

Grey Matter

by **Thad Kreisher**
Contributing Writer

Well, it finally happened. After 1.5 years of writing this column, I finally got a letter. And, to be honest with you, I am both excited and elated. It's on page 2 if any of you want to read it. I really want to thank the author for sharing his viewpoint with us and I'd also like to encourage any of you who think enough to have

WARNING: This album contains a piece of artwork that may be considered offensive to some people. Life is sometimes that way.

your own opinions to write in as well.

Let's talk about those for awhile. Viewpoints that is. A long time ago, in that magical, crazy kinda' time known as the Middle Ages, there was a very bad case of mass paranoia. It seems that the people of this time believed that there was a huge conspiracy in hell, (a.k.a. the firey pit, lake of fire, netherworld), headed by Satan, (a.k.a. the devil, the beast, the host of hell, Ronald Reagan), to infiltrate God's green earth with human servants who were to wreak havoc, evil, and general bad times upon the Christians. These people were known as witches.

Now, we must remember that in this time period, the Roman Catholic Church, (a.k.a. "the Church"), was the supreme authority in Europe. Anyone who didn't at least pretend to be a Christian was considered to be the anti-christ, sworn enemy of mankind, God, Christianity, "The Church," and a general menace to society. The point of this is that in those days, there was one viewpoint; the viewpoint of "the Church." Anyone holding a different opinion was simply killed or imprisoned.

We're talking about hundreds of thousands of people killed for thinking the wrong way.

But, enough about the past. POOF! Back to 1987, Democratic United States.

In theory, America is free. We are guaranteed the right to freedom of press, religion, and expression without censorship, and without fear of imprisonment, death, or persecution....right? Of course. At least in theory.

However, despite the noble ideals and theories, we have had a few black splotches on our freedom in the past. The best known of these is the blacklisting of communists during the McCarthy era. We have also had some pretty severe racial and sexual discrimination. Still do sometimes.

Some of you are probably saying, "So what. Who cares about McCarthy? That stuff don't happen anymore."

How many of you guessed that the next thing I'm going to say is "Oh yes it does." God, I've become predictable. Anyway, here goes.....Oh yes it does.

There is currently a musical group known for their political, sarcastic, and what some have called "tasteless" lyrics. This band included a surrealistic painting in one of their recent albums. When this album was received by a thirteen year old boy, and his mother saw the poster included in the album, well, the shit hit the fan. It seems that mom called her lawyer.

The band members and the independent record lable they own are currently being prosecuted for providing harmful materials to a minor. This seems ironic considering that 1) The album in question contained a warning sticker reading "WARNING: This album contains a piece of artwork that may be considered offensive to some people. Life is sometimes that way," and 2) The piece of art included in the album hung in the Vienna Museum of Modern

Forget McCarthy, we've got the PMRC

Art and can also be seen by anyone, underage or not, at your local library.

It is interesting to note that the distributors of the album and the store that the album was purchased at were not prosecuted because they agreed to stop carrying the album. Sounds like self imposed censorship to me.

In the mean time, however, a small independent record label does not have the financial resources to pay the huge legal fees included in a suit of this nature. As a result, they will likely be put out of business. In effect, silenced.

Somewhere along the line, the Parent Music Resource Center has gotten involved. These people claim that they have a right to give their children to a "Christian" upbringing, and that it is the state's responsibility to help.

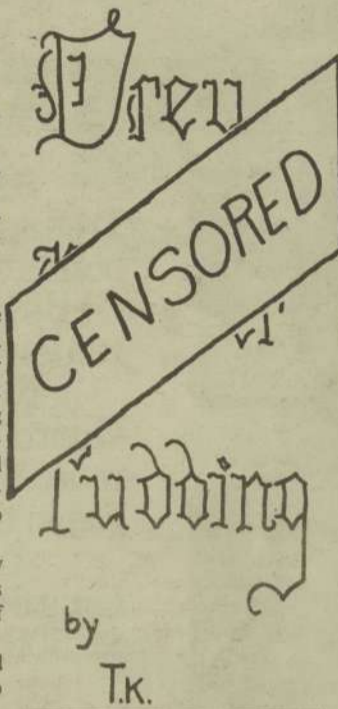
It is my belief that it is the parent's responsibility to raise their child. No one else's. With

effective parenting, no artwork, music or outside influence is going to be harmful to a child.

What is currently happening to Alternative Tentacles Records, and the Dead Kennedys is nothing more than censorship.

No one has the right to regulate my morals. I am myself. I think for myself. I have my own views of life and the way things are. I have a right to do this, at least, in theory.

Some of the things I say and think are considered to be sacrilegious, anti-patriotic, tasteless, strange and offensive to some individuals. But, then again, it's lucky for them that they aren't me, so that they don't have to be the ones saying these things. That's what freedom is all about. Not just freedom for Christians, not just for Democrats and Republicans, but for every one. Commies included. At least in theory.



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