

For Immediate Release

Statement given to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) study on  
Marketing of Violent Entertainment to Children, October 29, 2003

The panel of experts assembled for this conference will give you many opinions as to the excessive violence and pornography that makes up the majority of modern entertainment in the motion picture, music recording and video game industry groups. However, I feel you need to hear from someone who is a consumer of these entertainment products in order to get a balanced view of the subject.

I feel that most of the excessive violence, nude scenes, and the use of foul language can be traced back to the Franco Zeffereli film version of the *Romeo & Juliet* story. This is a form of child pornography in that the actors who played the characters were about the same ages as the characters. This means that the actor who played Romeo and the actress who played Juliet were both under the age of 21 years, and were technically too young to film the nude scenes.

In previous versions of the Shakespeare Classic, Romeo and Juliet were played by actors who were over the age of 21, and the wedding night scene was either not shown on camera, or the actors did the scene fully dressed.

The use of child actors to portray Romeo and his Juliet and to film the nude scenes opened the floodgates to the modern age of pornography, nudity and excessive violence in the modern entertainment industry.

Most of the video games on the market originated as arcade games in which the players had to insert quarters to play the game. Each player was given a certain number of "lives" and when the player could not come back to life again, the game was over and the player had to insert another quarter to continue the game or start a new game.

The home versions of these games now allow the player to push the RESET button to continue the same game, or to start a new game. However, the game content has not progressed much beyond trying to kill as many of the "bad guys" as possible before your character is killed.

Since the computer can produce an unlimited number of villains, the player can never hope to win, only stay alive long enough to rack up game points for the neighborhood bragging rights. These "battle games" are producing a generation of people who can commit murder without feeling the pains of a guilty conscience or the fear of jail time or the possibility of a state execution.

Likewise, the driving games are producing a generation of unsafe drivers who cannot differentiate between the game car and a real car out on the highway. In the game, no harm results if you force the other cars off the road where they crash and burn. Also, killing pedestrians will generate bonus game points. I feel this is the main reason behind the recent sharp spike in road rage and unsafe driving incidents, as the commuters fight each other for road space, and try to get to work on time.

The pedestrians have become an endangered species, since very few drivers now come to a stop to allow pedestrians to cross safely. The laws on the subject have become the most ignored laws since Prohibition. Most drivers either do not know about these laws, or they choose to ignore them in their hurry to get to work on time.

On a recent trip to Reno, Nevada I got a practical lesson on what happens with strict enforcement of the laws requiring cars to stop and yield to pedestrians in a marked crosswalk. I had to cross a busy street, so I was waiting for the traffic to clear before stepping out into the marked crosswalk. Another pedestrian told me to "come on." As soon as we stepped off the curb, the cars in both directions came to a full stop to allow us to cross safely. The effect was almost magical, since I am used to cars ignoring the laws requiring drivers to stop and yield to pedestrians.

As a magician and entertainer, I do a lot of shows in church basements and before family-type audiences with both parents and kids in the audience. Therefore, I set high standards for my performances both in technical quality and in personal conduct. I could perform my show for the Pope himself without changing a single word.

I have seen the trick performed on a public stage in which the magician apparently removes a woman's bra during the performance. I have been offered the chance to purchase the apparatus for this trick, but I have declined simply because I do not use "blue" material in my shows. The performer who did the trick got a cheap laugh, but today nobody remembers his name.

When I was performing my TV show, *Uncle Bob's Ranch*, I had to make sure my act was squeaky clean since this was a children's show. Essentially, the show consisted of cartoons, magic tricks and games. What Buffalo Bob Smith and Howdy Doody were doing on a national show, I was doing on a local TV station.

The show was recorded on videotape on Thursday afternoon for showing on Saturday mornings. A special clock was set up so that all time references could be made to Saturday mornings. The show was done as a live performance. It was possible to back up the tape and record over mistakes, but this was rarely done. In addition to the lost time and continuity, there was the matter of repositioning the cameras and lighting.

Myself and the performers became quite good at ad-libbing to cover over the mistakes. For example, when the girl singer forgot the words to her song, the rest of the cast joined in to sing along with her, to make it seem as though this was part of the act.

In addition to performing the show, I doubled as part of the production staff, right down to using the special typewriter to make up the rolls of paper for the TelePrompter units. I also wrote and performed the commercials, such as inventing the "flying donut" for a sponsor who was a bakery.

None of my TV shows exist anymore for the simple reason that the station had a policy of rewinding the videotape after the Saturday morning broadcast, and using the same tape to record the new performance on Thursday afternoon.

I feel the VZONES programs offer parents, teachers and legislators a realistic alternative to the great mass of violent and pornographic video games, music recordings and motion pictures now on the market. I am not trying to turn back the clock to the days when using profanity on the radio and TV would result in swift action and heavy fines from the FCC.

