

# Ice-T: There goes the neighborhood?

by Brent Legault

Ice-T is bad. Very bad. He is concentrated evil. America's No. 1 menace. If it was not for his nefarious effect upon our nation's morale, all races and all social castes would clasp hands and embrace, basking in the warm glow of the love they share for each other.

OK, that's only a silly exaggeration, but not too far from the truth if you ask nearly any member of national or local police organizations. Ice-T writes a song about killing cops, and suddenly, he becomes a traitor.

Ice-T and Body Count agitate a lot of people. Since the release of their debut album that included the song "Cop Killer," police officers, community leaders, and government officials have been all a twitter. Most cops, judging from some printed reactions, seem indignant and maybe a little nervous that someone dares to criticize their powerful position. Some cops may find themselves so ancy, they can barely choke down that last, tiny, raspberry-filled bite.

Andy Anderson, president of the local chapter of the Policemen's Protection Division was so excited about Ice-T coming to town, he couldn't wait to tell Metro officers that they should not consider working security for the show in their off time. Richard Lenz, manager of the Huntridge Theater, said he never hires law enforcement officers for "thrash" shows anyway. "I think (Anderson) is just grandstanding," he said.

Anderson should not expect to make much impact. Ice-T is used to this sort of greeting by now. Besides, he has more notable advisories than some small-time Vegas cop. Ollie North, as a spokesman for the Freedom Alliance, wants to prosecute Ice-T and his record label Time-Warner for violating sedition



photo by Ched Whitney

Ice-T and Body Count rocked the Huntridge Theatre Tuesday night, perhaps to the dismay of Las Vegas police.

## On with the Body Count

It was billed as Slamfest '93, featuring the heavy metal bands Body Count, D.R.I. and Pro-Pain. But everyone knew what the big deal was all about. And it was no secret to Metro either.

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department was prepared for Ice-T's Tuesday night show at the Huntridge Theatre. Officers had blocked off the back Huntridge parking lot forcing fans to seek parking elsewhere on Charleston Boulevard.

Ice-T, who became famous as a rapper (his album *Original Gangster*) and an actor (*New Jack City*, in which he played a cop) before he became infamous for the *Body Count* song "Cop Killer"—which has subsequently been pulled from the album, is getting used to this kind of treatment.

The show seemed to go off without incident. Metro officers on the scene said they didn't know if anything had occurred and referred all questions to police headquarters.

Body Count didn't take the stage until after 11 p.m. At the beginning of the show, the tour's last, Ice-T apologized for his failing voice. But it didn't matter; the band more than made up for it as songs such as "There Goes the Neighborhood" and "Voodoo" came off better live than on the album.

Prior to the band's encore ("Cop Killer," of course), Ice-T summed up his message for the crowd: "If I die tomorrow, the one thing I want you to leave here with is courage. The good cops out there, they're not going to mess with you. But those mother fuckers (bad cops) that are out there fucking things up can't hurt you if you stand together."

Love him or hate him, one thing can't be denied about Ice-T: with the Slamfest tour, the new movie *Trespass*, a new Ice-T rap record and a new Body Count album forthcoming, he's the hardest working person in the business.

— Ched Whitney

and anti-anarchy statutes. The famed actor, Charlton Heston, a share holder of Time-Warner, denounced Ice-T and TW as irresponsible. President Bush called Ice-T "sick."

There are a lot of people who share the same views as the above-mentioned "American icons." Most of them wear badges and carry guns. But is it really so "sick" and "irresponsible" to write and record a song about killing a cop? Is it?

How many movies have you seen where people get brutally murdered? Pick up any Stephen King novel, turn

to a page, and read about the many fascinating things a common corkscrew can do to the human form. Many songs, popular and not-so-popular, deal with violence and killing as well. But if the victim of violence is an officer of the law, then the proverbial "line" is crossed. Apparently, it's all right to suspend certain freedoms when these freedoms seemingly threaten those in power, although, one of the laws our "men in blue" are supposed to uphold is the First Amendment of the Constitution.

It isn't surprising to hear so many shouts of disgust

from angry police who are ready to decry that Ice-T is wrongful for speaking his mind in a country where freedom of speech is the first and most fundamental right of all people. After all, that is what free speech is about. Strong words breed strong reactions.

However, it is a shock to find out that Time-Warner is not only labeled "irresponsible," but several organizations have filed suit against them, in order to banish the song completely, to strike it from the record, to force TW to donate *Cop Killer* profits to families of police officers

killed in the line of duty; as if Time-Warner and Ice-T are at the bottom of all of society's ills. And then, as was mentioned earlier, Ollie North cries ANARCHY! Anarchy? What a feeble jump in logic! A black man writes a song about a fictional character, who "kills" fictional cops; Time-Warner, a major American corporation distributes this song, and together, somehow, they have contributed to a rebel insurrection!?

Let's put things into perspective. It's only a song, not a manifesto. Ice-T is not wav-

see Ice-T