

## Hip Hop Mourns the Death of MC Conscious

Written by Minister Paul Scott ID3055

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### The Tragic Death of MC Conscious by Minister Paul Scott

According to Hood News, Hip Hop is mourning the death of MC Conscious. It was first speculated that Conscious was murdered by corporate gangsta's as retaliation for his work to get drugs off the streets of Black America or that he got caught in the crossfire when trying to squash a beef between two rival rappers.

However, an investigation revealed that he simply committed suicide. No longer able to carry the responsibility of saving a lost generation and at the same time giving them a funky beat to dance too. It is reported that he was watching the latest episode of 'strange Love" when he put a pistol to his head and.....

"Can we please have a moment of silence?"

The ability of Black artists to not only "move tha crowd" but to be a viable political force has long been a subject of debate in the Black community. For white folks music may be something to two step to at the Saturday bight Ball but for Black folks even the songs that, to the untrained ear, were made to make "a joyful noise to the Lord" or serve as weekend coolin" out music have always had deeper social and political undertones. If we look back at the days of slavery, we will see that the 'sweet" negro spirituals of the enslaved Africans were actually directions for the big break North. So 'swing Down Sweet Chariot" was not really a prelude to George Clinton's monster jam of the 70's but more in line with Dead Prez's "Let's Get Free."

During the Civil Rights/Black Power Era, the music of the Last Poets and Gil Scott Heron served as the perfect sound track for the rebellions that were going on across America. As we look back at that era, it is hard to see where the activism ended and the music began. Or were they one in the same?

"Can we have another moment of silence?"

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During the late 80's, the Reagan-omics of the Reagan-Bush Era began to take its toll on the Black community and the frustrations of Black youth began to be reflected in Hip Hop. Although the '80's were referred to as the decade of self indulgence, the gulf between the haves and the have nots began to broaden. While some members of the Black middle class were blessed with economic growth, the masses of Black people suffered under the curse of voodoo economics. Also the dissatisfaction with post Black Empowerment Era, COINTELPRO ravaged Black leadership left a void in the Black community that Hip Hop artists slowly began to fill.

Although some rap artists became the poster children of an underground "culture" that had recently hit the lotto with corporate America, the pipe dreams of a Hip Hop Nation of "dookie" gold rope wearing millionaires with Nike endorsements clashed with the realities of ghetto slums and crack babies.

Out of this socio-political climate sprang forth a new form of "edutainment" known as Conscious Hip Hop. During this period, groups such as Public Enemy, X-Clan, Poor Righteous Teachers, Boogie Down Productions and a nation of Pro Black militant emcees grabbed the mantle of Black leadership and hit the scene like an army of Urban Dance Floor Guerillas dedicated to freeing your mind so that your behind would follow.

At first the samples of speeches by Black Power "radicals" mixed perfectly with the black to tha bone lyrics of fury of the rap artists, as they gave both inspiration and information to a nation of youth who were, as Whitney Houston sang, "looking for a hero." For many, the rap artists were serving as temp agents, filling in for Black leaders who were on an extended hiatus. But as time went on it was revealed that Black Leadership had resigned and the temp agents had become full time employees.

"Can we please have a moment of TRUTH?"

What has become painfully evident is that Hip Hop artists were not meant to be revolutionary leaders. They were merely supposed to supply the hook while Black revolutionaries kicked the powerful verses. The difference between an entertainer and a revolutionary leader is the willingness to give his or her life for the people. To tell a TRUTH so powerful that it will inevitably stir the wrath of a ruthless, unforgiving white supremacist system. As Yeshua, the Black revolutionary Messiah taught us, "there is no greater love than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends." A revolutionary leader must be willing to commit, as the late Huey P. Newton would say, "revolutionary suicide." Are the conscious rappers willing to commit even

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revolutionary "career" suicide for the LIBERATION of Afrikan people? The failure of Conscious Hip Hop to consistently serve as a voice of resistance has made many in the Hip Hop community become disillusioned with the art form. And the cries of "Hip Hop is dead" that was once used to mourn the commercialization of Hip Hop by corporate America is now being used to mourn the ineffectiveness and inconsistencies of Conscious Hip Hop.

"Can we please have a moment of PEACE?"

While the controversy over VH1's reality show Strange Love may seem like an insignificant issue for some, it may very well serve as the final nail in the coffin of Conscious Hip Hop. If the Conscious Hip Hop community cannot even organize to derail a reality show that blatantly destroyed the legacy of the major icon of Conscious rap, Public Enemy, then how can they inspire the people to tackle the bigger issues such as racism, political "disenfranchisement" or police brutality? Surely, this will have a ripple affect on future CD releases by Conscious Hip Hop artists. Because if you don't have the courage speak out against Strange Love, then what are you going to speak about on your next CD? What is your subject matter going to be about unless you talk about "racism" and "white supremacy" in very generic and abstract terms. So for many the state of Conscious Hip Hop is like a cold dark, necropolis of failed attempts and shattered dreams of a musical revolution that never came to pass.

"Can we have a moment for the children?"

Many ancient theologies and philosophies speak of something having to die in order to live again. One such myth is the story of the Phoenix that burns itself into ashes every 500 years only to be reborn again. So as we mourn the death of Conscious Hip Hop, we also look forward to its rebirth. We look forward to a Conscious Hip Hop that will partner with Afrikan revolutionary leadership to not only capture the imagination of the people but will also bring about revolutionary change. We look forward to the day when members of the Afrikan Power Movement and Hip Hop Nation hold joint summits that will serve as more than music networking sessions. We look forward to the day when Conscious Hip Hop artists will feature Afrocentric scholars on their CD's and mixtapes and the day when Afrocentric Scholars will allow Hip Hop artists to warm the crowd up for them at conferences before they drop some science on the masses. We look foward to the Hip Hop Resurrection Movement that must happen.

But as for now, Conscious Hip Hop is dead. So, can we please have a moment to mourn.....Amen.

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