

## 'Changes Should Be Made in Hip Hop' True But

Written by Robert ID4158

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This is a response to an editorial that appeared on 'The Hilltop' – The Student Voice of Howard University titled 'Changes Should Be Made in Hip-Hop'.

Many of the writers' comments are right on point. The references made to hip hop and rap artists like Lil' Wayne and T.I. are true and it is truly a shame that these artists find their selves in these situations.

Although these artists were named, many were not. Many hip hop artists and rap notables have found them selves in trouble with the law and they usually receive lenient sentences, giving the perception that this society that seems to be focused on the 'stars' are willing to give them a get out of jail free card because they are a 'star' in their given profession. This is not only true in hip hop but applies to most of the stars of Hollywood or television and really anyone of notoriety, seldom do we see 'stiff' sentences given out. We have to understand what kind of message that sends to the youth, not only of the hip hop community but to the mainstream community as well.

The mention of hip hoppers "gangster lifestyles" is not totally true. Many of these 'studio gangster rappers' are not real life gangsters. Many in hip hop do have connections to street organizations (gang affiliation) and are affiliated but most are just playing a 'role' and are 'studio gangsters'.

The writer says "Many of them are living in mansions, making millions of dollars, driving luxurious cars, and the list goes on. Still, they cannot leave their pasts." – but most are not. There are more broke rappers than you may think. Just because BET shows a hip hop video with a rap artist next to a Bentley or a clip of a luxurious home, does not mean that at the end of the shoot the rental company comes and takes all the stage props back to the warehouse.

Not many in hip hop and rap gain the status of 'being rich'. This is evident in all of music genres not just hip hop and rap. Many artists end up bankrupt and penniless. Their careers are built on a false persona.

The writer also says "With the lifestyle changes, shouldn't character changes take place as well?"..."but hip-hop artists will not change unless they make a conscious effort to do so. It will

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be similar to a rehabilitative experience.” This change will never take place because the record labels want that image portrayed; it sells records.

True change in hip hop will only take place when the hip hop community and the record labels stand up and say ‘No More, enough is enough’ now lets move forward. True change can come when major labels are willing to promote meaningful hip hop projects and projects that uplift the community instead of tearing it down.

In the late 80’s and during the 90’s hip hop changed and the persona of ‘gangsta rap’ was introduced to the art of hip hop. Groups like NWA broke the news to the nation that things were not as good in the hood as everyone thought or did not care about. Artists like Tupac (2Pac), Eazy-E, Ice Cube, Ice T, and many others helped to cultivate the message and the image of gangsta rap. And the labels of those days, Suge Knight and Death Row Records, Eazy-E and Ruthless Records did very well putting out what there was a demand for. And the labels associated with those labels, Interscope and Priority did well also.

It is a money game to the labels not an art form. The hip hop community as a whole can not be blamed for things they do not stand up and take control of. If a label puts out something or someone who is detrimental to the hip hop community or the society at large; that is on them. The labels need to be held accountable for some of the garbage they promote.

The artists can not be totally blamed as many of them are ‘slaves’ of the major labels and do what they need to do to portray the image the label wants them to portray.

The do agree with the editorial on ‘The Hilltop’ but many of the things mentioned happens everyday in every community – not just in the hip hop community. Violence, drugs and guns are everywhere; it is becoming a way of life in many communities. We are losing a big part of the young generation – either by death or long prison terms and I do agree something needs to be done, but on a much larger scale. It is not fair to blame hip hop for society’s woes.

It is not “Because their upbringings are so embedded in them” as the writer states, it is because that is the way it is – embedded or not. In the studio or on the street – survival is key if you want to exist; and that has nothing to do with hip hop.

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Read the editorial on 'The Hilltop' [HERE](#) .