

= Backmasking =

Backmasking is a recording technique in which a sound or message is recorded backward onto a track that is meant to be played forward . Backmasking is a deliberate process , whereas a message found through phonetic reversal may be unintentional .

Backmasking was popularised by the Beatles , who used backward instrumentation on their 1966 album Revolver . Artists have since used backmasking for artistic , comedic and satiric effect , on both analogue and digital recordings . The technique has also been used to censor words or phrases for " clean " releases of explicit songs .

Backmasking has been a controversial topic in the United States since the 1970s and 1980s , when allegations from Christian groups of its use for Satanic purposes were made against prominent rock musicians , leading to record @-@ burning protests and proposed anti @-@ backmasking legislation by state and federal governments .

= = History = =

= = = Development = = =

In 1877 , Thomas Edison invented the phonograph , a device allowing sound to be recorded and reproduced on a rotating cylinder with a stylus (or " needle ") attached to a diaphragm mounted at the narrow end of a horn . Emile Berliner invented the familiar lateral @-@ cut disc phonograph record in 1888 . His design overtook the Edison phonograph in the 1920s , partly because Berliner 's patent expired in 1918 , leaving others free to use his invention .

In addition to recreating recorded sounds by placing the stylus on the cylinder or disc and rotating it in the same direction as during the recording , one could hear different sounds by rotating the cylinder or disc backwards . In 1878 , Edison noted that , when played backwards , " the song is still melodious in many cases , and some of the strains are sweet and novel , but altogether different from the song reproduced in the right way " . The backwards playing of records was advised as training for magicians by occultist Aleister Crowley , who suggested in his 1913 book Magick (Book 4) that an adept " train himself to think backwards by external means " , one of which was to " listen to phonograph records , reversed " . In the movie Gold Diggers of 1935 , the end of the dancing pianos musical number " The Words Are in My Heart " is filmed in reverse motion with the accompanying instrumental score incidentally being reversed .

The 1950s saw two new developments in audio technology : the development of musique concrète , an avant @-@ garde form of electronic music , which involves editing together fragments of natural and industrial sounds ; and the concurrent spread of the use of tape recorders in recording studios . These two trends led to tape music compositions , composed on tape using techniques including reverse tape effects .

The Beatles , who incorporated the techniques of concrète into their recordings , were responsible for popularizing the concept of backmasking . Singer John Lennon and producer George Martin both claimed they discovered the backward recording technique during the recording of 1966 's Revolver ; specifically the album tracks " Tomorrow Never Knows " and " I 'm Only Sleeping " , and the single " Rain " . Lennon stated that , while under the influence of marijuana , he accidentally played the tapes for " Rain " in reverse and enjoyed the sound . The following day he shared the results with the other Beatles , and the effect was used first in the guitar solo for " Tomorrow Never Knows " and later in the coda of " Rain " . According to Martin , the band had been experimenting with changing the speeds of and reversing the " Tomorrow Never Knows " tapes , and Martin got the idea of reversing Lennon 's vocals and guitar , which he did with a clip from " Rain " . Lennon then liked the effect and kept it . Regardless , " Rain " was the first song to feature a backmasked message : " Sunshine ? Rain ? When the rain comes , they run and hide their heads " (listen ; the last line is the reversed first verse of the song) .

== Sayings ==

The Beatles were involved in the spread of backmasking both as a recording technique and as the center of a controversy . The latter has its roots in an event in 1969 , when WKNR @-@ FM DJ Russ Gibb received a phone call from a student at Eastern Michigan University who identified himself as " Tom " . The caller asked Gibb about a rumor that Beatle Paul McCartney had died , and claimed that the Beatles song " Revolution 9 " contained a backward message confirming the rumor . Gibb played the song backwards on his turntable , and heard " Turn me on , dead man ? turn me on , dead man ? turn me on , dead man ? " . Gibb began telling his listeners about what he called " The Great Cover @-@ up " , and to the original clue were added various others , including the alleged backmasked message " Paul is a dead man , miss him , miss him , miss him " , in " I'm So Tired " . The " Paul is dead " rumor popularized the idea of backmasking in popular music .

