

## Is Society to Blame for Hip Hop's Problems

Written by Westside ID4262

Wednesday, 02 April 2008 05:31 -

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In the later part of February hip hop artist T.I. was offered a 15 year prison term plea agreement by prosecuting attorney David E. Nahmias on his weapons charges.

At that time it was said that the sentence offered to the hip hop star T.I. may be reduced. At that time the hip hop artists' lawyers were in negotiations.

The final outcome is now said to be at least 1,000 hours of a total 1,500 hours of community service, talking to youth groups about the pitfalls of guns, gangs and drugs. Then he will be sentenced in March '09 to about a year in prison.

T.I. is not the only artist who seems to find a way out of the trouble they get into.

Artists like Snoop Dogg, 50 cent, P. Diddy, Busta Rhymes, DMX and the list goes on, seem to be able to find 'alternatives' to answer the charges against them: time after time.

Society then looks at the youth in hip hop and wonders why the youth seem out of control at times; giving hip hop a bad name.

Maybe if prosecutors, judges and juries would understand that the youth in hip hop admire and respect these artists and want to be like them; then they would understand why it is important to make the right decisions when these artists find themselves in trouble. The youth try to emulate these hip hop and rap artists, and when they see their idols getting little or no condemnation for their actions then the youth think the same will apply to them if and when they are caught. Sadly most find out that a gun charge in California, for example; will not lead to cleaning up a park for them. It will end up with a strike and jail time for most.

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Other hip hop and rap artists have paid the price for their bad decisions: In February of '97 Suge Knight, CEO of Death Row Records was sentenced to nine years in prison for his supposed role in an attack on Orlando Anderson the night of Tupac's (2Pac) murder in '96. In February of 1995 hip hop icon Tupac (2Pac) was sentenced to up to four and a half years after being found guilty of sexual abuse. Ol' Dirty Bastard received two-to-four years in jail for drug-related charges, Flesh-N-Bone of Bone Thugs - n- Harmony is doing an 11-year jail sentence and there are many others.

But that was back in the day. Now there can be a fight in a club, a shooting, drug busts, weapons charges – things that find the young hip hop generation caught up in and when the people they idolize do these things they see these lenient sentences handed down and they figure they are 'gangsta's' too and will only get a little time, and then the reality of a prison term sets in when they are sentenced.

The wrong message is being sent to the hip hop youth by the powers that be. Now that is a harsh statement but if the charges are found to be true, (and we know a lot of things are drummed up), then these artists and those in hip hop need to take responsibility and step up. Or even better yet, leave all that behind and help build the hip hop community instead of tearing it down and giving it a black eye.

You have to ask yourself what guidelines are used when making these deals that let these artists off with light sentences. Are those in the judicial system 'star struck' or do they know what they are doing? Do they set these examples so young kids fall prey to their thinking and then they have an excuse to lock them up?

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It is up to the hip hop community to uplift, elevate & empower our people – Black, Brown, White and Asian. Short-sighted and self-destructive attitudes does nothing for the culture of hip hop and as long as the youth try to emulate their favorite hip hop and rap artist someone needs to take a stand and to assure that there are very strict punishments for many legal offenses if you do not have the money or 'star' appeal that their idols have.

Isn't it enough we celebrate destruction, despair, misogyny, drugs and gangsta activity in our music with out sacrificing a whole generation of youth so some very few can sit back and collect their money and live off our despair?

Destruction, crime and degeneracy is not what hip hop is suppose to be. We need some good role models in hip hop and we need accountability from the ones that the youth look up to.

If mainstream society is going to support the actions of some of these artists, with their lenient sentences or looking the other way; then they should not be so quick to write or talk about how bad hip hop culture is.

Many of us know there is a problem but few are willing or able to speak on the problems so it just grows worse.

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Someone has to say it: We can and must do a better job setting examples for the youth.