

The Cheneyites and the Killer-Trainer Lobby

by Anton Chaitkin

What kind of power might have been exerted, to influence the *Washington Post* to suppress its own reporter's account that the Virginia Tech murderer was a killer-video-gamer?

Washington Post reporter David Cho had written that "several Korean youths who knew Cho Seung Hui from his high school days said he was a fan of violent video games, particularly Counter-Strike, a hugely popular online game published by Microsoft, in which players join terrorism or counterterrorism groups and try to shoot each other using all types of guns."¹ The *Post* then removed any reference to video games from the published article on the mass murderer.

The 1999 massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, drew world attention to the perpetrators' addiction to interactive murder-simulation games. A powerful lobbying force was put into play, seeking to stifle public discussion of the problem and to punish active critics of violent video games.

EIR is engaged in an ongoing investigation into the political and financial agencies behind this lobby.

The "revolution in military affairs," promoted by Vice President Dick Cheney and his ilk, originally created the shooter-game genre to transform civilians into mindless killers for imperialism.

The continuing sponsorship of this mayhem by the Cheneyite military-freak element is exemplified by the U.S. Army project, "Institute for Creative Technologies" at the University of Southern California (USC), where killing games are developed for military training and for commercial public distribution. As we report below, Cheneyite attack-dogs are currently at the center of the fight, in the main U.S. legal case over the responsibility of these murder-simulators for the school massacres.

Meanwhile, the presence of Melinda Gates, wife of Microsoft owner Bill Gates, on the board of the *Washington Post*, points directly to the financial/corporate side of the lobby in question.

The Alabama Obscenity

In 2003, teenager Devin Moore, a car-theft suspect, was in an Alabama police station when he grabbed a gun and murdered three policemen, then fled in a police cruiser. When

recaptured, Moore reportedly said: "Life is a video game. Everybody's got to die sometime."

The families of the dead officers hired attorney Jack Thompson to sue the makers and distributors of the video game the boy was trained on.

CBS veteran reporter Ed Bradley gave this account on March 6, 2005:

"Imagine if the entertainment industry created a video game in which you could decapitate police officers, kill them with a sniper rifle, massacre them with a chainsaw, and set them on fire.

"Think anyone would buy such a violent game?"

"They would, and they have. The game *Grand Theft Auto* has sold more than 35 million copies, with worldwide sales approaching \$2 billion.

"Two weeks ago, a multi-million dollar lawsuit was filed in Alabama against the makers and marketers of *Grand Theft Auto*, claiming that months of playing the game led a teenager to go on a rampage and kill three men, two of them police officers.

"*Grand Theft Auto* is a world governed by the laws of depravity. See a car you like? Steal it. Someone you don't like? Stomp her. A cop in your way? Blow him away.

"There are police at every turn, and endless opportunities to take them down. It is 360 degrees of murder and mayhem: slickly produced, technologically brilliant, and exceedingly violent.

"And now, the game is at the center of a civil lawsuit involving the murders of three men in the small town of Fayette, Ala. They were gunned down by 18-year-old Devin Moore, who had played *Grand Theft Auto* day and night for months. . . ."

Take Two Interactive and Sony, makers of *Grand Theft Auto*, hired the Philadelphia-based Republican Party law and lobbying firm, Blank, Rome, to oppose Thompson and the officers' families.

The wrongful-death lawsuit proceedings began in court Nov. 1, 2005. On Nov. 4, Blank, Rome submitted a motion demanding that attorney Thompson, known nationally as a crusader against the video murder games, be removed from the case for "inappropriate" conduct. Thompson withdrew three days later, and the case continued with a different lawyer. Even so, the Blank, Rome firm persists, up to the present, in a vendetta against Jack Thompson, seeking his disbarment as a lawyer.

If the case goes before a jury as scheduled Jan. 8, 2008, it will be the nation's first such suit to be allowed to come to a full trial, with the fate of the multi-billion-dollar killer game industry at stake.

At that moment back in 2005, as Blank, Rome defended the killer video-game industry in Alabama, the law firm was entrusted with a role in Dick Cheney's own fight for political survival.

