this, the preachers ask "Does Sting seriously prefer to be evil?

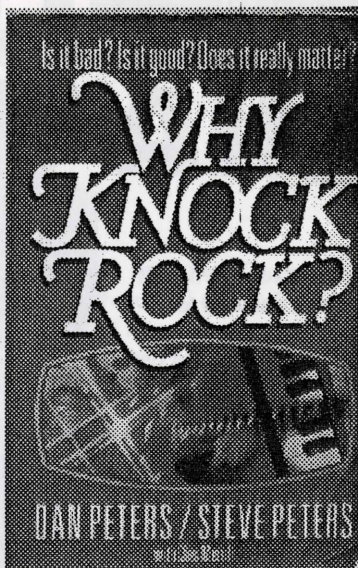
Whether he was speaking sincerely or not, the fact remains he spoke as one of rock's most popular and persuasive stars, glorifying in the benefits of evil" Yes, it is a common instance for people to succumb to evil after watching Sting's performance in *Dune*.

Later, the Peterson duo warns us that "A look at the lifestyles of many rock VIP's will quickly divulge to whom they mistakenly pledge their allegiance." For example, Dave Guard of the Kingston Trio says "I'm into a lot of good health, yoga, meditation". It is also noted that "He studies Sanskrit, Indian Philosophy and Indian Music" Holy fucking shit! This madman and the other members of his satanic "Trio" are singing to our innocent youth about deadly meditation and good health?! The horror! They also blast Rastafarians by noting that "they are nature-lovers". Damn you, Bob Marley.... Loving nature and shit.

The always dangerous Michael Jackson is also tackled in this book. "'I love to

create magic' says the young superstar, 'to put together something so unusual, so unexpected, that it blows people's heads off.' Creating magic, as Jackson puts it, can be rewarding, exhilarating. But that sort of "magic" is just short of madness—and therein lies the danger. Elvis Presley lived to weave magic for others, and was soon caught under his own spell—trapped in his own alter-image—until life became unreal" Scary stuff! They also note about Mr. Jackson "his connection with the cult of Jehovah's Witnesses leaves him vulnerable to satanic influences" Careful there, Michael!

Occult connection in rock bands are explored further. "Perhaps most shocking are the groups whose name are chosen for, or whose intentions are linked with, the demonic. Some rock stars, such as Iron Maiden's Bruce Dickinson, say they are 'not into the



Above: Burn, Baby, Burn

occult that much'; however, that is self-delusion. Playing around with the devil is like Russian roulette. Perhaps the first time a person pulls the trigger, the gun won't fire, but if he keeps playing long enough, he's liable to blow his head off." Yikes! I thought it was all fun and games!

A later chapter is entitled "Dead and Gone: Rock and Roll Obituaries", which is just that—a long list of musicians who have died. The chapter is introduced with "Let's now ponder the death of some of rock music's greats, not for any sadistic or morbid purpose, but for the purpose of seeking 'true knowledge' and 'good judgment'. Tragic as many of these lives and deaths may be, perhaps we can at least profit from their mistakes"

OK, got that? Now lets look at a few of their inclusions:

Bobby Bloom—Originally a member of the Imaginations, Bloom came to public attention in 1970 with a light, summery song, 'Montego Bay'. He died in 1974, the victim of an accidental shooting

Bill Chase—Chase's group, the Chase, had several songs among the top 100 in the early seventies, but the trumpet player and three other members of the band perished in a plane crash on August 9, 1974.

Earl Grant – Known for his hit tune "The End", Grant met his end during an auto accident.

Al Jackson – A drummer with the band, Booker T and the MGs, Jackson was shot to death by an intruder in his home.

Roy Hamilton – Born in Leesburg, Georgia, Hamilton moved to Jersey City, where he sang in church with the Searchlight Gospel Singers. His first secular hit came in 1954 with, "You'll never walk alone", and his fame was instantaneous. He died of a heart attack in 1969.

OK... exactly what "mistakes" are we supposed to be "profiting" from here?! Don't have heart attacks? Don't get in cars or planes? Don't be in the wrong place at the wrong time? Don't play light, summery songs?

