



BANNED BOOKS WEEK

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American Civil Liberties Union • www.aclu.org/banned2003

Brief Timeline on Censored Music

The ACLU works to preserve the rights of musicians and their fans to create and enjoy music. Below is a sample of music censorship in the United States.

2003: Management of the Six Flags Amusement Park in Darien Lakes, New York, bans Marilyn Manson from performing at the park as part of the Ozzfest tour. No other acts are removed from the bill.

Radio stations across the country remove songs by the Dixie Chicks from airplay because of a comment made by the group's singer saying she was embarrassed that U.S. President George W. Bush was from her home state of Texas. Even though she later apologized for the comment, the ban is still being aggressively enforced.

2002: A federal judge in Louisiana permanently blocked federal agents from banning masks, pacifiers, and glow sticks at a local dance venue as part of its nationwide war against raves. The judge noted, "There is no conclusive evidence that eliminating the banned items has reduced the amount of [the drug] ecstasy use at raves." He concluded, "when the First Amendment right of Free Speech is violated by the Government in the name of the War on Drugs, and when that First Amendment violation is arguably not even helping in the War on Drugs, it is the duty of the Courts to enjoin the government from violating the rights of innocent people."

2000: In Louisiana, a federal judge ordered officials to return all confiscated music, including the Disney Tarzan soundtrack and songs by Britney Spears and Snoop Doggy Dog, to a roller skating rink owner, saying that a local sheriff may not censor the music played at the rink. The sheriff had seized the music claiming that the recordings played in the rink had caused a fight to break out in the parking lot.

A private school in Texas suspended four students who attended a Backstreet Boys concert, violating a school policy forbidding "involvement in inappropriate music [or] dancing."

1998: An 18-year-old was suspended from a Michigan high school for wearing a tee shirt promoting the band Korn. The shirt contained no images or words save the band's name.



1997: Three owners of a concert venue in Mississippi were arrested and given six-month jail terms for booking a performance by 2 Live Crew.

1990: Missouri legislators introduced a bill that would forbid the sale of records containing lyrics that are violent, sexually explicit or “perverse.” Similar measures were introduced in 20 other states.

1987: A record clerk was arrested in Florida for selling a copy of 2 Live Crew’s album 2 Live Is What We Are to a 14-year-old boy.

1975: Radio stations across the country refused to play Loretta Lynn’s “The Pill” because of its references to birth control.

1968: The Doors’ single “Unknown Soldier” is banned from airplay at many radio stations because of its anti-war theme

1965: Radio stations across the country banned the Rolling Stones hit “I Can’t Get No Satisfaction” because of sexually suggestive lyrics.

1955: The Juvenile Delinquency and Crime Commission of Houston, Texas banned more than 30 songs it considered obscene. Almost all of the artists on the Commission’s list were black. ♠

(excerpted from *A Brief History of Banned Music in the United States*, by Eric Nuzum,
<http://ericnuzum.com/banned>, and the ACLU, www.aclu.org)

