

## = The Great Milenko =

The Great Milenko is the fourth studio album by American hip hop group Insane Clown Posse , released on August 12 , 1997 , by Hollywood Records , in association with Psychopathic Records . As the fourth Joker 's Card in the group 's Dark Carnival mythology , the album 's lyrics focus on the titular Great Milenko , an illusionist who tries to trick individuals into greed and other such sins .

The album was recorded and initially released by the Disney @-@ owned record label Hollywood Records . The album was taken off shelves by Hollywood hours after its release , in response to criticism from the Southern Baptist Church of decisions that the church believed did not reflect Disney 's family @-@ friendly image , although Disney claimed that the album was released due to an oversight by its review board . After Hollywood terminated the group 's contract , Insane Clown Posse signed a new contract with Island Records ( whose parent at the time , PolyGram , distributed Hollywood releases in North America ) , which agreed to release the album as it was originally intended .

The music of The Great Milenko features a rock sound and features guest appearances by popular rock stars Alice Cooper , Steve Jones and Slash . Although the album was poorly received by critics , it debuted at number 63 on the Billboard charts , and was later certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America ( RIAA ) . It is the group 's 10th overall release .

## = = Conception = =

## = = = Background = = =

Following the 1994 release of the album Ringmaster , Insane Clown Posse started to attract a strong local following in Detroit , Michigan . The group began selling out large clubs such as St. Andrew 's Hall and the State Theater , and drew the attention of major record label Jive Records . The next year , Insane Clown Posse signed with the label Battery , a subsidiary Jive Records . Battery / Jive released the duo 's third studio album , Riddle Box ( 1995 ) , but showed little interest in promoting the album . The group 's manager Alex Abbiss negotiated a contract with the Disney 's Hollywood Records label , which reportedly paid \$ 1 million to purchase the Insane Clown Posse contract from Battery / Jive Records .

The expansion of the Juggalo fanbase into its own culture inspired Insane Clown Posse to write the songs " What Is A Juggalo ? " and " Down With The Clown " for this album .

## = = = Recording = = =

The group started recording The Great Milenko in 1996 , and Violent J began thinking of a title for the album shortly after . Bruce later came up with the title The Great Milenko . Bruce also admitted that he had always liked the ring name of professional wrestler Dean Simon ( " Dean Malenko " ) , because he felt that the name Malenko had a " carnival " sound to it . Believing that he had created the name himself , Bruce later realized that he had unwittingly used the nickname of Dean 's father , Boris " The Great " Malenko .

The band wanted to include famous rock stars on the album . Julian Raymond , the artists and repertoire representative for Hollywood Records contacted Slash , Steve Jones , and Alice Cooper . Slash , who was a self @-@ professed fan of the band 's music , reportedly only asked for Wild Irish Rose as payment for his contributions . Bruce , who knew very little about the Sex Pistols or Steve Jones , declined to show up at the studio when Jones played his guitar part for " Piggy Pie " . Although not knowing much about Alice Cooper either , Bruce decided to fly to Arizona and coach Cooper on his parts . Bruce and Clark also met George Clinton , who was staying in the same hotel , and recorded his voice in his room , but it did not fit anywhere on the album .

After the recording sessions were finished , executives at Hollywood Records ? and the label 's parent company , Disney ? expressed dissatisfaction with several tracks . Disney requested that the

tracks " The Neden Game , " " Under the Moon , " and " Boogie Woogie Wu " be removed because of lyrics referencing abuse of women , rape and murder , and the slaughter of children , respectively . Disney also asked that the lyrics of " Piggy Pie " be changed , due to lyrics about murdering police officers . Disney threatened not to release the album if their requests were not met . Begrudgingly , Bruce and Utsler complied with Disney 's requests . The uncensored version of " Piggy Pie " was later released on Forgotten Freshness Volumes 1 & 2 . After recording was finalized , the duo planned to go on a national tour with House of Krazees and Myzery as its opening acts . Several songs were recorded with the intention of releasing them on The Great Milenko . One such song , " House of Wonders " was recorded but was later released on Mutilation Mix ( 1997 ) and Forgotten Freshness Volumes 1 & 2 ( 1998 ) .

= = = Joker 's Cards = = =

The Great Milenko is the fourth Joker 's Card in Insane Clown Posse 's Dark Carnival concept album series . The Dark Carnival is a concept of the afterlife in which souls are sent to a form of limbo while waiting to be sent to heaven or hell based on their individual actions . These concepts are related by Insane Clown Posse in a series of albums called the six Joker 's Cards . Each of the six Joker 's Cards relate to a specific character ? an entity of the Dark Carnival ? that tries to " save the human soul " by showing the wickedness inside of one 's self .

This Joker 's Card is a necromancer and illusionist who tries to trick individuals into acts of greed , envy , and lust . The Card ultimately issues a warning against such acts of sin , and enlightens listeners that The Great Milenko is a part of every individual , and that they have the power to fall under his illusions or cast his hoaxes aside .

= = Music = =

= = = Style = = =

The Great Milenko featured more rock influences than previous Insane Clown Posse albums , including an introduction performed by Alice Cooper and guitar tracks performed by Steve Jones ( on " Piggy Pie " ) , and Slash ( on " Halls of Illusions " ) . Stephen Thomas Erlewine of Allmusic wrote , in his review of The Amazing Jeckel Brothers ( 1999 ) that , " The Great Milenko [ ... ] was targeted at white @-@ boy , adolescent metalheads -- really , how could any album that contained guest spots from Alice Cooper , Slash , Steve Jones and Legs Diamond be anything else ? "

Insane Clown Posse hired renowned Detroit record producer and DJ Mike E. Clark to produce the record . Clark made the album sound more rock @-@ oriented , as opposed to the duo 's earlier material , which featured a more prominent hip @-@ hop sound . To create the record , Clark utilized standard hip hop techniques such as record scratching , and mixed them with elements of rock and heavy metal .