They list other rockers who've overdosed and choked on their own vomit and what not—at least in those cases I kinda understand what the mistake would be, and what you could learn from it (if you pass out drunk, try to roll over on your side), but WHAT THE FUCK IS THEIR POINT in these ones? Are they saying that Bill Chase's plane would not have crashed had he not been a sinister trumpet player? If Al Jackson were not a drummer, would his intruder have gone elsewhere? Would Ray Hamilton--- actually I don't know what the fuck they're talking about with Roy Hamilton. The dude sang in a GOSPEL CHOIR at CHURCH and he had a HEART ATTACK. What more do these morons want out of the guy?! (I thought it was funny that the previous owner of my book felt moved to pencil in his own addition, at the bottom of the page: "Rick Nelson Died 12/31/85. Plane Crash")

Next, the Peters brothers turn to the pressing issue of offensive album covers. They even include sickening examples of this vulgarity, except for a few "because they contain nudity". All of the bad boys you'd expect are examined: Blondie, Eddie and



Above: Beware the Pyramid Energy!

the Hot Rods, Journey, Paul McCartney, Bow Wow Wow, even Earth Wind & Fire. Here's what they have to say about Earth Wind and Fire's album *Spirit*, pictured to the left: "Each one of its albums bears some (if not several) occultic symbols, as shown on the cover of *Spirit*. It depicts pyramids, the supposed energy and life-force producers in the occult" Oooh, better burn that one, guys! While you're at it, better burn all the dollar bills in your pockets, Dan and Steve! Wouldn't want the sinister pyramid-energy to get a hold of you!

The book really hits its stride when it gets into subliminal messages and backward masking; this is where they give the above-mentioned revelation that

"Another One Bites the Dust" is secretly a plea for youngsters to decide to smoke marijuana.

What else do we learn? When Led Zeppelin sings "...is the word that only leaves you guessing", the backwards masking is "Satan is really Lord". And Stairway to Heaven may SOUND like "There are two paths you can go by.... You know, sometimes words have two meanings" But try playing it backwards and you'll be horrified to hear "There's no escaping it. Here's to my Sweet Satan. No other made a path, for it makes me sad, whose power is Satan. There was a little child born naked.... Now I am Satan. I will sing because I live with Satan" Boy, Led Zeppelin, they really dig Satan.... However, according to the Peters brothers, "The real lies on this recording are in the forward version, however. First of all the song says the woman is 'buying a stairway to heaven'. That's impossible, since heaven can't be earned or bought—it's a free gift. Satan would just love people to fall for that falsehood. Likewise, the song claims 'there are two paths to go by, but in the long run there's still time to change the road you're on....' Don't you believe it! The time to choose the narrow path that leads to heaven is today."

Best of all is Hotel California by the Eagles. Forward, the lyrics are pretty spooky: "This could be heaven or this could be hell" But backwards? Whoa--- "Yes, Satan he organized his own religion... it was delicious... he puts it in a vat and fixes it for his son and gives it away..." I never thought I'd want to own Hotel California on vinyl, but man, I gotta hear that shit for myself.

I wanted to catch up with the Peterson brothers to see how their mission was going nowadays, and to see if they had lightened up a little in their stance towards some of the tame-by-today's-standards bands explored in "Why Knock Rock". I figured I'd give them a story about how their book affected me, sending off the following letter:

Dear Peterson Brothers:

I want to tell you my story. My name is Nate Gangelhoff. I grew up in Lincoln Nebraska, a lovely city with many wonderful, god-fearing people. As a child, I was raised well. I listened to good Christian music such as the inspirational tunes of 4Him. My parents had a strong connection with Jesus, and brought me to church twice a week. But somewhere along the way, I strayed. You see, I was strolling down the Lincoln streets, humming my favorite 4Him song, "The Ride" (I'm sure you've heard of it), when I spotted a record store I had never seen before. Curious, I stepped inside. Those turned

out to be the worst steps I've ever taken... the first steps towards the dripping-with-gooney-evil land of Satan.