After Gibb 's show , many more songs were found to contain phrases that sounded like known spoken languages when reversed . Initially , the search was done mostly by fans of rock music ; but , in the late 1970s , during the rise of the Christian right in the United States , fundamentalist Christian groups began to claim that backmasked messages could bypass the conscious mind and reach the subconscious , where they would be unknowingly accepted by the listener . In 1981 , Christian DJ Michael Mills began stating on Christian radio programs that Led Zeppelin 's " Stairway to Heaven " contained hidden messages that were heard by the subconscious . In early 1982 , the Trinity Broadcasting Network 's Paul Crouch hosted a show with self @-@ described neuroscientist William Yarroll , who argued that rock stars were cooperating with the Church of Satan to place hidden subliminal messages on records . Also in 1982 , fundamentalist Christian pastor Gary Greenwald held public lectures on dangers of backmasking , along with at least one mass record @-@ smashing . During the same year , thirty North Carolina teenagers , led by their pastor , claimed that singers had been possessed by Satan , who used their voices to create backward messages , and held a record @-@ burning at their church .

Allegations of demonic backmasking were also made by social psychologists , parents and critics of rock music , as well as the Parents Music Resource Center (formed in 1985) , which accused Led Zeppelin of using backmasking to promote Satanism .

== Legislation ==

One result of the furor was the firing of five radio DJs who had encouraged listeners to search for backward messages in their record collections . A more serious consequence was legislation by the state governments of Arkansas and California . The 1983 California bill was introduced to prevent backmasking that " can manipulate our behavior without our knowledge or consent and turn us into disciples of the Antichrist " . Involved in the discussion on the bill was a California State Assembly Consumer Protection and Toxic Materials Committee hearing , during which " Stairway to Heaven " was played backwards , and William Yarroll testified . The successful bill made the distribution of records with undeclared backmasking an invasion of privacy for which the distributor could be sued . The Arkansas law passed unanimously in 1983 , referenced albums by The Beatles , Pink Floyd , Electric Light Orchestra , Queen and Styx , and mandated that records with backmasking include a warning sticker : " Warning : This record contains backward masking which may be perceptible at a subliminal level when the record is played forward . " However , the bill was returned to the state senate by Governor Bill Clinton and defeated . House Resolution 6363 , introduced in 1982 by Representative Bob Dornan (R @-@ California) , proposed mandating a similar label ; the bill was referred to the Subcommittee on Commerce , Transportation and Tourism and was never passed . Government action was also called for in the legislatures of Texas and Canada .

With the advent of compact discs in the 1980s , but prior to the advent of sound editing technology for personal computers in the 1990s , it became more difficult to listen to recordings backwards , and the controversy died down .

== Resurgence ==

Though the backmasking controversy peaked in the 1980s , the general belief in subliminal manipulation became more widespread in the United States during the following decade , with belief in Satanic backmasking on records persisting into the 1990s . At the same time , the development of sound editing software with audio reversal features simplified the process of reversing audio , which previously could only be done with full fidelity using a professional tape recorder . The Sound Recorder utility , included with Microsoft Windows from Windows 95 to Windows XP , allows one @-@ click audio reversal , as does popular open source sound editing software Audacity . Following the growth of the Internet , backmasked message searchers used such software to create websites featuring backward music samples , which became a widely used method of exploring backmasking in popular music .

In January 2014 , the first backmasked video was released as part of a Grammy Awards promotional campaign . A customized video player allowed the user to watch a piece of film accompanied by a music soundtrack both forwards and backwards . The backwards content contained a hidden visual story and the words ' music unleashes you ' embedded into the reversed audio track .

= = Use = =

Backmasking has been used as a recording technique since the 1960s . In the era of magnetic tape sound recording , backmasking required that the source reel @-@ to @-@ reel tape actually be played backwards , which was achieved by first being wound onto the original takeup reel , then reversing the reels so as to use that reel as the source (this would reverse the stereo channels as well) . Digital audio recording has greatly simplified the process .

Backmasked words are unintelligible noise when played forward , but when played backwards are clear speech . Listening to backmasked audio with most turntables requires disengaging the drive and rotating the album by hand in reverse (though some can play records backwards) . With magnetic tape , the tape must be reversed and spliced back in to the cassette . Compact discs were difficult to reverse when first introduced , but digital audio editors , which were first introduced in the late 1980s and became popular during the next decade , allow easy reversal of audio from digital sources .