For example, while I was working at radio station KVRO, one of the disk jockeys made a rude remark concerning a girl singer who was very popular at the time. He was too slow in switching off the microphone, so the profanity went out over the air. A few days later, the station manger received a nasty letter from the FCC along with the heavy fine. The station manager was so angry that he almost fired the DJ on the spot. However, when he cooled down, the DJ was required to pay off the fine as a series of deductions from his paychecks.

There are three software programs that are available in the VZONES collection that are rated as G or being suitable for all ages and both sexes. I cannot endorse the SeduCity program because of the full nudity and simulated sex acts. This software is supposed to be an adults-only realm. Quite frankly, I feel that SeduCity will not be around much longer. This is very boring, and if the number of subscribers keeps dropping, the program owners will close down the program because they cannot generate enough income to pay for the computer servers. This happened to other software when the entertainment value fell off.

The other three programs, DreamScape, NewHorizone and The Second Kingdom are the ones I recommend that parents, teachers and legislators give to the children to use and enjoy. These create a community in cyberspace with a wide range of activities that do not involve trying to kill the other players. You can rent a turf (apartment) and buy furniture and decorations, you can walk around and play games from Bingo to Trivia. You can also simply hang out on the corner to talk with friends.

Since I am fluent in both English and German, I have many friends from all over the USA and Europe. This program teaches you to look beyond external appearance, and focus on what the person is saying. The conversations happen in a real-time two-way conversation mode. I have many of the people behind the avatars by attending the conventions or Gatherings. These are held several times a year in the major cities. In fact, the Boston Gathering attracted a crowd that was so large that the hotel ran out of rooms. Many people had to sleep in a nearby motel and come over to the hotel for the planned events.

In the DreamScape program, I have two homes in Kymer City. One is a six room beach cottage, and the other is a ten room mountain cabin. The beach cottage is my summer home, and the log cabin is my winter home. These provide a place to wake up and start my inworld adventures. These exist inside my home computer and on a set of linked Internet pages.

The beach cabin is a rental property that costs me 1,900 tokens per month. The six rooms include an entry room that I have furnished as a formal living room where I can receive guests. There is a door in the back wall that leads to the second room, a suite of three rooms. This is furnished as a dining room. The third room, or left side room has become an informal lounge or home office. The right side room or fourth room is a library and reading room. There is a doorway from the library to the fifth room or outdoor patio paved in cobblestones and a low retaining wall. The gap in the wall leads to the sixth room, or my private strip of beach with sand, tropical plants and the ocean view.

The ten-room log cabin is a property I have purchased for \$60 in American money, with a five-year lease deal. The first room is an exterior view showing the front of the cabin, the front door and front yard. The second room has been furnished as a living room. The third room is a bedroom with a canopy bed that allows me to lie down and pretend to sleep. The fourth room is a corridor with a large picture window giving a view of the backyard. There is also a staircase leading up to the fifth room, or balcony on the back of the cabin. The balcony commands a good view of the backyard areas.

Coming back to the ground floor, the sixth room is an old-fashioned kitchen that is not much different that the one my grandmother used in raising her family. The seventh room is an underground root cellar or storm cellar. I have repainted the walls to make this a recreation room.

The Living Room has a back door leading out to the outdoor areas of the backyard. The "eighth room" is a stone circle around a campfire with a friendly fox and birds moving around in the trees. The "ninth room" is a grove of trees with a large grassy area. There is also a rope swing hanging from a tree branch, so I can sit down and ride the swing back and forth. The "tenth room" is a peaceful location next to a small lake with an excellent view of a grove of trees and the distant mountain peaks.

Over the past nine years, I have seen Kymer City and the DreamScape grow and develop from a collection of locked doors to a large community offering many of the services that you would find in a real world city of equivalent size. I can teach a class at the Learning Center, meet a famous author in the Library as he or she discusses the latest book, or visit the Bar-I Bar a western saloon.

I can also go to the Isle Caribe nightclub, or play a game at Harlequin Games, or go shopping in the V-Mart department store where I can buy everything from a voodoo doll to the rooms of furniture in several styles. Also, I can visit the city museum, spend time in Meditation Park which is a four-seasons park with areas representing the Winter Forest, Spring Gardens, Summer Grove and a farm during the fall harvest time.

I can visit the Memorial Gardens with monuments to honor the memory of avatars whose real-world users have died, famous people who have passed away, and friends and loved ones who wish to be remembered. Then there is the Muse Gardens where the nine Muses offer games and prizes. There is also the amphitheater where I performed the first and only inworld magic show. I can visit the Summer Palace of the former Kings and Queens of Kymer before the dynasty became extinct.