Once inside, my eyes spotted a poster on the wall and something inside me snapped. It felt like an outside force had entered my body, a terrible feeling that I could do nothing about. What was the poster of? You guessed it—the "rock" group Kiss.

This new evil force coursing through me shoved the catchy melodies of 4Him out of my system and forced to walk up to the poster. It literally felt like I was possessed! My body stared up at the poster in wonderment and I found myself tracing the outline of Gene Simmons' tongue. As my finger touched the image of that demonic appendage, all hope was lost; I was completely under the sickening command of this new force.

I could not control myself; suddenly I was at the counter with a stack full of albums by Kiss and other demonic groups such as Blondie, Paul McCartney, Journey, Earth Wind & Fire... even the particularly vile Ozzy Osbourne.

I went home, marched past my parents with a stony stare and locked myself in my bedroom. Turning off the lights, I sat in the center of the room with my headphones on full blast, listening to the albums over and over again, the vile demonic subliminal messages coursing through my controlled mind. I found myself evilly grinning, whispering to myself over and over again "Satan is my new master... satan is my new master... must find blood for my new master...."

From that point on I plummeted into the depths of depravity faster than you can imagine. I stopped going to church. I stopped obeying my parents. I even began to smoke marijuana. I even shot heroin into my eyeballs during a break period while ritualistically slaughtering a goat at the Lincoln Baseball Park with some of my newfound Earth Wind and Fire loving companions. It was pathetic... but as I said, I was not in control of myself.

All of this changed a few weeks ago. I was walking down another Lincoln street, Journey blasting on the headphones, thoughts of demons racing through my corrupted mind, when I spotted a used book store. "Perhaps the Satanic Bible, written by my lord the Dark One lies within this lair" I barked, entering the store.

During my search for Satanic literature, I stumbled across your book, "Why Knock Rock?" (on sale for the amazing price of ten cents), and my life was yet again forever changed... only this time, for the better.

As I read about the messages and evil lyrics contained within "rock" music, I could literally feel the force within me beginning to wither away and lose power. "N-noo—" it moaned "Exposed—to the truth of savior Jesus--- my manipulative lies... are powerless" and then it completely drifted away up out of me. I felt like my old self again!

So I would like to thank you for helping me get my life back. I have a whole stack of records by Blondie, Journey, the Beatles, Scorpions, and so on that I would like burn. When are you organizing your next record-burning? I will be there, front row center, to watch with delight as the forces of Satan lurking within that sinister vinyl melt away.

Thank you

Nate Gangelhoff

Either I had an out-of-date address or they simply didn't give a shit, cuz I hadn't heard back as of "press time". Or maybe Satan, realizing his days were numbered with these two leaking the truth, had them eliminated.

The Sorry Saga of Nick Carter

In the summer of 1997 I was 17 years old, working in a cramped blowgun factory, making between 3 and 4 dollars an hour, depending on how tired and ineffective I was at assembling blowguns on that particular day. It was monotonous, unbearably hot, and slightly degrading, but the added blow, the salt methodically poured in the wound, if you will, was the steady soundtrack of bubbly top 40 radio played by my stonily silent coworkers.

It became the soundtrack to my life, a continual annoyingly catchy chorus of "babys" "you know it's true" "ooh" "aah", and so on. Grinding my teeth, my thoughts would inevitably begin to center around the singers of these sorry songs; images of them, and of me taking one of the freshly assembled blowguns in my hands and puncturing precise holes into their vocal chords, rendering them mute and relatively harmless.

One particularly retched song was spun by the "should have been flogged to death in the dark basement of a third-rate comedy club many years ago" DJ in intervals of what seemed to be 10 minutes. All day long it would get played over and over again, about half of the time causing one of my machine-like fellow employees to lean over and actually TURN IT UP. The song was not returned to the previous volume upon its completion, so by the end of the day, I was hearing it for the 18th time at a now ear-bleeding level. This final listening session generally coincided with the end of my shift and the accompanying jarring revelation that I had yet again spent the previous five hours assembling blowguns and had 15 dollars to show for it. That feeling, with that song backing it up—there are few methods of achieving such a pure sense of self-loathing and hatred.