= = = Satanic backmasking = = =

In the 1973 film The Exorcist , a tape of noises from the possessed victim was discovered to contain a message when the tape was played backwards . This scene might have inspired subsequent copycat musical effects . Although the Satanic backmasking controversy involved mainly classic rock songs , whose authors denied any intent to promote Satanism , backmasking has been used by heavy metal bands to deliberately insert messages in their lyrics or imagery . Bands have utilized Satanic imagery for commercial reasons . For example , thrash metal band Slayer included at the start of the band 's 1985 album Hell Awaits a deep backmasked voice chanting " Join Us " over and over . (listen) . However , Slayer vocalist Tom Araya states that the band 's use of Satanic imagery was " solely for effect " . Cradle of Filth , another band that has employed Satanic imagery , released a song entitled " Dinner at Deviant 's Palace " , consisting almost entirely of unusual sounds and a reversed reading of the Lord 's Prayer (a backwards reading of the Lord 's Prayer is reportedly a major part of the Black Mass) . Seattle @-@ based grunge band Soundgarden parodied the phenomenon of Satanic backmasking on their 1989 album Ultramega OK . When played backwards , the songs " 665 " and " 667 " reveal a song about Santa Claus . Marilyn Manson used this technique . For example , in the beginning of his song " Tourniquet " when played backwards , his voice is heard saying " This is my lowest point of vulnerability " as explained in his book The Long Hard Road Out of Hell .

= = = Aesthetic use = = =

Backmasking is often used for aesthetics , i.e. , to enhance the meaning or sound of a track . During the Judas Priest subliminal message trial , lead singer Rob Halford admitted to recording the words " In the dead of the night , love bites " backwards into the track " Love Bites " , from the 1984 album Defenders of the Faith . Asked why he recorded the message , Halford stated that " When you 're composing songs , you 're always looking for new ideas , new sounds . " Stanley Kubrick used " Masked Ball " , an adaptation by Jocelyn Pook of her earlier work " Backwards Priests " (from the album Flood) featuring reversed Romanian chanting , as the background music for the masquerade ball scene in Eyes Wide Shut . At the end of " Before I Forget " by Slipknot , lead singer Corey Taylor 's voice can be heard saying " ... You 're wasting it " which is in reference to how Rick Rubin , the producer of their album Vol . 3 : The Subliminal Verses , wanted Taylor to change the chorus vocal melody because he felt it wasn 't catchy ; however , Taylor stood his ground and the chorus stayed unchanged .

One backmasking technique is to reverse an earlier part of a song . Missy Elliott used this technique in one of her songs , " Work It " , as did Jay Chou (" You Can Hear " , from Ye Hui Mei) , At the Drive @-@ In (" 300 MHz " , from Vaya) , and Lacuna Coil (" Self Deception " , from Comalies) . A related technique is to reverse an entire instrumental track . John Lennon originally wanted to do so with " Rain " , but objections by producer George Martin and bandmate Paul McCartney cut the backward section to 30 seconds . The Stone Roses have made heavy use of this technique in songs including " Don 't Stop " , " Guernica " , and " Simone " , which are all backwards versions of other Stone Roses tracks , sometimes overdubbed with new vocals that sound somewhat similar to the initial track when backmasked . Meanwhile , Klaatu used the reversed vocals from " Anus of Uranus " (from their first album , 3 : 47 EST) as the vocals for the song " Silly Boys " (on their third album , Sir Army Suit) . The lyrics for " Silly Boys " on the lyric sheet from Sir Army Suit are accordingly printed backwards . Danish band Mew 's 2009 album No More Stories ... contains a track , " New Terrain " , which , when listened to in reverse , reveals a new song , entitled " Nervous " .

Artists often use backmasking of sounds or instrumental audio to produce interesting sound effects . One such sound effect is the reverse echo . When done on tape , such use of backmasking is known as reverse tape effects . One example is Matthew Sweet 's 1999 album In Reverse , which includes reversed guitar parts which were played directly onto a tape running in reverse . For live concerts , the guitar parts were played live on stage using a backward emulator .

== = Humorous and parody messages == =

A common use of backmasking is hiding a comedic or parodical message backwards in a song . The B @-@ side of the 1966 Napoleon XIV single " They 're Coming to Take Me Away , Ha @-@ Haaa ! " is a reversed version of the entire forwards record , entitled " ! aaaH @-@ aH , yawA eM ekaT oT gnimoC er 'yehT " . It reached # 3 in the US charts and # 4 in the UK .

