

Living in a state of Violence

From movies to gangsta rap, today's entertainment value provides more shock for the buck



Jeremy Keddie
BATTALION

Violence, whether fact or fiction, can be seen every day. It can be seen on television, newspapers, movies and in music. Perhaps you could say people are attracted to violence in one form or another. At times, people say the amount of violence exposed is overwhelming. But do we ask

visual mainstream of violence, and ticket sales are high for films like violent films like "The Crow." Oliver Stone's recent satire on violence and the media "Natural Born Killers" debuted at No. 1 on the movie ticket sales.

Ralph Large, manager of Hastings Books, Music, and Videos in Culpepper Plaza, said violent movies are attractive because everyone has the internal urge to kill somebody.

"It's the fact that there's something that other people can get away with that (the viewers) can't," Large said.

"Faces of Death," a five-part film series, contains clips of fatal accidents and explicit scenes of violence. The films are in high demand by consumers, and Large said Hastings does not carry the movie because the management thinks it is too extreme. He said violent movies tend to rent better at Hastings, but just because a movie is violent does not mean it is going to have a high rent demand.

However, 2 Day Video on Texas Avenue carries "Faces of Death," and can be rented if someone's lucky enough to find it.

Matt Holligan, the store manager, said the movie is constantly checked out, and is usually returned late.

"People mainly hear about it from others, and are curious about what it is," Holligan said.

Violence does not occur in visual mediums alone, but also exists in music — especially in rap. And rap has long been the target of attack from those who believe violence in music should be regulated.

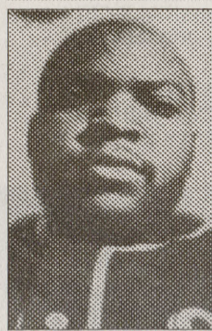
Dr. Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, an associate professor of journalism at Texas A&M, gave expert testimony in the October 1990 trial of Florida vs. Charles Freeman, in which the lyrics of 2 Live Crew were questioned for obscenity and violence.

2 Live Crew's album "As Nasty As

They Wanna Be," was banned in Florida, but Freeman, a record store owner, chose to distribute the album anyway and was sued. Louis Gates, an African-American scholar, testified in favor of Freeman, and said the explicit lyrics and violence of 2 Live Crew were representative of the African-American culture.

However, Kern-Foxworth, the first African-American woman to receive a Ph.D. in mass communications with a concentration in advertising, disagreed with Freeman and said the group's music has detrimental effects.

She said the music of 2 Live Crew and other gangsta rappers advocates



"When I'm called off, I got a sawed-off / Squeeze the trigger and bodies are hauled off."

"Straight Outta Compton"
—Ice Cube
formerly of N.W.A.

men beating women, which makes it easier for men to justify violence, including rape. She said the music also lessens the chance for women to be able to stand up for what they believe in.

"If you really buy into that and think it's okay, then you start thinking that that's the way it is supposed to be," Kern-Foxworth said.

Kern-Foxworth said she thinks the music has the propensity to make people violent, but only blaming rap music for violent acts creates scapegoats out of the rappers.

"Defendants who use that ploy are mentally disturbed anyway," she said.

Music which portrays African-American men as violent, is detrimental to blacks in several ways, Kern-Foxworth said. Many parents do not screen their children's music, and young black teenagers often want to emulate what they are hearing, she said.

"They sometimes do not know better, or otherwise listen to it because it is going against the establishment," she said.

Kern-Foxworth said the music also affects blacks in the way white people view the music. She said white people who listen to gangsta rap may think that the lyrics are portraying what blacks do.

"They often think you are supposed to disrespect to be 'in', and don't think anything is wrong with the music," Kern-Foxworth said.

Kern-Foxworth taught a class two summers ago which addressed the effects of the media on consumers. She said the class included the effects of music, and she had the students listen to 2 Live Crew and discuss the issue.

"I was appalled that white as well as black students paid little attention to the lyrics," Kern-Foxworth said.

She said several of the students, including women, had violent music in their collections, and most of the women in the class were not offended by the lyrics because they did not feel it was talking about them.

She said the women felt the music was referring to others who carried themselves in ways described by the lyrics "bitches" and "hoes."

Kern-Foxworth said the number of listeners of gangsta rap has decreased and attributes it to the increased awareness of the music. She said parents now scrutinize their children's music more, and that legislation is establishing stricter regulations against the music.

But a decrease in violence doesn't appear to be the case in movies. Priest said the violence in movies appears to be increasing and it is a matter of shock value — as people are exposed to violence, they become immune to that particular level of shock. She said movies then have to contain higher levels of violence to have a thrilling effect on audiences.

