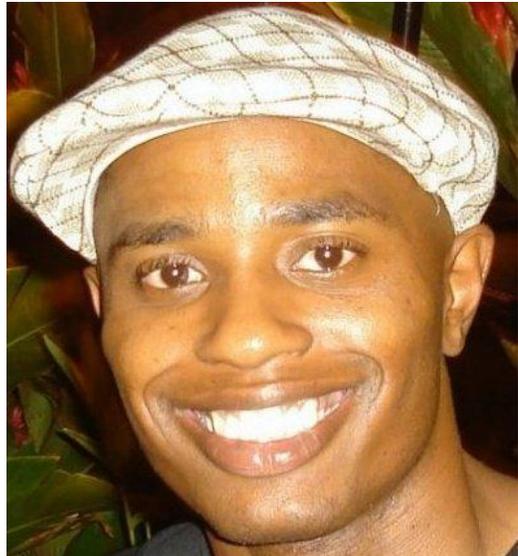


Rap, Rape and Rick Ross: Has Hip Hop Gone too far?

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"A nation can rise, no higher than its woman," was once said by Min. Louis Farrakhan, longtime leader of the Nation of Islam. If this is true, then the Black community in America is on the decline, if one of its most influential pop stars, Rick Ross can conceive and record a song about using date rape drugs and sexually assaulting women.



In the song "U.O.E.N.O.," Rick Ross says, "Put Molly all in her champagne/ She ain't even know it/ I took her home and I enjoyed that/ She ain't even know it."

For the record, in January of 2012, the U.S. Department of Justice defined rape as: "The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with anybody part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim."

Therefore, if one was "drugged" and unable to give consent for a sexual act she or he was raped.

Rick Ross has since stated that he doesn't condone rape and also stated that he never used the word rape in his verse. The problem here is that although he never stated the word

specifically, he gives a "how to rape for dummies" line in the song. Songs such as this, compounded with sexually explicit music videos, billboards, commercials, and popular magazines, only add to the culture of rape and sexual abuse.

In 2010 there were 232,804 children between the ages of 12 – 17, that were raped or sexually assaulted. According to an article published by the Washington Post, in Washington DC alone, rape had risen by 25 percent in the year 2011. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) concluded that between the years of 2006 - 2010, an average of 211, 200 crimes of rape and sexual assault went unreported. That is over 1,000,000 sexual crimes in a five year span, in addition to the ones that were reported.

In March 2013, DOJ also issued a special report titled "Female Victims of Sexual Violence, 1994 - 2010." In this report it affirmed that the largest population of rape victims were young girls between the ages of 12 - 17 and the second largest population were women between the ages of 18-34. These two demographics are amongst the largest consumers of hip hop music. One has to ask the question, why is this type of music allowed to be produced and marketed?" In the words of Diddy "It's all about the benjamin's baby."

Rick Ross brought in nine million dollars (\$9,000,000) in the year 2012, from concerts, record sales and the Maybach Music Group Record label. Rapper "Lil Wayne", generated 27 million dollars (\$27,000,000) in 2012, from partnerships with Pepsi Cola, as well as his record sales. Nicki Minaj made 15 and a half million dollars (\$15,500,000) from her performances at the NFL Super Bowl, deals with Pepsi Cola and record sales.

Rappers are taking the heat for many of the social ills that plague the current generation, because of their sexually explicit lyrics, but what about the multi-billion dollar corporations that are making profits from these sexually explicit lyrics as well? Viacom, the parent company of

music video networks MTV, BET & VH1 has produced over 22 billion dollars (\$22,000,000,000) in assets from marketing sexually explicit videos to children. They are rarely challenged as to their roles and responsibility in encouraging and rewarding this type of behavior.

No one can deny that sex is a profitable business in America and everyone wants to be successful, however at what cost. Are fancy cars, diamond rings and extravagant lifestyles worth the risking the sexual sanctity of children?

America has created an atmosphere in which pop artists are larger than life figures and their actions shape and mold the minds of young children. Therefore artists such as Rick Ross should realize that although they cannot be legally held responsible for the actions of others, they have a moral responsibility to the community not to promote drug use and sexual violence against women, or anyone for that matter. At some point someone has to stand up and say enough is enough, no amount of money is worth the rape of a 12 year old child.

The National Black United Front (NBUF) is sponsoring a free community forum and panel discussion on "Rap, Rape and Rick Ross," Tuesday April 30, 7pm at the Emergence Community Arts Collective 733 Euclid St. NW Washington DC 20001. Everyone is encouraged to come share their thoughts on how we can improve as a community on this crucial topic.