WWE wrestler Al Snow had a theme song that had backmasking in it . The song was mostly instrumental , but at one point a clearly audible voice can be heard saying a line of gibberish . When the song is played backward , the gibberish is actually saying " I AM IN CONTROL " . The message played on Al Snow 's character as an unstable mad man .

The Beatles song " Free as a Bird " was originally composed and recorded in 1977 as a home demo by John Lennon . In 1995 a studio version of the recording , incorporating contributions from Paul McCartney , George Harrison and Ringo Starr , was released as a new single from The Beatles Anthology 1 project , 25 years after their break @-@ up and 15 years after the death of Lennon . In a humorous self @-@ parody and tribute to Lennon , the surviving Beatles inserted a backmasked clip of Lennon saying " Turned out nice again . " at the very end of the song .

Pink Floyd dropped a backmasked message into " Empty Spaces " :

... Congratulations . You have just discovered the secret message . Please send your answer to Old Pink , care of the Funny Farm , Chalfont ...

Roger ! Carolyne 's on the phone !

Okay .

The first line may refer to former lead singer Syd Barrett , who is thought to have suffered a nervous breakdown years earlier . The first known instance of Pink Floyd having a backwards message is on the song " Bike " . When played backward , it produces a nonsense poem .

In " Weird Al " Yankovic 's " Nature Trail to Hell " , from 1984 's " Weird Al " Yankovic in 3 @-@ D , Yankovic 's backmasked voice declares that " Satan eats Cheez Whiz " (listen) . Another early example can be found on the J. Geils Band track " No Anchovies , Please " , from 1980s album Love Stinks . The message , disguised as a foreign @-@ sounding language spoken under the narration , is , " It doesn 't take a genius to tell the difference between chicken shit and chicken salad . " Belgian act Poésie Noire included a satirical backmasked message on their 1988 album Tetra saying " You fucking asshole , play the record in the normal way " . Tenacious D includes the backmasked message " Eat Donkey Crap " at the end of " Karate " from their self @-@ titled first album .

Electric Light Orchestra and Styx , following their involvement in the 1980s backmasking controversy , released songs that parody the allegations made against them . ELO , after being accused of Satanic backmasking on their 1974 album Eldorado , included backmasked messages in two songs on their next album , 1975 's Face The Music . " Down Home Town " begins with a voice twice repeating (in reverse) " Face the mighty waterfall " . And the opening instrumental " Fire On High " contains the backmasked message " The music is reversible , but time is not . Turn back ! Turn back ! Turn back ! Turn back ! " (listen) . In 1983 ELO released an entire album , Secret Messages , in response to the controversy . Among the many backmasked messages on the album are : " Welcome to the big show " (2x) ; " Thank you for listening " ; " Look out there 's danger ahead " ; " Hup two three four " ; " Time After Time " ; and " You 're playing me backwards " . Styx also released an album in response to allegations of Satanic backmasking : 1983 's Kilroy Was Here , which deals with an allegorical group called the " Majority for Musical Morality " that outlaws rock music . A sticker on the album cover contains the message , " By order of the Majority for Musical Morality , this album contains secret backward messages " , and the song " Heavy Metal Poisoning " does in fact contain the backmasked Latin words " Annuit c?ptis , Novus ordo seclorum " (" [God] has favored our undertakings ; a new order for the ages ") ? part of the Great Seal which encircles the pyramid on the back of the American dollar bill .

Iron Maiden 's 1983 album Piece of Mind features a short backwards message , included by the band in response to allegations of Satanism that were surrounding them at the time . Between the songs " The Trooper " and " Still Life " is inebriated drummer Nicko McBrain doing an impression of Idi Amin Dada : " ' What ho ' , sed de t 'ing wid de t 'ree bonce [said the thing with the three heads] . Don 't meddle wid t 'ings you don 't understand , " followed by a belch . Prince 's controversial song " Darling Nikki " includes the backmasked message , " Hello , how are you ? I am fine , because I know that the Lord is coming soon . " The Waitresses ' 1982 EP I Could Rule the World if I Could Only Get the Parts included a backwards masking warning on the cover and a message masked within the song " The Smartest Person I Know " : " Anyone who believes in backwards masking is a fool . "

