

## Simmons vs The Source Beef

Written by Westside ID168  
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"Russell Simmons has been exploiting Hip-Hop for years...We invited, and expected him to participate in the largest annual Hip-Hop weekend of the year, and he bailed from the event because he is afraid of the authenticity and influence of The Source Magazine, and our weekend. Russell is further from Hip-Hop, the community and struggle it represents than he has ever been. Russell is a serious threat to the advancement of the black community, and Hip-Hop culture because he exploits the perception in corporate America that he represents the views of the Hip-Hop community when he does not" was the joint statement released by The Source's Dave Mays and Ray Benzino.

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Russell Simmons, who as founder of Def Jam Records is one of the leading figures in hip-hop, announced Wednesday that he and his Hip-Hop Summit Action Network would not participate in a Source-sponsored youth rally scheduled for Saturday at the Miami Arena.

"Although I applaud the efforts of The Source magazine and am looking forward to working with them in the future to promote these goals, I will not participate in this rally unless I can create dialogue between all the members of hip-hop," Simmons said in a statement.

Simmons' release followed one from The Source stating that he, Minister Louis Farrakhan, Al Sharpton, Ja Rule, Ludacris and Fat Joe would participate in the Hip-Hop Voter Education Rally, at 1 p.m. Saturday.

"We invited, and expected him to participate in the largest annual hip-hop weekend of the year, and he bailed from the event because he is afraid of the authenticity and influence of The Source," Source co-owners Dave Mays and Ray Benzino said in a statement late Wednesday.

Wednesday's volley was the latest in almost two years of a verbal war that has pitted the magazine and rapper Ja Rule against rappers Eminem and 50 Cent and Interscope, their record label.

Simmons and HSAN have sought to maintain a neutral public stance in the feud.

HSAN president Dr. Benjamin Chavis expressed fear that the feud would undermine the purpose of Saturday's rally, as would The Source's statement that the rally would "address the issues of the urban community and debate what the political agenda of this community should be."

"The HSAN already has an agenda," Chavis said. "If there's a large gathering in Miami-Dade this weekend, it will be historically incorrect not to address the voter mobilization needs that were the center of controversy four years ago. That should be our focus."

The Source awards will be taped Sunday night at the James L. Knight Center in Miami and aired Nov. 30 on BET.

The HSAN arrives in Miami today, wrapping the first week of its national bus-tour voter

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registration drive. Chavis said that with rally attendance off the agenda, the organization will take to the streets with celebrities in tow to register voters. The HSAN has a bus devoted to Florida until Election Day.

""We are predicting the largest youth voter turnout in American history,"" Chavis said. ``We're concerned a lot of voting officials in some counties are not prepared for the voter turnout. We've learned there's some repeat of the voter suppression issues of four years ago.'"

Source: [DaveyD](#)