

Public Enemy's Latest Video Banned

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By Mark Armstrong

(9/17/02, 12 p.m. ET) - Public Enemy and MTV were unable to workout a compromise so that the group's latest video--for the song "Give The People What They Need," from the group's new *Revolvelution* album--could air on the network, according to the group's frontman Chuck D.

At the center of the controversy were the references made in the song and video to Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was found guilty of killing police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981. Jamal was sentenced to death, but Judge William Yohn set aside the sentence last year. Both parties have appealed Yohn's decisions and the case is currently in the U.S. Court Of Appeals. If Yohn's decision is upheld, Jamal will serve the rest of his life in prison.

MTV requested that Public Enemy remove the word "free" before Mumia Abu-Jamal, but the group refused the request. Chuck D explained the group's stance to DaveyD.com, "Really it ain't about playing the Public Enemy video. So be it. I do art and songs to provoke and not be a joke. It would've been simple as hell for them to rather say they didn't like the video. But as a black man, it's the nerve of them judging what's acceptable coming out of blackface. If they think having a political viewpoint in music is irrelevant, it's because they've taken the Nazi approach in censoring it themselves...I refuse to edit out the Mumia audio and visual, that's crazy and they must be out of their f--king mind."

Calls to MTV for comment were not returned by press time.