Some messages chastise or poke fun at the listener who is playing the song backwards . One such message was included by " Weird Al " Yankovic in " I Remember Larry " , from the 1996 album Bad Hair Day , on which Yankovic lightly chastises the listener with the backmasked remark , " Wow , [you] must have an awful lot of free time on your hands " (listen) . Similarly , the B @-@ 52 's song " Detour Through your Mind " , from the 1986 LP Bouncing off the Satellites , contains the message , " I buried my parakeet in the backyard . Oh no , you 're playing the record backwards . Watch out , you might ruin your needle . " A similar message comes from the Canadian band Frozen Ghost from their 1987 self @-@ titled debut album : " You are ruining your needle ! " .

Meanwhile , Christian rock group Petra included in their song " Judas Kiss " , from the 1982 album More Power to Ya , the message , " What are you looking for the devil for , when you ought to be looking for the Lord ? " Bloodhound Gang 's 1996 controversy @-@ begging track " Lift Your Head Up High (And Blow Your Brains Out) " mocked the Judas Priest controversy directly , and included the backmasked phrase " Devil child , wake up and eat Chef Boyardee Beefaroni " . The band

Mindless Self Indulgence released a song titled " Backmaskwarning ! " , which contains the forward lyrics " Play that record backwards / Here 's a message yo for the suckas / Play that record backwards / And go fuck yourself " . The backwards messages in the song include , " clean your room " , " do your homework " , " don 't stay out too late " , and " eat your vegetables " .

Backmasking was also parodied in a 2001 episode of the television series The Simpsons entitled " New Kids on the Blecch . " Bart Simpson joins a boy band called the Party Posse , whose song " Drop Da Bomb " includes the repeated lyric " Yvan eht nioj . " Lisa Simpson becomes suspicious and plays the song backward , revealing the backmasked message " Join the Navy " , which leads her to realize that the boy band was created as a subliminal recruiting tool for the United States Navy .

= = = Critical or explicit messages = = =

Backmasking has also been used to record statements perhaps too critical or explicit to be used forwards . Frank Zappa used backmasking to avoid censorship of the track " Hot Poop " , from We 're Only in It for the Money (1968) . The released version contains at the end of its side " A " the backmasked message " Better look around before you say you don 't care . / Shut your fucking mouth ' bout the length of my hair . / How would you survive / If you were alive / shitty little person ? " This profanity @-@ laced verse , originally from the song " Mother People " , was censored by Verve Records , so Zappa edited the verse out , reversed it , and inserted it elsewhere in the album as " Hot Poop " (though even in the backward message the word " fucking " is censored) . On the same album , a modified backmasking can be heard in " Harry , You 're a Beast " with Madge saying , " Don 't come in me , in me " repeatedly before she starts crying . In at least one bootleg version of the album , these words are very clear .

Another example is found in Roger Waters ' 1991 album Amused to Death , on which Waters recorded a backward message , possibly critical of film director Stanley Kubrick , who had refused to let Waters sample a breathing sound from 2001 : A Space Odyssey . The message appears in the song " Perfect Sense Part 1 " , in which Waters ' backmasked voice says , " Julia , however , in light and visions of the issues of Stanley , we have changed our minds . We have decided to include a backward message , Stanley , for you and all the other book burners . "

= = = Censorship = = =

A further use of backmasking is to censor words and phrases deemed inappropriate on radio edits and " clean " album releases . For example , The Fugees ' clean version of the album The Score contains various backmasked profanities ; thus , when playing the album backwards , the censored words are clearly audible among the backward gibberish . When used with the word " shit " , this type of backmasking results in a sound similar to " ish " . As a result , " ish " became a euphemism for " shit " .

In Britney Spears ' 2011 song " Till The World Ends " , Spears says " if you want this good shit " . However , on the official version , " shit " is reversed , creating the " ish " sound ; therefore , the official version says " if you want this good ish " . Backmasking is also used to censor the word " joint " in the video for " You Don 't Know How It Feels " by Tom Petty , resulting in the line " Let 's roll another tnioj " .

= = = Accusations = = =

Artists who have been accused of backmasking include Led Zeppelin , The Beatles , Pink Floyd , Electric Light Orchestra , Queen , Styx , Judas Priest , The Eagles , The Rolling Stones , Jefferson Starship , AC / DC , Black Oak Arkansas , Rush , Britney Spears , and Eminem .