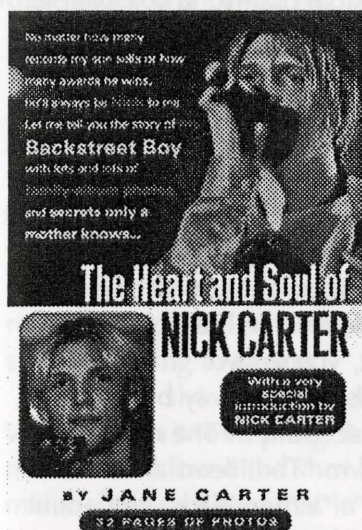
The song in question was called "Quit Playing Games With My Heart", and the only consolation I could get out of it was the fact that it would be off the airwaves in a few weeks and the band would be shoved into obscurity, robbing convenience stores in a month or two. Oh, how wrong I was. The band was called the Backstreet Boys, and they ended up catapulting to insane levels of fame and stardom over

the next few years, performing a whole array of similarly vapid songs.

The whole "boy band" genre—consisting of them, N-Sync, and lesser players such as 98 Degrees, O-Town, and probably a whole bunch of others I've never heard of—seems to be dying slowly, gasping its final harmonized breaths as I write. Of course, everyone saw this coming, but it was strange that it took so long. When I was in elementary school, all the girls listened to the equivalent band back then, the New Kids on the Block, but they were nobodys after what, a year or two? The current crop of boy bands has managed to scam success for close to five, six years at this point. They should all be well into the drugged-out haze section of their VH1 Behind the Musics by now, but yet they're still raking in some pretty good dough.

But don't worry—this article will not be an examination of the "boy band" phenomenon. I liken that sorry era of popular music to a bout with leprosy—once it's over, you don't think "Hmm, let me examine that experience". Fuck no, you try to forget about it; you're Glad It's Over.

No, this scholarly article will take a look at one particular player in the Boy Band scene, Mr. Nick Carter of the Backstreet Boys. I have had two encounters with writings about Mr. Carter, and heard a couple of stories, of all which paints a funny, if conflicting picture.



A friend of mind scored this priceless tome while dumpster diving behind a bookstore: "Nick Carter: Secrets Only a Mother Knows", written by his mom Jane Carter. Pretty weird a book like that would be in a dumpster, huh? Now, granted, her target audience was 12 year old girls, not 22 year old degenerate punk kids who write about books found in dumpsters, but either way I think it's a bad, kinda fucked up novel, and here are a few random observations from it.

It's essentially a tedious, poorly written account of Nick Carter's early childhood before becoming a Backstreet Boy. She goes through the tales of all his early

auditions and try-outs, the ups and downs, the lessons learned, and the eventual rise to fame. Plus plenty of pictures with captions like "hot!", "Cool!", and "The Once and Future Star!"

We're treated to some bubbly rhetoric about "daring to dream", showing us "Nick's Dream Workbook". "There is no such thing as an impossible dream" she tells us. Wrong, Ms. Jane Carter! What if Nick had, rather than be a singer of inane pop songs, wanted to, oh I don't know, be a half-ape, half man who could turn into oil at will and be capable of dividing by zero? Would you have written a book for youngsters relating his tale of dreaming? Fuck no, you would have force fed him horse tranquilizers or something.

She seems to think that her son is some sort of multi-talented genius, a modern-day Mozart, and devotes a good chunk of the book to attempting to determine how he developed his amazing talents. According to her, it has to do partly with the fact that she danced while pregnant, and that the family lived above a disco night club while Nick was young. Whatever you say, Jane!

Nick's lineage is also explored in order to determine the roots of his talents. (One particularly cringe-inducing quote from this section: "Apparently, Nick Carter rocks all the way back to Plymouth Rock.") While describing his ancestors, Jane offers us a riddle: "What do you get if you cross a beauty pageant winner, a pipe organ virtuoso, a Shakespeare fanatic, a portrait artist, a classical pianist, and a couple of disco entrepreneurs and music lovers? Nick Carter!" Well, if so, then lets never try that particular cross-breeding experiment again, ok folks?

