

## Labeling records

### Local businesses ban sales of some music to minors

By Kathy Woods  
JC 326

Ben Matthews, a 14-year-old from Burlington, enters Record Town in Holly Hill Mall in Burlington. Ben has money in his pocket and wants to buy a tape. He finds one he likes, but he cannot buy it no matter how much money he has.

A bright green sticker is plastered on the cover: "Warning: Content may not be suitable for minors. You must be 18 or over to purchase this item here." Ben knows he would never pass for 18. Besides, the girl at the register is carding customers.

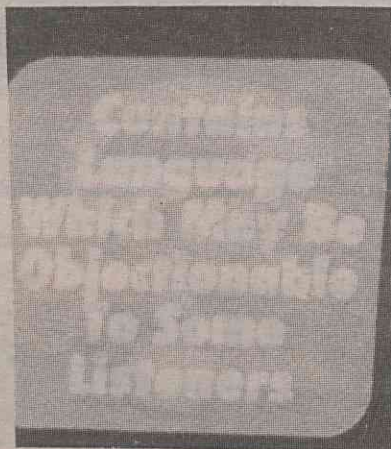
"I buy a tape about every two weeks, or more often if I can," Ben said. "I don't see what difference it (censorship) will make. We hear worse things at school."

Record Town is the first record store in the Burlington area to sport these stickers, but other record stores are being cautious as well.

Keith's Records in Burlington and Graham will eventually follow Record Town's lead. "If a kid wants to buy something like Two Live Crew, I won't sell it to him unless a parent is with him. Two Live Crew is the worst, I think," manager Keith Sykes said.

David Hoddad, manager of Discount Records in Elon College, agreed that Two Live Crew's "As Nasty as They Wanna Be" should not be sold to minors. One look at the nearly-naked women on the album's cover gives a customer a pretty good idea what the songs are about.

"We have cut back on all that because I just don't know where it's going," Hoddad explained. "We avoid the hardcore, but sometimes they slip by us. Ones like L.L. Cool J., with maybe one controversial song, we'll carry."



Mike Vorndran / The Pendulum

Hoddad does not expect to use stickers to censor his items, but will not sell a controversial item to just anyone. "If it's a high schooler, we might refuse to sell it to him," he said.

Some record companies put warning labels on tapes, albums and compact discs before they are sent to stores. On music items the label might read, "Explicit Lyrics. Parental Advisory." On comedy items, stickers might read, "Recommended for adult listening."

"About 50 percent of our rap section cannot be sold to minors and about 80 percent of our comedy section as well," explained Leigh Ann Frink, an Elon College junior who works at Record Town. "It is not just our store doing this. We are part of Trans World Music, which has 480 stores on the East Coast. All of these stores are not selling controversial items to minors."

Tone Loc's "Loc-ed After Dark" has sold millions of copies. He is especially famous for his song "Wild Thing." This album cannot be sold to minors at Record Town. Other restricted albums include L.L. Cool J.'s "Walking with a Panther," and Slick Rick's "The Greatest Adventures of Slick Rick," which contains songs such as "Treat Her Like a Prostitute."

Censored comedy albums include works by George Carlin,

Sam Kinison, and even Robin Williams. William's album "A Night at the Met" includes skits entitled "Marijuana," "Cocaine," "Lust," and "Men's Parts." One of the few artists who has no works censored is Bill Cosby.

"Tony" is a 16 year-old who is upset at the development of censorship in the area. "If I can't buy it because I'm not 18, I'll just get someone older to get it for me. Music is a way to express yourself. They shouldn't take that away from us. It isn't corrupting us," he said.

His friend, who is 17, agrees. "I'm old enough to get married and have kids. I'm old enough to drive and work. But I'm not old enough to buy the tapes I want. We've cussed before. We know all about sex."

Sykes believes the censorship law will be passed in North Carolina "because of Jesse Helms." The bill is still at Congress. Florida and Pennsylvania already have passed this law, which requires customers to be 18 or older to buy certain cassettes, records or compact discs. Controversial items include songs about alcohol, drugs or sex.

"When it comes right down to it," Sykes said, "either record stores will have to put stickers on everything, or we'll have to open up one of every tape we get and listen for the word 'beer' or something."

Sykes said that under the new law, bands that are not usually considered controversial will be sporting stickers on some of their works. Some albums by Lynyrd Skynyrd, for example, will not be sold to minors due to the reference to alcohol in certain songs.

"I think it is ridiculous to think that teenagers need to be protected from something they'll probably hear every day and most likely hear later on in their lives," Frink said.

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