



## Black Ink

"The essence of freedom is understanding"

# FORUM

## Banned in the USA

The heated controversy surrounding the 2 Live Crew's music is past, but the constitutional and moral questions their music has aroused in the minds of a nation remains.

Should music that is obscene to many be banned altogether?— with all of the different forms of artistic expression, why is music presently singled out to be the critic's choice? Banning material that is deemed as obscene cannot possibly be limited in scope to just music; Censorship, once adopted as a paradigm, will be a mighty weapon against all other "shady" material such as books, art, theater, and the like. Censors have taken shots at the 2 Live Crew. It remains to be seen who, or what will be next.

This issue of censorship and banning has gone on for many years in our recent history. It is ironic and quite hypocritical that the same group of people now so vehemently against 2 Live Crew were the same group of people in the past that were staunch supporters of Rock 'n' Roll — a music form also thought to be obscene and fit for banning at the time of its inception. This vicious cycle goes on and on for decade upon decade. What issue will today's 2 Live Crew advocates consider obscene and "bannable" in 20 year's time?

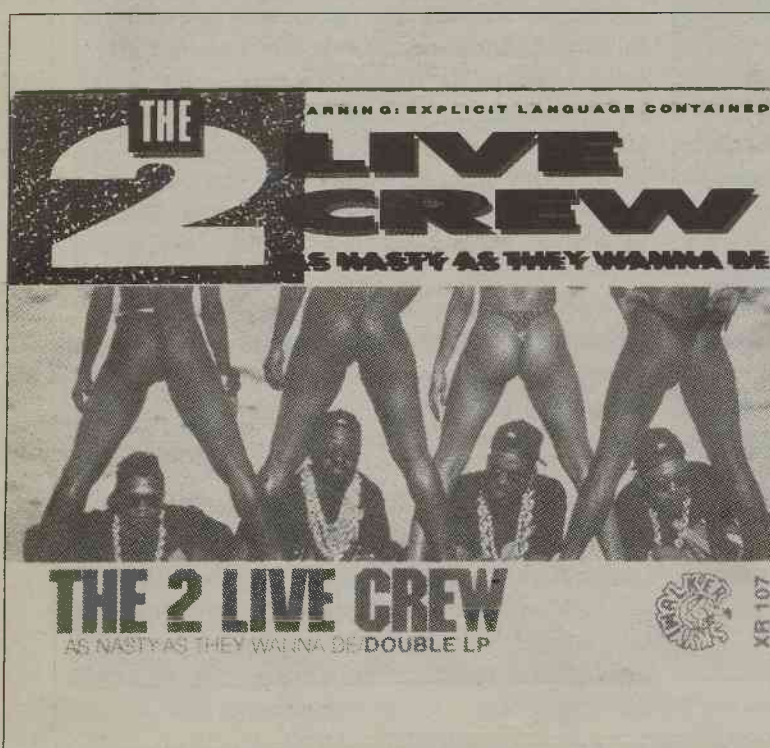
Yet something must indeed be done to control or limit the 2 Live Crew's music. Their material lyrics are definitely offensive, and does warrant a bit of concern. Such concern led Orange County District Attorney Carl Fox to say that he would prosecute any establishment in Orange County selling the album.

Many are terrified that their children and young ones will be corrupted and deluded by this music if some sort of age limitation is not placed on this album as well as all other music with explicit lyrics. Parents feel that their children are not equipped with the maturity that it takes to deal with such forms of expression as the 2 Live Crew's music. Aren't our young entitled to such protection?

With obligations to keep constitutional guarantees intact and trying to "clean up" the music industry for the youth of America, we have reached an impasse. Where is the line drawn between the obscene and artistic expression? Where is the neutral ground, or better yet, the correct side of this issue?

Will America reach some compromise or will the union worker's stamp on all products "Made in the U.S.A" be substituted for one reading "Banned in the U.S.A."

In the weeks to come FORUM will take an in-depth look at many issues concerning African-Americans on the university, state, national, and international levels. Suggestions for topics are welcome and will be taken in the *Black Ink* office, Rm. 108-D in the Carolina Student Union.



## Ban the 2 Live Crew! Ban Andrew Dice Clay! Ban Huckleberry Finn! Ban Playboy! -- It's all the same.

By Terrence E. Garrison  
Contributor

As an avid fan of the 2 Live Crew, freedom of speech and freedom of artistic expression, I applaud the Orange County District Attorney Carl Fox's decision to reverse his ban on the 2 Live Crew. It is obvious to anyone who sincerely believes in the U.S. Constitution and the Bill Of Rights that the banning of the 2 Live Crew's "As Nasty As They Wanna Be" is unconstitutional and to some degree discriminatory. Censorship in, my opinion, is as nasty as the conservative element which is its main proponent (Ban Jesse Helms!). I see no reason why the 2 Live Crew should receive special attention when other music groups like Guns and Roses sing songs with racist undertones. How can a nation that sells alcohol legally, sells Playboy legally, allows the Ku Klux Klan to preach racial hatred legally make a mere album illegal?

It is surprising that the notion of banning an album would even occur in a country founded on freedom (for some of us anyway). Those who want to ban the 2 Live Crew justify their position by saying they have only recently been exposed to the 2 Live Crew's music and therefore can only make a quick, snappy judgement concerning them. This is blatant narrow-mindedness. Those who want to ban the 2 Live Crew make a conscious choice to pick on them and no one else. Obscenity is unavoidable in this age of sexual revolution. These people have simply made a choice to deprive us of our choice.

Sure, "As Nasty as They Wanna Be" is of a "mature" nature. But just as rated R movies read at the beginning- "This movie has been rated R by the motion picture association of America. It is intended for mature audiences only" so too reads 2 Live Crew's album- "this album

contains explicit lyrics". What's wrong then America? Can't a black man make money? Can't people choose to buy what they please as long as they do not infringe upon the rights and privacy of others?

Under N.C. General Statute 14-190.1, material is considered obscene if:

- (1) depicts or describes in a patently offensive way sexual conduct.
- (2) the average person applying contemporary community standards would find that the material taken as a whole appeals to the prurient interest in sex
- (3) lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value
- (4) is as used un-protected or un-privileged under the U.S. Constitution of North Carolina.

By this statute, which is highly subjective and therefore at the whim of any wealthy or otherwise privileged person or party, shouldn't Playboy be banned? Shouldn't the tapes of people such as Andrew Dice Clay be banned? What about the Ku Klux Klan? What about Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn? All of these examples are offensive and/or depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way or lack serious literary, artistic, political or scientific merit according to some one. There are 250 million people in the U.S.; we all can't agree. But we shouldn't let the average person (white) applying contemporary community standards (middle class) be the person (male) to make judgements on what is art and what is not.

To put it simply, if the 2 Live Crew were as wealthy as Hugh Hefner, Bob Guccione, or as Italian as Andrew Dice Clay, they could be as nasty as they wanna be. In the land of the free and the home of the brave, we (all "true" Americans) should fight the powers that be so the 2 Live will not be banned in the U.S.A.