Later, she talks about how she raised Nick, and the rest of her kids right. "According to our Carter family code" she notes "Every child is a person, not a thing" Gee, what a radical approach to raising a kid! I suppose you'd expect a book of this nature to say that sort of thing, but I think it would be funny if a mother of some child star argued that "A child is an object, to be chained up in the basement at night, and shipped to talent shows during the day to determine if any profit can be extracted." That'd be refreshingly honest, you know?

Overhearing Nick singing one day, she is blown away by his talent and begins bringing him to auditions. Her account of one of these auditions highlights the deep writing found in "The Heart and Soul of Nick Carter: Secrets Only a Mother Knows": "When Nick sang about flying a kite, high in the sky, he looked up. The upward glance was

part gesture, practiced as June instructed. Yet, I knew it was more. When Nick raised his eyes, he saw what I did up there, a piece of the sky holding a special star waiting to be inscribed with his name. Both of us knew there was a long way to go.... And a lot of work to be done to connect celestial dots until he reached that special star." Boy, if, in addition to his dizzying array of other talents, Nick has inherited his mother's writing skills, he'd be almost **too powerful**, ya know?

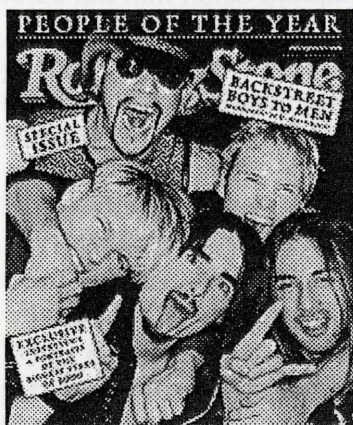
Later in the book she says "Songs from your adolescence stay with you, always. Years from now today's Backstreet Boys hits will be the "oldies" of scores of current fans" Fuck, that sucks! Do you have any idea how shitty that's going to be if the Golden Oldies stations of the future are playing the fuckin' Backstreet Boys? Yech.

Other sources have reported Jane Carter as being a psychotic overbearing witch, so she devotes a couple of chapters towards the end of the book to defending herself, titling one "Must Every Cinderella Tale Have A Wicked Stage-Mother?" "I've been criticized over the years, sometimes severely by many people" she admits. She spends the chapters explaining on how she knew Nick's dream was to be a famous singer, and she merely helped him achieve that goal. I dunno, I've never met the Carter family so I can't say, but I still think it'd be pretty hard to know that sort of thing when you're eight years old, and being thrust into the limelight at that young of an age is probably a bad thing. Especially because all FIVE of the Carter kids have entered showbiz in one way or another: Aaron is also a nauseating pop singer (I discovered on some website that Jane "is working on her next book "The Charmed Life: The Charm Only A Mother Reveals," which is about Aaron" Gee, lets keep our fingers crossed that she matches the greatness of her first novel) younger sisters Leslie and Angel sing, and sister BJ is a an aspiring model/actress. I find it hard to believe that all five children would independently decide they wanted the path of fame, especially after witnessing first hand how it caused their older sibling to miss out on a normal childhood. Then again, maybe Jane is right, and they're all simply "daring to dream"

But even she lets some doubt slip out a few times in the book. Watching an MTV Spring Break Backstreet Boys performance, Jane notes that "I loved the show, but for an instant while I watched it, I felt melancholy, wishing that in truth Nick was just another carefree teenager on vacation"

Later, little brother Aaron confesses "I wanted to become a pop star so I could spend more time with my brother" Damn, is it just me, or does that seem really fucked-up? Well, shit, the whole book is pretty fucked-up I suppose.

Even though I was essentially just "skimming with a sneer", I still, upon reaching the end of this book, thought "I cannot believe I just read that".



