

Is a Morals Clause Needed in Hip Hop and Rap

Written by Robert ID3597

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Since the Don Imus affair, hip hop and rap have taken much examination for the lyrics contained in many of the songs. Has the time come for a need for a "Morals Clause" in Hip Hop and Rap?

Secret behind closed door meetings are being planned by hip hop notables, entrepreneurs and so called leaders of the culture. Ministers and even politicians have weighed in and offered their comments on hip hop culture; the language and the message behind the music.

The 'gangsta thug' mentality and the over all 'look and actions' of hip hop culture and its artists have been brought into question. Being 'gangsta' on wax and being a law breaking citizen in real life are two different things and it is time to take a look and hold people accountable for their real life.

Although the comparison of the recent Don Imus statements and hip hop and rap lyrics is ridiculous, still the way hip hop and rap artist portray their self in real life is and has been a problem for the hip hop culture for some time. And many who are speaking out now seem to be riding the 'wave' of Imus for some kind of recognition.

Reverend Al Sharpton touch a nerve among the industry in March of '05 when he called for a 90-day ban on radio and TV airplay for any artist using violence to settle a score or hype a record – lets take that and build and add 'moral clauses' to artists contracts and hold them accountable for their real life.

In any social event or organization that has gone corporate there are moral clauses built into the contract. Be it sports, beauty pageants, Hollywood stars and many other fields, people can be held accountable if they 'damage' a company's or a sports team's reputation – why not hip hop culture. Big business is treating the culture as a cash cow so if you are a high profile member who is 'damaging' the culture, lets hold you accountable.

Over 75% of endorsement contracts today contain a moral clause that allows companies to exit without penalty in the event of an incident by the celebrity that greatly damages the company's reputation.

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Hip hop and rap are BIG business and it may be time to implement a moral clause into record deals. Instead of violence and bad headlines being an incentive for street cred and stardom, it should be labeled ignorant behavior and contracts should be voided.

Now I was told that the record companies would loose too much money if this was to be done so that is why it is not done. If a record company had a lot of product to recall the cost would be staggering.

But that aside, if an artist has a 3 album deal and screws up on album 1 then there is no 2 or 3. Or if he has a distribution deal, it can become null and void. The same would go for a development deal.

Hip hop is a business we have to face that. Corporate greed has infiltrated the culture and we have so many just out for them selves that the culture is being lost and blamed for every ill of society. Something has to give before the corporate major labels run the hip hop culture into the ground and then move on to the next thing they set out to destroy, leaving hip hop scattered and in shambles.

And this is not only violence or drugs or guns – it has to do with our women, our children and the entire culture of hip hop. Hip hop is so misrepresented today, even by the artists, that if an artist can feel as comfortable as Don Imus with the word 'hoe' flowing out of their mouth toward any woman then that artist should be seen in the same light that we all see Don Imus in now.

The major record labels have been quiet on this. I have heard none of them speak out about hip hop or the content they endorse and spend millions of dollars to put out. Where is their accountability?

With all the talk now about the perception of hip hop now is a good time to take drastic measures to ensure hip hop culture is represented as the true hip hop culture and not what corporate America has built around hip hop culture to make a buck.

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If these so called leaders of the hip hop culture are truly concerned, let them also include some sort of morals clause in their 'by invitation only meetings'; but those meetings will most likely spend their time involved on 'damage control' and how to keep their cash cow alive a little longer.