= = = Lyricism = = =

According to the group 's mythology , The Great Milenko is a necromancer and illusionist who tries to trick individuals into greed and other such sins . He takes out the worst in an individual and creates powerful illusions in an attempt to cause them to become hedonistic and greedy . An honorable individual must fight his magic in order to make it to Shangri @-@ La ( as revealed in the track " Pass Me By " ) .

The album 's themes mostly revolve around those of death , morality , and everyday decisions . For instance , " How Many Times ? " talks about annoying traffic jams and other everyday @-@ life inconveniences . " Piggy Pie " references the Three Little Pigs and tells Violent J 's story of murdering three kinds of people : an incest @-@ prone redneck , cops who wrongly arrest and harass people , and stuck @-@ up wealthy people . " Under the Moon " tells the tale of a man

convicted after killing a man who tried to rape his girlfriend . " Boogie Woogie Wu " is told from the perspective of the boogie man and talks about the slaughter of children . The " Neden Game " takes the form of a Dating Game @-@ esque show , albeit with added misogynistic banter for humor . Finally , the lyrics to " Hellalujah " target money @-@ hungry preachers .

= = = Singles = = =

Two singles were released from the album : " Halls of Illusions " and " Hokus Pokus . " " Halls of Illusions " was the first single released in 1997 . The single peaked at number 56 on the UK Singles Chart , and its accompanying music video peaked at number one on The Box video request channel . The album 's second single , " Hokus Pokus , " was released in June 1997 . In 1998 , it peaked at number 54 on the UK Singles Chart .

= = Promotion and release = =

Initially , Hollywood Records shipped 100 @,@ 000 copies of The Great Milenko to various record stores . During a music @-@ store autograph signing , Insane Clown Posse was notified that Hollywood Records had deleted the album within hours of its release , despite having sold 18 @,@ 000 copies and reaching number 63 on the Billboard 200 . The group was also informed that its in @-@ store signings and 25 @-@ city nationwide tour had been canceled , commercials for the album and the music video for " Halls of Illusions " ( which had reached number one on The Box video request channel ) were pulled from television , and that the group was dropped from the label . It was later revealed that Disney was being criticized by the Southern Baptist Church at the time because of Disney 's promotion of Gay Days at Disneyland , in addition to producing and distributing the gay @-@ themed television sitcom Ellen . The church claimed Disney was turning its back on family values . Although Abbiss told the press that Disney had stopped production of The Great Milenko to avoid further controversy , Disney claimed instead that the release of the album was an oversight by their review board , and that the album " did not fit the Disney image " because of its " inappropriate " lyrics , which they claimed were offensive to women . Although Hollywood Records had ordered record stores to return shipments of the now @-@ deleted album , many record stores refused , including the Michigan @-@ based Harmony House where 1 @,@ 700 CDs were sold in 36 stores after the termination order .

After the termination of the Hollywood Records contract , labels such as Interscope and Geffen Records wanted to sign the group , but Island Records ' Chris Blackwell came to the group 's rescue and agreed to release The Great Milenko as it was originally intended . As part of the deal , Island also agreed to rerelease the group 's first two Joker 's Card albums . Milenko was released in four colors : red , green , purple , and gold . Each color had a different secret message that would help reveal the title of the fifth Joker 's Card , The Amazing Jeckel Brothers . Music videos were filmed for " Halls of Illusions , " " How Many Times , " and " Piggy Pie . " An unofficial music video for " Down with the Clown " was featured on the home @-@ video release Juggalo Championshxt Wrestling Volume 1 . A music video for the Headhuntaz Remix of " Hokus Pokus " was produced after the release of the album . The video featured appearances by Twiztid and Myzery . Blackwell left Island Records shortly after the group released Forgotten Freshness Volumes 1 & 2 , and the merger of PolyGram into Universal Music Group ( which owned Interscope and Geffen ) affected the way the label handled its next Joker 's Card release . Despite the rough start , The Great Milenko has sold well over the years . On May 5 , 1998 , the album was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America ( RIAA ) . A year later , on April 21 , 1999 , the album was certified platinum for shipments of over one million copies . As of 2007 , the album has sold over 1 @.@ 7 million copies in the United States .

= = Critical reception = =

Reviews for The Great Milenko were generally very mixed reviews . Entertainment Weekly music

critic David Browne gave the record a C @-@ minus rating : " [ With ] its puerile humor and intentionally ugly metal @-@ rap tunes , the album feels oddly dated . " Allmusic reviewer Stephen Thomas Erlewine said that The Great Milenko is " the sort of record you wish they would take off the stereo at excruciating frat parties . " In The Great Rock Discography , Martin Charles Strong gave the album five out of ten stars . The album received two out of five stars in The New Rolling Stone Album Guide , in which Ben Sisario identified it as the album in which " the group came into its own "

Although the reviews were mostly negative , some critics complimented the album 's improved sound over its precursors . Stephen Thomas Erlewine said that the album was " a better record than [ its ] predecessors , boasting a tougher sound and some actual hooks , without losing the juvenile vulgarity that pleased their following , " and added that " it is better than the rest of ICP 's work . " David Browne said that " Milenko is better produced than the duo 's earlier output ( Slash grinds out metal chords on Halls of Illusions ) , and Pass Me By is a genuinely melodic song . " In 2009 , Fangoria named The Great Milenko an iconic horrorcore album .

= = Track listing = =

= = Personnel = =

= = Charts and certifications = =

= = = Singles = = =