On Oct. 28, 2005, four days before the video game case

1. see http://blog.washingtonpost.com/virginia-tech-shootings/2007/04/website_posts_play_allegedly_w.html



The Satanic-image Doom video game was screened for a huge party thrown by Bill Gates, called "Microsoft Judgment Day," in October 1995. On Dec. 1, 1997, 14-year-old Michael Carneal shot and killed three girls at his high school in West Paducah, Ky. The makers of Doom were among the companies charged in a lawsuit, for training Carneal to shoot people without blinking and without missing.

opened, Cheney's Chief of Staff, I. Lewis Libby, was indicted on perjury charges concerning the Federal investigation of the Vice President's office in the Valerie Plame/Iraq War-lies coverup. Would Cheney himself be indicted? Would impeachment bring down the regime? Blank, Rome partner Barbara Comstock, notorious as a leader of Bush-Cheney "opposition research," was quietly chosen to organize the Lewis Libby legal defense fund, to raise millions and bring together Cheney-backers to help stop the down-spiralling momentum.

Salon.com made public the Blank, Rome role with Cheney/Libby, in an exposé published Nov. 15, 2005. On Dec. 19, the Blank, Rome law firm officially registered the scooterlibby.com Internet domain name, on behalf of the Lewis Libby Legal Defense Trust, with Barbara Comstock, the trust's spokesman and organizer, listed as the administrative contact.

Blank, Rome had fat credentials for these assignments. The firm's chairman, David Girard-diCarlo, was Pennsylvania state chairman of the Bush-Cheney 2000 campaign, and state co-chairman and finance chairman for the Bush-Cheney 2004 campaign. The firm has served as the Philadelphia head-

quarters for the pro-fascist Federalist Society, the lawyers' base for the Cheney clique.

The longtime Blank, Rome lawyer/lobbyist, Rear Adm. (ret.) William L. Schachte, played a flagrant role in that filthy 2004 campaign. Schachte, a leader of the Swift Boat Veterans slander drive against Democratic Presidential candidate John Kerry, renewed the attack Aug. 27, 2004, by lying to journalists that Kerry's first Purple Heart medal was the unearned result of a self-inflicted wound not under enemy fire.

Earlier that year, on Aug. 31, the *Washington Post* reported that the Bush Administration had awarded FastShip, a client for whom Admiral Schachte and Blank, Rome chairman Girard-diCarlo had lobbied, a \$40 million defense contract. Meanwhile, their fellow Blank, Rome defense lobbyist, David Norcross, was chairman of arrangements for the 2004 Republican convention.

Bill Gates Goes Gothic

Immediately after the 2007 Virginia Tech massacre, Jack Thompson sent an open letter to Microsoft chairman Bill Gates, citing the aborted *Washington Post* report on the killer video-game connection, and asking Gates to "pull the plug" on the game Counter-Strike, a version of which Microsoft publishes for its Xbox machine.

The online/cable giant MSNBC—co-owned by Microsoft (hence, the "MS" preceding "NBC")—then jumped to defend killer video games. MSNBC's Chris Matthews had Thompson on his "Hardball" interview show and hammered and badgered Thompson on his "unproven theories." Thompson stood up to it so well, that the next day, MSNBC ran a "news" item entitled, "Were video games to blame for massacre? Pundits rushed to judge industry, gamers in the wake of shooting." This news item was devoted entirely to ridiculing Thompson as a "massacre chaser." MSNBC quoted from "experts" such as a sociologist at the University of Southern California, where the Army has its virtual-murder laboratory, and a spokesman for the International Game Developers Association, whose treasurer Michael Capps develops simulators for the U.S. Army and for Microsoft's Xbox.

An understanding of Microsoft's interest in the matter must begin by going back to an event known as Microsoft Judgment Day, on Oct. 30, 1995. The company held a huge party in the Microsoft garage and cafeteria, converted into a haunted mansion. Leaders of the video-game industry were invited to create their own sections of the "happening." Attendees included LucasArts, Activision, and iD Software, mak-

ers of the video game Doom. Doom's iD Software reportedly set up "an eight foot tall vagina with dildo teeth. Inside, two members of [the band] G.W.A.R. dressed in fur and raw meat attacked passersby with rubber penises."

In the main event, a specially concocted virtual world of the Satanic-image game Doom was screened for the participants. A video of this monstrosity survives, and can be viewed on the internet, at

<http://www.reelsplatter.com/doommedia.html>.