The idea that Nick's early rise to fame was a positive thing is put into further doubt by the second bit of literature I read, a Rolling Stone interview with the Backstreet Boys from a year or so ago. The general impression you get from the article is that although four of the members of the band are decently well-adjusted, down to earth, "normal guys" blah blah blah, Nick Carter is kinda messed up due to being in show business from such an early age. Which, obviously, makes sense... if you were doing talent shows and filming

commercials and what-not from the age of six, constantly in the camera, living an artificial existence, not doing any of the normal things kids do, then you'd probably end up saying the things he says in the article, like "It's affected me to the point where I can't look at things normal. It's hard for me to get a grip on reality. When I'm in my room, it's like you almost feel like a king. But I can't go outside and do anything, you know? Sometimes I sit back and wonder what it would be like if it wasn't like this. But another thing is, I've been in this business so much and seen so much stuff that it's almost like my feelings are kind of numb. It takes a lot for me to cry. I don't cry. You know what I'm saying?"

We also learn a few tidbits about Nick that were strangely absent from his mom's book—not only is he the smelliest Backstreet Boy, but he is also the most frequent masturbator! Plus, he's the Backstreet Boy who's "most likely to start throwing his fists around".

An article in Spin from a few years earlier paints an even worse picture of Mr. Carter, detailing how he ignored Leslie, a fan in a wheelchair on her birthday: "'Nick! Nick!" she implores, hands clawing air. Nick, who possesses a finely calibrated sense of detachment, pretends not to hear her. "Oh," Leslie whispers to herself. "Bye.'" Later in the article, he pokes fun at overweight Backstreet Boys fans.

A few weeks after reading all of this literature about Nick Carter, I was talking to a friend of mine who works as a bouncer at a silly yuppie bar in downtown Minneapolis. He had been working one night when some loud and obnoxious moron started causing a scene. My friend kicked him out of the bar, and when he returned his coworker exclaimed "Dude, don't you know who that was?"

"No, who?"

"That was Nick Carter from the fuckin' Backstreet Boys!"

My friend was understandably disappointed that he didn't know this earlier, so he could have been a little rougher with Mr. Carter, or mocked him and his band a little bit before sending him sailing into the pavement.

A couple of months after hearing this excellent story, I was zonked out, eating pizza at some café outside of Orlando when suddenly the in-store TV snapped me back to reality with a report that none other than Nick Carter had been arrested for disorderly behavior at a local bar!

Apparently he was arguing with a woman outside, being loud. Police told him to leave ten times, and when he continued to argue, he got cuffed and tossed in the back of a squad car. I looked up the details on the internet later and found a couple of funny accounts:

"According to eyewitnesses he proceeded to pull down his pants, wave his appendage around in the air, and scream, 'Hey everybody, I'm Nick Carter!'"

and

".... a 21-year-old Brandon, Florida woman present at the time of Carter's bust gave this account: "The cops arrested him, put him in handcuffs, and then put him in the police car. Nick wasn't belligerent, but he started bawling. He said, 'You just want to arrest a Backstreet Boy. I've never been arrested. I don't know what to do!' He was crying

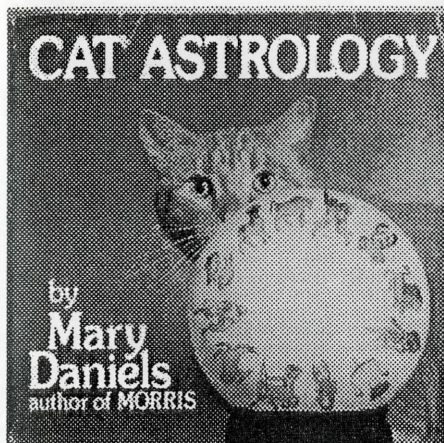
hard. Tears were streaming down his face. People were laughing at him. The cops were chuckling."

Of course, he got off with probation, claiming he did nothing wrong, and that he was simply in the "wrong place at the wrong time". While researching this, I also discovered that "One of the few members of the Carter family that doesn't sing, Bobbie Jean Carter, 20, has been arrested, according to WENN. Bobbie faces drug charges after crashing a BMW car in a late-night, high-speed police chase in Marathon Key, Florida. Carter, who also is on probation, broke her ankle in the crash."