Electric Light Orchestra was accused of hiding a backward Satanic message in their 1974 album Eldorado . The title track , " Eldorado " , was said to contain the message " He is the nasty one / Christ , you 're infernal / It is said we 're dead men / Everyone who has the mark will live . " ELO

singer and songwriter Jeff Lynne responded by calling this accusation (and the related charge of being " devil @-@ worshippers ") " skcollob " , and stating that the message " is absolutely manufactured by whoever said , ' That 's what it said . ' It doesn 't say anything of the sort . " The group included several backward messages in later albums in response to the accusations .

In 1981 , Styx was accused of putting the backward message " Satan move through our voices " on the song " Snowblind " , from Paradise Theatre . Guitarist James Young called these charges " rubbish , " and responded , " If we want to make a statement , we 'll do it in a way that people can understand us and not in a way where you have to go out and buy a \$ 400 tape player to understand us . " The vinyl reproduction of Paradise Theater had laser etching on side one , spelling out Styx at the top , and two ladies facing each other on the sides . But on side two , the side with the song (Snow Blind) it had a black label with a small hole cut out where you could place the eraser side of a pencil , and play the album backwards to hear the backward message . In 1983 , the band released a concept album , Kilroy Was Here , satirizing the Moral Majority .

A well @-@ known alleged message is found in rock group Led Zeppelin 's 1971 song " Stairway to Heaven " . The backwards playing of a portion of the song purportedly results in words beginning with " Here 's to my sweet Satan " (listen) . Swan Song Records issued a statement to the contrary : " Our turntables only play in one direction ? forwards . " Led Zeppelin vocalist Robert Plant denied the accusations in an interview : " To me it 's very sad , because ' Stairway To Heaven ' was written with every best intention , and as far as reversing tapes and putting messages on the end , that 's not my idea of making music . " Another widely known alleged message , " It 's fun to smoke marijuana , " in Queen 's song " Another One Bites the Dust " , is similarly disclaimed by the group 's spokesperson .

= = = Subliminal persuasion = = =

= = = Fundamentalist Christian groups = = =

Various fundamentalist Christian groups have declared that Satan ? or Satan @-@ influenced musicians ? use backmasked messages to subliminally alter behavior . Pastor Gary Greenwald claimed that subliminal messages backmasked into rock music induce listeners towards sex and drug use . Minister Jacob Aranza wrote in his 1982 book Backward Masking Unmasked that rock groups " are using backmasking to convey satanic and drug related messages to the subconscious . " Christian DJ Michael Mills argued in 1981 that " the subconscious mind is being successfully affected by the repetition of beat and lyrics ? being affected through a subliminal message . " Mills has toured America warning Christian parents about subliminal messages in rock music .

Some Christian websites have claimed that backmasking is widely used for Satanic purposes . The web page for Alabama group Dial @-@ the @-@ Truth Ministries argues for the existence of Satanic backmasking in " Stairway to Heaven " , saying that the song contains the backward message , " It 's my sweet Satan ... Oh I will sing because I live with Satan . "

= = = PMRC = = =

In 1985 , Dr. Joe Stuessy testified to the United States Congress at the Parents Music Resource Center hearings that :

The message [of a piece of heavy metal music] may also be covert or subliminal . Sometimes subaudible tracks are mixed in underneath other , louder tracks . These are heard by the subconscious but not the conscious mind . Sometimes the messages are audible but are backward , called backmasking . There is disagreement among experts regarding the effectiveness of subliminals . We need more research on that .

Stuessy 's written testimony stated that :

Some messages are presented to the listener backwards . While listening to a normal forward message (often somewhat nonsensical) , one is simultaneously being treated to a backwards

message (in other words , the lyric sounds like one set of words going forward , and a different set of words going backwards) . Some experts believe that while the conscious mind is absorbing the forward lyric , the subconscious is working overtime to decipher the backwards message .

