

From Boss to Da Boss Why Do Rappers Gotta Front By Davey D

Written by Davey D ID4463

Thursday, 31 July 2008 06:20 -

When I first heard about the drama surrounding Miami rap star and now former correction officer Rick Ross and him fooling the world into thinking he was major crime figure connected to the drug game, two things came immediately to mind. The first, was the hook to the song; "It's hard out here for a pimp" You know how it goes-

Ya know it's hard out for a pimp when he's trying to get this money for the rent For the Cadillacs and gas money spent We have a whole lot of bitches jumping ship

I kept thinking to myself, how brilliantly Rick Ross had pimped his fans into thinking he was a kingpin moving kilos when reality he was locking up kingpins. I guess if you need to stretch it out a bit one can make the case that Rick Ross aka "Da Boss" was King of the Pen (Guardian of the cell blocks).

As for the all the "keys" Rick Ross has been moving...well let's just put that in perspective. Prison guards have lots of keys. They have lots of keys that they use to open the cell doors to all the kingpins they're guarding. From what we can tell the only "keys" Mr Ross was moving was the ones he used as he shuffled inmates from cell to cell or the piano keys he may have played when making a song.

(LOL)

All kidding aside, we can get real deep for a minute and bring folks up to speed on a few things. Drugs are definitely inside these prison walls and oftentimes the people on the frontline of smuggling and moving of contraband are the guards. Let's not get it twisted. We can run a lengthy article about the corruption inside these prisons. We can talk about the brutality and outright killings many guards have unjustifiably unleashed on inmates. We can talk about the staged fights for money. We can talk about the drug trafficking. We can talk about guards pimping these prisoners and using them as slave labor. We can talk about how it goes down and the slave camp conditions in many of these now privately run institutions.

Check out this insightful interview from a former prison guard Tim Hamilton who is working on a book exposing fake rappers. Here he gives an incredible break down of how it went down for

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him...He also explains how the term "Boss" is often used by inmates in Southern jails when referring to correction officers. According to Hamilton it means 'sorry Son of a Bitch" backwards.

It makes you wonder if Rick Ross was sending a coded message to those on the inside? Was he secretly giving them something to cheer about because of he was one of them finally made it? Check out Tim's article at the link below: <http://keepittrill.com/media/?p=239#more-239>

Personally, I'm not that concerned about Rick Ross for not living up to his hip hop costume. After all, we've always made room for such contradictions. Over the years we've had conscious rappers who in real life weren't so conscious. We've had revolutionary-Pro Black cats who never dated sistas. We've had cats telling you to vote who never voted. We had rappers telling us to say no to drugs while doing drugs.

We've had cats who've named themselves after dictators and despots who in real life were as soft as they come. We've had soft looking bubble gum types who'd be the first to lay you out if you stepped to them wrong. We have intellectuals who weren't that damn bright. We've had all sorts of studio gangsters who never been to jail, never shot a gun and never killed anyone. And to be honest I'm glad. The bottom line had always been as long as the music was good we've allowed the contradictions. Life is full of contradiction. So Rick Ross is part of long tradition of cats who just didn't live up to the hype and his prevailing image.

Like I said I'm not as concerned about him not being a drug dealer as I am as to what sort of cat he was when he wore that badge. Was he a cool cat just trying to do his job or was he punkass officer exploiting and brutalizing inmates to satisfy some corrosive sadistic kink? To me that's the make or break.

The Rick Ross we know aka William Leonard Roberts II who took his name from real life Cali drug dealer Freeway Ricky Ross (who by the way was happy about the name jacking), has been while steadfastly denying his law enforcement past. Rick has been denying everything in spite of massive documents uncovered by the smoking gun website detailing everything from his application, resignation letters, assignment details and some sort of pledge sheet where he checked boxes affirming that he'd be willing to shoot and use physical force against inmates.