So yeah, anyway, everything I've just gone over is kinda pointless and not all that surprising—kids forced into stardom at an early age, unable to lead a normal childhood, tend to end up as hollow, confused people. But here's the sinister part to all this. At one point in Jane Carter's book it's mentioned that Nick's first studio experience was when he "sang vocals from the rock group Journey's album on which his favorite song was Steve Perry's classic masterpiece 'Lights'. Nick has performed that song as a Backstreet Boy. What a thrill it would be for Nick to record that song someday with Steve Perry, his early rock 'n roll inspiration"

Whoa, whoa, whoa. As we learned earlier this issue, this rock group Journey is chock-full of satanic influence. Nick Carter, Tool of Satan?! Quit Breakin' My Heart, indeed!

The Rock Solid Scientific Field of Cat Astrology



Not too much to say about this one... I just wanted to make everyone aware of its existence. To all you aspiring authors out there, who dream of someday having a published novel to hold in your sweaty hands—look what you're up against.

The only review the author was able to find to put on the book sleeve is "The Morriscope says... a catty review can't hurt this one. Mary, sweetie, you've done it again" And who gave this glowing thumbs-up? Morris, a cat who was apparently the spokesperson for 9-Lives cat food in the 70's. Yippie. I'm sold.

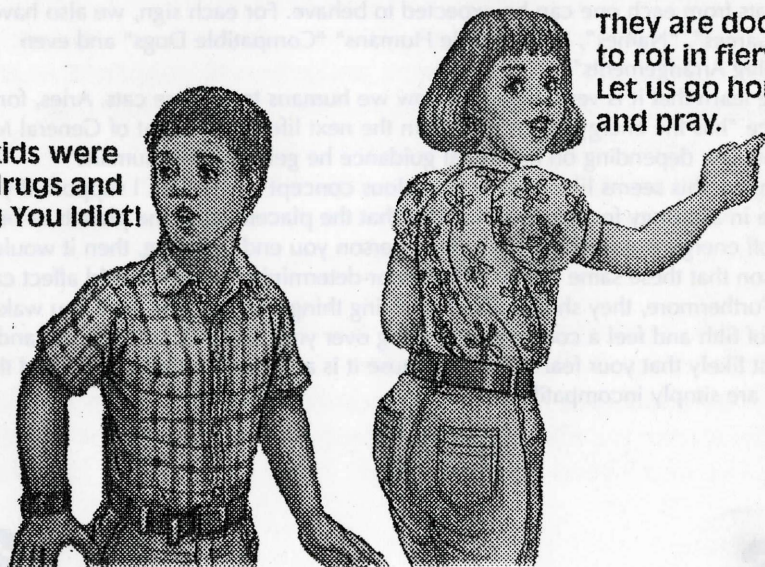
I dunno... I couldn't read this book, though. I just couldn't make myself do it. I mean, I didn't really "read" any of the other books, I just sort of skimmed through them with a sneer, jotting down sarcastic notes. But I couldn't even go that far with "Cat Astrology". I'd read a line or two, shudder, flip a few pages ahead, and do it all over again.

The book basically just runs through the twelve astrological signs, and explains how cats from each one can be expected to behave. For each sign, we also have topics like "Games", "Names", "Compatible Humans" "Compatible Dogs" and even "Sleeping Arrangements".

We learn that it is very important how we humans treat these cats. Aries, for instance "has the energy to come back in the next life as President of General Motors or a mugger, depending on the moral guidance he gets from his humans"

I mean, this seems like a really ridiculous concept to me. But, I suppose if you did believe in astrology for humans, the idea that the placement of the planets at birth gives off energy that affects what type of person you end up being, then it would stand to reason that these same beams of behavior-determining energy would affect cats as well. Furthermore, they should affect all living things. So the next time you wake up in a pile of filth and feel a cockroach crawling over your face—don't freak out and kill it! Its most likely that your fear is there because it is a Capricorn Cockroach, and the two of you are simply incompatible.

**Those kids were
doing drugs and
reading You Idiot!**



**They are doomed
to rot in fiery hell.
Let us go home
and pray.**