When the Jungle Park opened about five years ago, this doubled the apparent size of Kymer City, as well as giving us a couple of hundred new locales to explore. I can walk through the ruins of the Old Temple, enjoy my "secret place," an area with a rich assortment of jungle flowers. I can also visit the Jungle Village, that consists of tree houses placed among the branches of a very old and very large Mahogany tree. This has become somewhat of a suburban community where people can live and use the transporter system to go back to the downtown areas.

I can explore the Jungle Maze, a very difficult puzzle, and see the Old Tomb at the maze center. I can also visit the cave near where the spring comes up out of the ground to form the Jungle River. I can also hike up the path to the Mountain Temple.

In future years, the plan is to open the Mountain Village surrounding the Greek style temple. My mountain cabin is located in an area that is not yet open to the public. There are several areas in Blasted Heath Park that will be opened in the next few years.

The Surfside beach community is another suburban area located on the southern edge of Kymer Island. In addition to the beach cabins, there is a souvenir shop, a lunch room, fish market and sandy beaches. There is also an underwater scuba park.

For the year-end holidays, there are special areas that are only open for brief periods, such as the Victorian Mansion from mid October to early November. This is the Kymer equivalent of a haunted house with Halloween costumes, special heads, and even the special candy. There are also the hidden rooms that open with a special combination, or a room where you can see an animated version of *The Raven* by Edgar Allen Poe. Each year new features are added to the Victorian Mansion.

For Christmas (December and early January) you can visit the Santa Village and do a lot of Christmas shopping for inworld gifts. You can also take the reindeer ride, visit Santa at home, tour the reindeer barns, or see the elves packing the Christmas presents. Also, during this time, you can visit the Ice Palace that used to be the Winter Palace for the Kymer Royal Family.

Most of the other holidays are celebrated with special items you can buy, such as the various love-gifts for your boyfriend or girlfriend or spouse. In fact, two avatars can be married in the Wedding Chapel with a traditional church setting, or on a sandy beach at sunset, or in a city apartment at night with a balcony overlooking the city lights. There is a room provided for the wedding reception with glasses of champagne and slices of wedding cake.

The NewHorizone program provides a different type of urban atmosphere that attracts young people. There is usually a game being played at every hour, day or night. You can also rent turfs in various cities, such as Seattle, London, Detroit or the Desert Tent that used to be part of the Phoenix Arizona area. This has now been redeveloped as the Desert Zone.

Also, you can buy cottages for real world dollars with the five year lease agreement. For example, you can purchase a home inside the trunk of a hollow tree next to the Romance River, or a Desert Campground space. The Garden Estate Cottages and the Castle Turfs are no longer available. When the program owners decide to stop selling the Romance River tree turfs, they will open another cottage development in the community.

NewHorizone offers its own types of inworld experiences from the Game Dome to the "downtown area" with the various shops and stores. For the holidays, the Hotel Silicon is transformed into the Hotel California with the Halloween stuff and hidden rooms. For Christmas, the Winter Village is opened north of the Hilltop Park. This offers everything from Santa Hats to Christmas trees to tree ornaments to toys and gifts and special food items.

The Second Kingdom is based on an old legend and the citizens can go on various quests or attend the Publick Faire. There are Sorcerers, Fairies, Trolls, Elves and various animal avatars. Each class has magic powers and the ability to hide by shape-shifting. This realm has been operational for just over a year. The fans of the Harry Potter books and movies will feel right at home in The Second Kingdom. This offers a magical world similar to the world Harry Knows. In fact, the community closely resembles the Hogsmeade Village located near the Hogwarths School. There are flying brooms, pet owls and spells and counter-spells.

In summary, I am trying to point out that there are realistic options available to wean children away from the violent and pornographic movies, music recordings and video games. Instead of paying \$50 for the cartridge with the *Grand Theft Auto-Vice City* game, why not give the child a five-month subscription to the *DreamScape* computer game world?

This program teaches the child to look beyond physical appearances and focus on what the person is saying. Also, this teaches practical geometry in a way that no textbook ever can. As you move around in this modified 3-D world, your direction of movement will change as you move from locale to locale. The thing that makes the Jungle Maze so difficult, is that there are no horizon lines to give you a sense of direction and movement.

The NewHorizone and The Second Kingdom offer gaming experience that are suitable for all ages and both sexes. This is a GREAT way to promote family unity, since the adults and children can share the program features.

You can go to the following web page <http://www.vzones.com> to download a free demonstration program on your home or office computer. At the top of the screen is a large white box with the VZ logo. You click on this to run the demo program. Then, you can go to the main entry page to download the software. think that DreamScape, NewHorizone and The Second Kingdom still offer the free seven day trial period in which you can explore the realm you choose. This will allow the parents, teachers and legislators to evaluate the program content before establishing a paid subscription that the children can use and enjoy.

## Notes and Comments