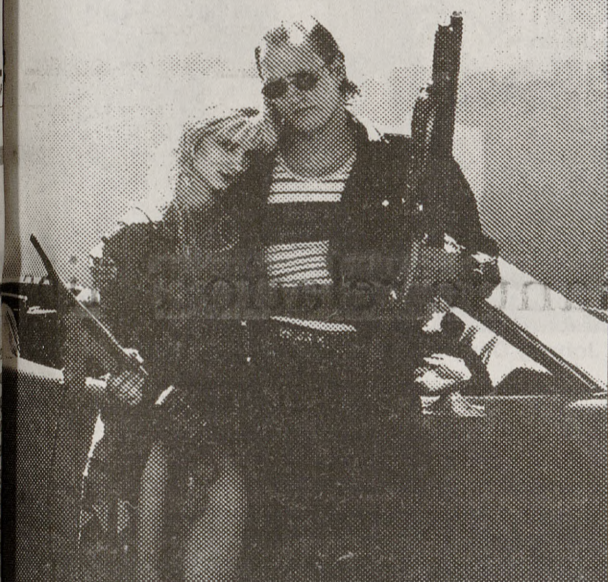
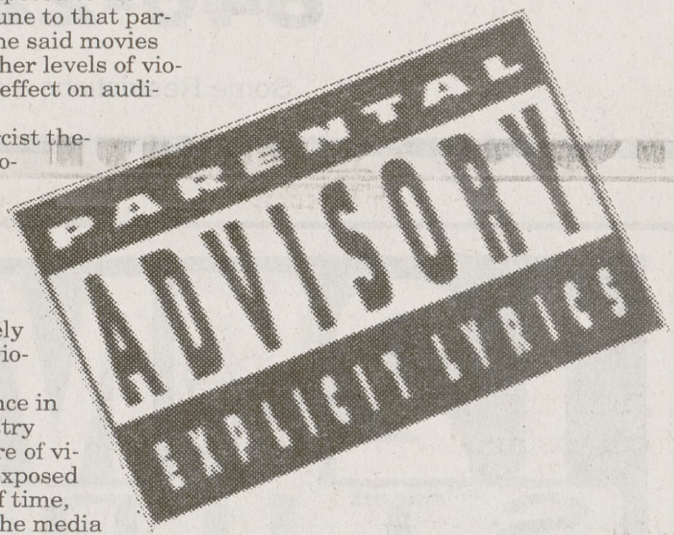
Priest said the cathartic theory, which states that violence in the media allows us to act out our desires, is a discredited theory. She said the theory tends to oversimplify the situation, and that it does not completely address the problem of violence in the media.

Priest said that violence in the entertainment industry makes people more aware of violence, and as they are exposed to it over a long period of time, the effect of violence in the media



Body Count, led by rapper Ice T, created the controversial anti-police song "Cop Killer"

influences what is acceptable and normal in society. "Seeing violence in the media teaches us that violence is something that just exists," she said.



Milla Jovovich and Woody Harrelson star in "Natural Born Killers," a movie cited for extreme violence.

Playing college crowds satisfying for Texas rocker Ian Moore

Claudia Zavaleta
BATTALION

The man on the stage makes love to his guitar. Oblivious to the hundreds of people watching and singing along with his music, Ian Moore closes his eyes and plays.

The recent record-breaking crowd of 450 packed into Stafford Opera House, for one reason — to hear The Ian Moore Band play. It was the biggest show at the Opera House since 1970.

For Moore, performing in front of an audience is a sensual experience. "I try to have a flirtatious male-female relationship with the audience," the 26-year-old Austin native said. "It's almost sensual. You have to throw the balls to reveal things about yourself on stage."

His second album, "Ian Moore Live in Austin," captures Moore's soulful lyrics and passionate guitar solos the way a live performance can.

"There's something about performing in your home town," Moore said. "We are welcomed with open arms, and like we can do no wrong. When we go out on tour, we have to be set-proof and have to work harder to have a great performance."

Moore said that some of his out-of-state fans attracted about 1,500 people, but he prefers playing in towns like Bryan at College Station because he likes performing to a college crowd.

"It's good to know that when you play places like College Station, the people are there because they like your music and they like to watch you play," Moore said. "In L.A., people maybe knew one song and thought like they were there because it was a cool thing to do."

Moore, who describes his style as "soul music" because his songs deal with emo-

tions, is often compared with other guitarists such as Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughn. He said his influences run much deeper than those two musicians.

"I don't just play blues-rock," Moore said. "My music is more in the vein of Hendrix, but I have tons of other people I like."

Among those are Al Green, Little Willie John and the Beatles. But having grown up playing the violin, Moore said he was influenced by classical and Hindu music.

"I've been playing instruments since I was a baby," he said. "My first instrument was a sitar (a Hindu stringed-instrument), then I moved on to violin."

Moore said he picked up a guitar as a teenager and formed his band when he was about 19. Since then, Moore said his focus has been exactly where he wants it — on his music.

"The thing I enjoy most about where I am today," he said, "is being able to center all my attention to what I think I should be doing, which is performing music."

Going on the road with ZZ Top gave Moore a chance to expose his band to more people.

"That kind of stuff makes you feel good," he said. "You know, it's nice to know that you're up there, but it's only a means to an end. It's a tool that allows me to make my music on my own terms."

He said he rarely hears a band that performs the music it wants. And since his music gained popularity slowly, he said he was able to avoid the group mentality of the music industry.

"In music like in everything else, you should walk your own path and be an individual," Moore said. "Be a freak. It's important to belong, but it's more important to believe in the individual."

The Ian Moore Band is set to go back to the studio in late November.



Texas rocker Ian Moore said his influences include Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Al Green and The Beatles.