Now, I can understand the denials. Rick Ross has spent all his proverbial "rent money"

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(credibility)on resurrecting this "cadillac" of a public persona of being a drug kingpin. As word of his deception becomes more widespread it can have serious financial implications as fickle fans may bounce off to check for someone else who they think is keeping it real. Not only does Rick stand to suffer financially, but so does his label Slip-N-Slide/Def Jam. At a time when the industry is seriously suffering, we have corporate interests who need to see "Da Boss remain Da Boss". Like the song says; It's hard out here for a pimp. The question is who is pimping who?

If Rick Ross wants to remain the kilo pushing kingpin Boss the only thing left for him to do is to follow the example laid out by real kilo movers and real hardened criminals. All he has to do is look at some of the folks who've occupied the White House. Pick a president, any president and look at their "get down"(mode of operation). When pressed, all these people do is deny, deny and deny. It's the mantra they live by-deny everything until people believe your denial as truth.

A good example, is what the late "drug kingpin" and former President Ronald Wilson Reagan did during the now infamous Iran-Contra scandal. He was often called the Great Communicator and was apparently effective as he eloquently and convincingly denied knowing anything about the inner workings of this scandal even after it was more than obvious that he did. The end result is that we know have airports and freeways named after this man and folks convinced he was the second coming of Jesus even though he was his boys were basically crack dealers.

For those who don't know about Iran-Contra, back in the early-mid 80s, in an effort to raise money and wage an unauthorized, illegal war in places like El Salvador, the Reagan administration with the help of the CIA raised money for weapons by selling drugs. The CIA started leaking drugs into the hood helping set off the crack epidemic that still haunts us to this day. They hooked up with Rick Ross' namesake Freeway Rick Ross who at the time had no idea his suppliers had these deep political ties. He came into prominence, became the poster child for drug dealing and became the ultimate fall guy. Much of this is detailed in a newspaper series turned book called Dark Alliances. The paper I write for the San Jose Mercury news first broke this story with a writer named Gary Webb.

His detailing of the CIA-drug dealing connection was impeccable and the fall out was explosive. The government circled the wagons, denied denied and denied and then tried to destroy the San Jose Mercury news and later Gary Webb's credibility and career. A few years ago Webb killed himself under very questionable and mysterious circumstances. I did one of the first radio interviews with him. Dude was stand up guy.

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Going back to Rick Ross, what's interesting to note is that The Real Ricky Ross said he tried to communicate to dude and let him know this was not the way to go. Freeway Rick says he regrets the damage he caused in the community and wants to reverse it. Maybe Rick Ross should be pushing that message and not the drug dealing one. The correction officer Rick Ross along with his corporate backers want to let you know that "everyday he's hustling".

What's even more disturbing is the larger problem of rap artists feeling like they have to criminalize their pasts in order to make it.

Where does that come from? What is it about us within Hip Hop that we can not make room for folks to simply be themselves? How did terms like "Keeping it Real" and "Being True to the Streets"? get equated to being criminal?

Did we really want Rick to be a drug kingpin? Our all our hidden fantasies hinging on the realness of the artists we admire? How did terms like "Keeping it Real" and "Being True to the Streets"? get equated to being criminal? Why do the streets always have to be about danger? What happened to "Peace, Unity , Love and Having Fun"? Who twisted the game and made such phrases seem corny?

Are we putting unrealistic expectations on them to the point that they feel they have to live up to their image take penitentiary chances in trying to replicate the madness they rap about. I don't know if its some sort of unconscious quest for power and respect, corporate and individual greed or just plain old dick riding that leads to people trying to be something that their not.

In a recent radio interview Rick Ross says;

"In the game we in, it's real competitive. Competitors have to do what they have to do to eat. We making the best music. Y'all seen the BET Awards, y'all saw the magazine. We the biggest in the game, we the best in the game. Just keeping it real. And anytime somebody can attack my character, like I said, you get nothing from the Boss. I don't give haters the pleasure....I'm one of the realest sources of this real street music in this game. Straight out of Miami, straight out of M-I-Yayo. One of my closest homies was on America's Wanted"

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I don't care what interview you're reading or hearing inevitably someone always gets around to referencing a friend they have in jail, the short time they spent in jail or how they are close to the streets. I always wanna ask "what streets? Wall Street? K-Street in DC where all the lobbyist are? What streets are you talking about and do you really own those streets? Last I looked it seemed like it was the police shooting unarmed Black men 50 times from coast to coast who were running these so called streets while big time developers were knocking down housing projects and and gentrifying the hood without any concern as to where the folks they displace would land.

