

Fear of Hip Hop and Youth Votes

Written by Davey D ID3050

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On Tuesday Oct 3 2006 film producer Tracey Edmonds spoke at the FCC Hearings and relayed a disturbing story that took place during the 2004 elections.

She and her ex-husband-Kenny Babyface Edmonds along with Russell Simmons gathered up an all-star line up of urban and hip hop artists to do a Get Out and Vote song called 'Wake Up Everybody'. It featured everyone from Mary J Blige to Wyclef Jean to Missy Elliot.

The song came at a time when other efforts including P-Diddy's 'Vote or Die' campaign Russell Simmon's Hip Hop Summit Action Network campaign and the National Hip Hop Political Convention were in full swing trying to engage the Hip Hop/urban audience to be more politically involved.

Wake Up Everybody was an ambitious project which caused quite a buzz as the video and the making of the video/song went on to be the number one on MTV. However, when it came to getting the non partisan song on radio all kinds of trickery came into play.

Edmonds testified Tuesday that a certain radio chain which 'owns more than 1000 stations' (Clear Channel) refused to play the record. This happened in spite of large numbers of requests from listeners.

Edmonds was later informed that the owners of the station chain (Lowry Mays who is good friends of the Bush family) did not want this song on his airwaves because it might've led to massive voter turn out amongst the youth vote for John Kerry.

I know that I played the record while working as an urban programmer for AOL Radio and got great feedback. I also recall hearing industry grumblings that the only way that song would see the light of day was if a million dollars was dropped in their coiffeurs.

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