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## Behind the Pepsi-iTunes parody

James Saldana's Pepsi-iTunes [Super Bowl parody](#) is showing up everywhere - with good reason.

It's one of the most [biting commentaries](#) of the way in which Big Music, with the enthusiastic help of Pepsi and Apple, exploited and then pilloried a bunch of naive kids during this year's [Super Bowl](#).



Saldana is Southern Illinois University multimedia graduate student and student rights activist. And he's been around.

"I make war and conflict documentaries, all on a Mac!," he told p2pnet. "I've made films in Kosovo, Palestinian West Bank, and I was a embedded filmmaker in Iraq with the 3rd Armored Division. I've received a few awards, had a few national screenings and the Kosovo film was on PBS (local). I have a international screening in St Johns Canada this spring for Our Road to Kosovo."

An ex-US Army drill sergeant and a peacekeeper with the 101st Airborne on the Egyptian / Israeli border he has a daughter of about the same age as the kids in the ad and, "It must have been a very degrading experience for them to be in that commercial," he says. "But what choice did they have? It was a way for them to pay off those fines."

"Maybe the RIAA should charge fair prices for music, instead of fighting a losing battle by fining kids."

"I think people are ethically torn when it comes to the RIAA and p2p file sharing. Some people can justify it to themselves thinking, 'I probably wouldn't have bought that CD anyway, or I couldn't afford it,' so it's no loss to the artist or the RIAA. Some other people are just thieves."

"On the other hand, the public knows for a fact that the recording

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industry has cheated artists, such as minorities and others, since the beginning, which should make you cringe at the thought of supporting the RIAA. You only have to look at the prices of CDs vs DVDs to know something doesn't make sense; a film like Star Wars certainly costs far more to make than Green Day's latest recording. The thought of your hard earned dollars being used to bust seven-year-old kids and grandmothers probably makes you feel like an accomplice to a crime.

"And what about our right to 'Fair Use?' Sharing with family and friends IS still legal, or at least it use to be.

"The bottom line is that people feel attacked and that never goes over well. A lesson that I hope the MPAA learns, since they are next on the hit list."

"I don't try to convince my daughter, Theresa, of anything, I just give her both sides and let her decide for herself. I can't live her life for her, kids have to learn to make decisions on there own and understand that they are responsible for their own actions.

"I started her on that track when she was around seven years old and I'm so proud of her now! She's a Mac wiz and she's already making films and providing tech support to her friends.

"Above anything, I think kids want to know that you love and respect them for who they are.

"I didn't risk my life in the military to watch her rights get trampled on. Our government only seems to be concerned about protecting the right of the RIAA, but what about our right to 'Fair Use?'

"I think iTunes is a leap in the right direction, as far as fair use is concerned. But CD pricing is still ridiculous (if you compare it to DVDs), and the majority of that 99 cents is going straight into the pockets of the RIAA, from what I've read. If iTunes can accomplish anything, it would be to circumvent the RIAA profit model / monopoly, by signing on independent labels and individuals artists and bands.

"I'm all for the artists getting paid, but they too can be a little greedy sometimes. Do they really deserve millions of dollars for a song, vs. hundreds of thousands of dollars? Maybe a few less dollars should go towards making millionaires, and a few more dollars should go towards kids in our schools and the homeless?

"I've always wanted to do something like this, but in the past the tools and technology weren't available. Now with final Cut Pro and the Mac it's possible! I wouldn't have been able to make documentary filmst were it not for Apple and the Mac, so I'd feel bad if I did anything to hurt the iTunes - iPod revolution.

"But I'm just so disgusted with the tactics of the RIAA that I just couldn't help myself.

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"Another thing to think about - if it hadn't been for all those illegal downloads and kids likes the ones in that commercial, the iTunes music store probably wouldn't have been possible.

"The RIAA simply had no choice but to offer alternatives to CDs; because they are losing this battle."

(Saturday 7th February 2004)

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