I guess one of the biggest ironies to Rick Ross Da Boss being exposed as a fake was that dude never got the memo or heeded with caution after another Def Jam rapper using the moniker Boss who also got hung out to dry 14 years earlier. Some of y'all are old enough to recall back in the early 90s when the west coast was in full swing and whole gangster rap thing via NWA and then later Death Row was setting the pace. The success of west coast gangster rap led to larger industry corporate interests wanting to get a piece of the pie which resulted in a full scale marketing of inner city pathologies and stereotypes.

The story goes as follows... In 1993 DJ Quik came across this female artist out of Detroit and put her own this record featuring AMG. Russell Simmons heard the cut and liked it so much he signed the girl and her DJ partner to his label Def Jam West. She teamed up with another Cali producer named Def Jeff who did a song called "Deeper" which sampled Barry White and the rest is history.

Lichelle Laws aka Boss and her partner Irene Moore aka DJ Dee put out an album called Born Gangstaz which went on to be one of the all-time top selling female rap albums of all time. The Boss was this new breed of gangster because she was a female and came from the mean streets of Detroit. In her interviews she talked about how she lived this real hardcore life where she sold dope and did all sorts of crazy stuff. She was setting the standard for an industry that was demanding its artists "be street oriented" and "gangster to the fullest". All that was selling Boss and that album until the Wall Street Journal caught up with her and let it be known this hardcore gangbanger was a middle class sista who came from a two parent home and attended Catholic School.

In the case of Boss and 14 years later Da Boss-Rick Ross, was that big corporate interests along with legions of fans most of whom live outside the hood don't ever seem to be happy seeing Black folks doing well for themselves. Its like if we aren't immersed in the all the stereotypes and pathologies of hood life then something is wrong. People then wanna start calling folks bougie or 'sell out'. It's funny how a guy like Will Smith is somehow considered

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corny because he's intelligent, smiles a lot, doesn't curse in his raps, takes care of his seeds and figured out how to make 20 million dollars a film while some cat down the street who beats his girl, doesn't bother taking care of his 4 kids from 3 different women and raps about selling keys which in reality he never moved, somehow is the real deal.

At the end of the day this is all supposed to be entertainment but we keep blurring the lines and I'm not quite sure why. All of us play a role and have a responsibility in this thing. First, if William Leonard Roberts II wants to morph into being Rick Ross the hustling dope dealer then so be it. He has a right to do that and if he can tap into an audience so be it. Hell I like Godfather films and and actors like Joe Pesci and Al Pacino found a way to tap into and satisfy the wants of audience members like me. The challenge that artists like Rick Ross have is that Al Pacino will always be bigger than Scarface. He will always be Al Pacino who played Scarface. It seems like William Leonard Roberts ain't nobody without Rick Ross and thus this is where the script must be flipped.

These artists need to expand the personas that they adorn and make room for the characters they play on record to also be loving, caring, productive members in the community who don't have to show bullet wounds and prison papers to be accepted or they best figure out a way to make their real life personas be bigger then the fake ones they adorn while rapping. In other words listen to Biggie and don't get high off your own supply. Stop letting this thing called the music industry pressure you into drinking the Kool Aid.

You see what we have today is a former, perhaps slightly insecure correction officer who became a wannabe hard talking, kilo hustling kingpin and underworld mob boss who is being pimped by an industry that masquerades as a business entity that champions free speech while in reality its really an intellectual property slave owner, cultural colonizer and exploiter. That's not a good look in 2008 and that has got to change.