

# GRIFF V. THOMPSON

## A case of: To Bleep, or not To Bleep

by Jared Dean

Although originally promoted as a music censorship debate, Griff vs Thompson quickly turned into rape versus racism at Ham Hall Wednesday.

Jack Thompson, the lawyer who challenged obscenity laws in Florida regarding the 2 Live Crew album "As Nasty As They Wanna Be," brought his open vs closed society paradigm up against Professor Griff, former "minister of information" of Public Enemy, and his idea of artists taking responsibility for their own actions.

With both sides given 20 minutes to state their case and 10 minutes for rebuttal, Thompson began by stating that an "open society doesn't work because chaos and

anarchy lead to totalitarianism." He went on to quote Carl Sandburg's statement that freedom in America is "moving easy in a harness."

Thompson based his argument on the idea that questionable material shouldn't be released. He read titles and lyrics from several 2 Live Crew songs as examples of "pornography."

The bulk of his stand was that rape is often directly connected to pornography. He said women and children's rights aren't being protected by the first amendment. He went on to tell stories of women he defended in court who were sexually molested and abused. These women asked him to go out and talk to students across the

country about the ramifications of pornography.

He concluded by saying "there is a \$12 billion industry in this country, the pornography industry, that every woman in this room doesn't have a right to be secure in her body and that a woman exists solely for the pleasure of a man." He questioned how an executive of Time-Warner who personally made \$117 million by selling "garbage," "doesn't have to answer to any authority anywhere, certainly not within the record industry." He went on to say, "If you don't think the record industry is the most corrupt, irresponsible industry in the country and in the world, I have some Milli Vanilli records I'd like to sell ya."

Thompson's presenta-

tion was more like the closing statement to a jury. Professor Griff took the podium like a preacher and stated, "even though me and Jack may not agree or you may not agree, I feel that we should still leave here brothers and sisters."

"I'm not coming from an open/closed point of view, which doesn't make any sense to me, I'm coming from an Afro-centric point of view," Griff said. "I'm coming from a black man's point of view. The point of view of the black man coming from Africa to America in hulls of ships."

Griff called for the censors to not target artists, but to go after the root of the artist's anger. Using Body Count's "Cop Killer" as an example he said, "rather than deal with the effect of a song like 'Cop Killer,' why can't we deal with the cause. What caused a brother like Ice-T to write a song like 'Cop Killer?'"

Griff called for parent's to be role models for their children and not wait for someone like M.C. Hammer to influence them. "We have to stop putting them (celebrities) on pedestals and praising them."

Ending his comments,

Griff asked how many people present think music should be censored. Less than 10 people raised their mitts. He then asked how many people think that censorship is wrong. There was almost complete arm upheaval. Griff said, "you lost Jack."

The most heated remarks of the night were directed toward mediator Rob Rosenthal, KUNV's General Manager, by Thompson. When Thompson perceived noise levels to be too loud, he frequently called out "moderator" in an attempt to get Rosenthal to regain order. Regarding Thompson's calls for order, Rosenthal said, "Thompson needed a scapegoat. He was clearly out numbered, so he attempted to avert the issue from his call for censorship to a small bit of noise in the audience."

The arguments in the rebuttal and question/answer session became circular when pornography, rape, and race overshadowed the question at hand. Censorship got lost in the crossfire.

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2. Ministry - Psalm 69: The Way to Succeed and the Way to Suck Eggs
3. Singles, Motion Picture Soundtrack
4. Mighty Lemon Drops - Ricochet
5. Sonic Youth - Dirty
6. Ramones - Mondo Bizarro
7. Cool World, Motion Picture Soundtrack
8. Kitchens of Distinction - The Death of Cool
9. The Flaming Lips - To Death in the Future Head
10. P.J. Harvey - Dry

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