Here is what happens on that video:

Monster-men are bloodily shot down one after another. We then see that it is Bill Gates himself, in the Doom simulation, dressed in a long black trench coat, doing the shooting with a big shotgun. He addresses viewers about how the new Windows 95 will revolutionize the realism of such killer games as Doom. A monster-man approaches and tries to talk to him; Gates blasts him dead, saying, "don't interrupt me." When he is finished speaking, Gates walks off with his gun. The screen goes dark with blood, and the closing slogan appears—"Microsoft: Who Do You Want to Execute Today?"²

On Dec. 1, 1997, 14-year-old Michael Carneal shot and killed three girls who were taking part in a prayer circle at his high school in West Paducah, Ky. Early in 1999, the victims' families, represented by Jack Thompson, filed a lawsuit against entertainment companies, including the makers of Doom, that had trained Carneal to shoot people without blinking and without missing.

After filing the lawsuit, Thompson went on NBC's *Today* show and predicted that there "will be other American boys in American high schools who will go on shooting rampages that have been trained on the game Doom, the game Michael Carneal was trained on."

Eight days later, April 20, 1999, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold murdered 12 students and a teacher at Columbine High School. Harris was addicted to Doom. He utilized user-programmable features to customize his copy of the game for his planned school massacre, and spent many hours in a "God" mode of the game, making him virtually invincible as a mass killer.

The terrifying 2002 Washington D.C.-area sniper shootings were solved with the arrest of John Muhammad and Lee Malvo. On Dec. 14, NBC reporters Tom Brokaw and Stone Phillips reported that Malvo, age 17, had prepared for the killings by training on the Microsoft Xbox shooter game, Halo, switched into "sniper mode." The report stated that the older shooter had made Malvo train on virtual human targets in Halo to break down his inhibition to kill.

2. David Kushner's 2003 book, *Masters of Doom*, described the game Doom as being the equivalent of a "religious phenomenon" at the Microsoft headquarters; the company developed the gaming aspect of its Windows system, for that product.

As the Virginia Tech story broke on April 16, 2007, the official lobbying organization for the video-game industry, the Electronic Software Association, was trying to rally the makers and distributors of the killer-simulators, now subject to growing public outrage. But the lobbying group was in disarray. Its president since the early 1990s, Douglas Lowenstein, had announced his resignation, to go on to his new post: president of the Private Equity Council, lobbying to save the reputation of the "vulture" investment funds that are eating and destroying productive industry, and taking over many video-game companies.

The chairman of the Electronic Software Association, Microsoft executive Robert Bach, praised his outgoing lobby president Lowenstein, and is searching for another mouthpiece.

Video-game lobby chairman Robert Bach heads Microsoft's Xbox division, tasked to carry out Bill Gates' grandiose plans, as *EIR*'s Don Phau has reported, "to hook millions of young people on video games such as the one played by Virginia Tech killer Cho Seung Hui. Counter-Strike, the point-and-shoot video game to which Cho was reportedly addicted, is an Internet game that can be played on a PC or through Microsoft's Xbox console. Gates debuted the Xbox 360 in 2005, after spending three and a half years and \$1 billion in its development. Microsoft reported at a press conference in Los Angeles, May 9, 2006, 'that Gates went on to outline the company's bold new vision to connect millions of Xbox 360 gamers with hundreds of millions of Microsoft Windows-based PC and mobile gamers from around the world through the Xbox Live online entertainment network.'"

The Military Freaks

EIR's continuing probe into the military "transformation" behind the killer-simulators, began with this magazine's scoop, in the July 2, 1999 issue (two months after the Columbine High School massacre), reporting that the then-secret project for an imperial virtual reality institute would go into action later that year.

This reporter had interviewed Michael Zyda, a civilian professor at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., who said that he had written the Army's plan for what would later be called the Institute for Creative Technologies, at the University of Southern California.

Zyda said that the Army's decision to create a joint institute with Hollywood arose out of a 1997 conference entitled "Modeling and Simulation: Linking Entertainment and Defense," chaired by Zyda and sponsored by the Department of Defense's Defense Modeling and Simulation Office. That conference promoted collaboration between the military and private entertainment enterprises as the wave of the future—in a hellish world of perpetual war, Dick Cheney's world, where war is the entertainment.