= = = = Court cases = = = =

Serial killer Richard Ramirez , on trial in 1988 , stated that AC / DC 's music , and specifically the song " Night Prowler " on Highway to Hell , inspired him to commit murder . Reverse speech advocate David John Oates claimed that " Highway to Hell " , on the same album , contains backmasked messages including " I 'm the law " , " my name is Lucifer " , and " she belongs in hell " . AC / DC 's Angus Young responded that " you didn 't need to play [the album] backwards , because we never hid [the messages] . We 'd call an album Highway To Hell , there it was right in front of them . "

In 1990 , British heavy metal band Judas Priest was sued over a suicide pact made by two young men in Nevada . The lawsuit by their families claimed that the 1978 Judas Priest album Stained Class contained hidden messages , including the forward subliminal words " Do it " in the song " Better By You , Better Than Me " (a cover version of a Spooky Tooth song) , and various backward subliminal messages . The case was dismissed by the judge for insufficient evidence of Judas Priest 's placement of subliminal messages on the record , and the judge 's ruling stated that " The scientific research presented does not establish that subliminal stimuli , even if perceived , may precipitate conduct of this magnitude . There exist other factors which explain the conduct of the deceased independent of the subliminal stimuli . " Judas Priest members commented that if they wanted to insert subliminal commands in their music , messages leading to the deaths of their fans would be counterproductive , and they would prefer to insert the command " Buy more of our records . "

= = = Skepticism = = =

Skeptic Michael Shermer claims that the emergence of the " Paul is dead " phenomenon , including the alleged message at the end of " I 'm So Tired " , was caused by faulty perception of a pattern . Shermer argues that the human brain evolved with a strong pattern recognition ability that was necessary to process the large amount of noise in man 's environment , but that today this ability leads to false positives . Stanford University psychology professor Brian Wandell postulates that the observance of backward messages is a mistake arising from this pattern recognition facility , and argues that subliminal persuasion theories are " bizarre " and " implausible . " Rumors of backmasking in popular music have been described as auditory pareidolia . James Walker , president of Christian research group Watchman Fellowship , states that " You could take a Christian hymn , and if you played it backwards long enough at different speeds , you could make that hymn say anything you want to " ; Led Zeppelin publicist BP Fallon concurs , saying " Play anything backwards , and you 'll find something . " Eric Borgos of audio reversal website talkbackwards.com states that " Mathematically , if you listen long enough , eventually you 'll find a pattern " , while Jeff Milner recounts , " Most people , when I show them the site , say that they 're not able to hear anything , until , of course , I show them the reverse lyrics . "

Audio engineer Evan Olcott claims that messages by artists including Queen and Led Zeppelin are coincidental phonetic reversals , in which the spoken or sung phonemes form new combinations of words when listened to backwards . Olcott states that " Actually engineering or planning a phonetic reversal is next to impossible , and even more difficult when trying to design it with words that fit into a song . "

In 1985 , University of Lethbridge psychologists John Vokey and J. Don Read conducted a study using Psalm 23 from the Bible , Queen 's " Another One Bites the Dust " , and other sound passages made up for the experiment . Vokey and Read concluded that if backmasking does exist , it is ineffective . Participants had trouble noticing backmasked phrases when the samples were played forwards , were unable to judge the types of messages (Christian , Satanic , or commercial)

, and were not led to behave in a certain way as a result of being exposed to the backmasked phrases . Vokey concluded that " we could find no effect of the meaning of engineered , backward messages on listeners ' behaviour , either consciously or unconsciously . " Similar results to Vokey and Read 's were obtained by D. Averill in 1982 . A 1988 experiment by T.E. Moore found " no evidence that listeners were influenced , consciously or unconsciously , by the content of the backward messages . " In 1992 , an experiment found that exposure to backward messages did not lead to significant changes in attitude . Psychology professor Mark D. Allen says that " delivering subliminal messages via backward masking is totally and ridiculously impossible " .

The finding of backward Satanic messages has been explained as caused by the observer @-@ expectancy effect . The Skeptic 's Dictionary states that " you probably won 't hear [backmasked] messages until somebody first points them out to you . Perception is influenced by expectation and expectation is affected by what others prime you for . " In 1984 , S. B. Thorne and P. Himelstein found that " when vague and unfamiliar stimuli are presented , [test subjects] are highly likely to accept suggestions , particularly when the suggestions are presented by someone with prestige and authority . " Vokey and Read concluded from their 1985 experiment that " the apparent presence of backward messages in popular music is a function more of active construction on the part of the perceiver than of the existence of the messages themselves . "