

You know what you need to learn?

Old school leaders don't always burn.

You're just another leader whose had his turn.

Now it's our turn!

Sampled from "I'm Still #1" (*BDP)

One staple of the black economy that often goes unappreciated is that urban commodity, the bootleg.

Sure, the scripto pen graffiti may not measure up to the funky graphic cover art of the store bought and it may not come complete with the special features and deleted scenes. But the bootleg doesn't have the 30 minutes of brainwashing in the form of preview commercials. The bootleg gets right to the point. And even if it may pause every 10 minutes, that's just for added effect.

Although, it is despised and not considered "official" by the industry and considered "too ghetto" by upwardly mobile Buppies, for the poor, hungry, "disenfranchised" Brotha with \$5.00 in his pocket, the bootleg is priceless. It represents the hood. It represents him....

The weekend of February 25, once again, our self appointed leaders will gather at the annual State of the Black Union meeting in Houston to assure white America that the hopes and aspirations of millions of Black folks can be represented by 35 people. For 8 hours white America can tune in to a Black middle class minstrel show and find out that all the masses of strugglin' Black folks really want is for Harvard graduate Lancaster Humphries III to become

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Written by Min. Paul Scott ID2355
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CEO of a Fortune 500 company. That act alone will wipe out 400 years of collective oppression. Then they can go to sleep that night assured that the rumors of some great negro insurrection were greatly exaggerated.

Those of us who don't go for the hype and only trust leaders who we can reach out and touch usually spend the day watching blocks of videos on BET and those who feel compelled to watch the C-Span event usually spend the afternoon heckling the panelists and throwing crumpled wads of paper at their wide screen TV sets.

But this year will be different as a bunch of rowdy renegades will gather for the "State of the Hood Conferences 2006" aka "The Bootleg version of the State of Black Union Conference."

While the rich and famous will be big pimpin" down in H-Town, we will be meeting in the back of barbershops and dusty old bookstores in hoods across America, No teleprompters, no giant thousand watt speakers, just groups of committed Brothers and Sisters gathering to develop local programs to make their neighborhoods better.

The panelists will not include the Civil Rights all-stars and their hand picked understudies, naw, just everyday folks that have shown a commitment to helping Black people. There will be no jockeying for position, no grandstanding for the cameras. C-Span ain't gonna be there; no white folks allowed. Matter of fact, members of the RAW Movement will be providing security and imposing a strict paper bag test. So if you are lighter than a paper bag and speak that proper Queen's English you will be required to give the Soul Brotha handshake and present two forms of ID confirming your Blackness.

Now I know that the Houston Hoax will have some relatively "radical" speeches by their token Super Bad Black Middle class "militants" to add a little street cred to the event. But compared to the State of the Hood meetings it will be like a thugged out Will Smith representin" gangsta rap. (Winchester, Come quickly! Some black chap has just mentioned the "R" word..Oh, the horrors...)

Unlike the Houston hoe-down , there will be no corporate sponsorship, just Black folks helping Black folks. So, Bro. Kwame doesn't have to worry about the "Happy Hog" logo hanging over his head while he is lecturing on "Good Nutrition to Save Our People" Nor will the US Army be

sponsoring Sis. Ruth's presentation on "Nonviolence as a tool."

We will have workshops dealing with Black political empowerment using the race first model of the Honorable Marcus Garvey. We will discuss how Black folks in communities across the country can use Afrocentric principals to ensure that all the members of the community will have something to eat and feel safe walking the streets at night.

The Playa's Ball in Houston will also be discussing political empowerment but you can be sure that there will be no discussion of Black nationalism on the agenda. Despite all of the threats of withholding the black vote and starting a third political party, the Democrats can rest assured that the same folks will be beggin" them for front row tickets to the Democratic National Convention in a few years.

On Sunday Feb 26th at noon, there will be an all day Fate of the Race discussion on LIRadio.com (<http://www.libradio.com>) where those Black nationalists who speak for the hardcore (Rough, Rugged and Raw!) will discuss plans to save Afrikan people from genocide. The weekend will end with Brothers and Sisters making a commitment to make such a lasting impact in their communities that another summit will not be necessary. Unlike the cheap 5 dollar high that you get after the Hypnotic Houston Happy Hour that leaves you fienin' for another hit same time next year.

In 2006, Black folks are tired of the same ol song. They need a new vision that gives hope to the hopeless, a new song that sings of solutions to their suffering and a new beat to help them step to true FREEDOM and Equality. Even if it comes courtesy of a bootleg..

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*Boogie Down Productions (BDP) was one of the most influential hip-hop groups of the latter half of the "80s. Led by the often brilliant and provocative rap MC KRS-1, BDP were pioneers of both hardcore and political (or "conscious") rap.