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**Weapons of Mass Distraction:
Mind Control, Zombification and the Neutralizing of Black People
Student Writers' Corner
By Tolu Olorunda**

BlackCommentator.com Student Guest Commentator

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It is not a startling claim, to state that black folks are living in a society that is antithetical to their independence. Nor is it strange news to assert that this repressive society has successfully taken over the control-vault that drives and directs the minds of black people. This diabolic mechanism is not new to the Black experience in America. It drips the blood of slaves everywhere it goes. For just as public lynching episodes were used to inject fear, shame and horror into "would-be" runaway slaves, the modern-day news outlets, and more culpable, the corporate media, has picked up where their forefathers left off.

The senseless tirades of such "bonafide" journalism-constructs as FOX News shreds all skepticism to validate the perceived insignificance of black life in this western empire. While a federal indictment against FOX is most apt, Rupert Murdoch is sadly not alone in his mendacious brand of news-reporting. One need only look back at the mainstream media's unfortunate coverage of Hurricane Katrina, and shutter at the "feed-the-children-like" depiction of our dear brothers and sisters.

Our reality today is as tragic as that of yesterday. Afrika Bambaataa, Hip-Hop's Godfather and Founder, once said that the media's portrayal of us is used as a psychological tool to devalue and operate on the consciousness of black people. In Hip-Hop, there is an indisputable effect of co-operate control over the airwaves of radio and TV stations. It is also widely known that the "payola" system that destroyed radio stations in the 90s, has been reawakened for a renewed license in the new millennium. This methodology supplies the Big-Name executives, with all the muscle they need, to imbued poison into the heads of young black, brown and even white

kids.

What is altogether more saddening is that often, black deejays and rappers are the axis of evil around which these corporate monsters revolve. Such acquiescence and traitorship is what Professor Griff, of the radical group Public Enemy, calls, "The Zombification of Hip-Hop." The Hip-Hop industry is inculcated with an inordinate amount of Caucasian executives, who see their role as limitless, in determining what gets played on the radio, shown on the television and won at award shows. For most "industry-insiders", the names, Jimmy Iovine, David Geffen, Andrew Lack, Rick Cummings and Sumner Redstone hold substantive weight. While it might be convenient to accuse the "white-boys" of controlling the Hip-Hop stream, their entry into the Hip-hop realm was arranged by such complacent and obsequious black executives as L.A Reid, P. Diddy, Russell Simmons and Bob Johnson.

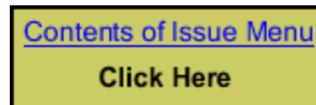
At a Federal Communications Commission hearing last year, Legendary Hip Hop star, "KRS One" spoke saying, "The issue is not ownership; and we should be owning more, no doubt. But what difference does it make if you own a station...If your heart is not in the right place, it don't matter who owns the stations, you're going to keep pushing that same nonsense." This executive presence within Hip-Hop has effectively silenced the echoes of internal criticism, while making incoherent excuses for the shame it produces. Music Mogul, Russell Simmons has unrelentingly and quite pathetically labeled all rappers as poets, doing nothing other than "reflecting the conditions of their neighborhoods." NYOIL, the New York rapper, caused a stir in late 2006, with a song titled "Y'all should all get lynched", calling for the lynching of certain rappers he felt had elevated symbol over substance. He posted in a video, pictures of those rappers he believed to have disgraced Hip-Hop with their "coonery" and "minstrelism." Hip-Hop Scholar and Georgetown University professor, Michael Eric Dyson, spoke about this phenomena in his latest book, writing, "A tortured racial history feeds this learned behavior, sustained now as a self-perpetuating cultural practice."

Ever since the emergence of the rap group, N.W.A, there has been the rehashed debate over what has come to be known as "Gangsta Rap." Many Hip-Hop scholars argue that a radical distinction must be made to clarify the difference between "Reality Rap" and "Gangsta Rap." "Reality Rap," they suggest, is a vocal artistic-reflection of the poverty-stricken and crime-filled conditions of many "chocolate-cities" across America, while "Gangsta-Rap" is a scheme marketed by big-money industries to exploit and commodify those conditions. Singer, Alicia Keys, recently made a statement that astounded and shocked the majority of her fans. She inferred that the U.S Government played a part in the creation of "Gangsta rap" and that its primary objective was the mis-education of young black males, and the proliferation of black on black animosity. To be sure, a surplus of entertainment blogs and news sites, paying uncritical deference to her words; viciously attacked the singer, berating her for being involved in such conspiracy-theorist activity. What they failed to see, however, is that the "Reaganomics" era laid the foundation for the aggressively-toned form of Hip-Hop that has dominated the airwaves for the last 20 yrs. This couldn't possibly be a product of happenstance.

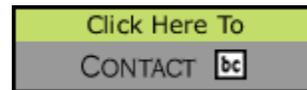
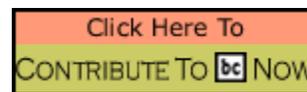
Taking this reality into account for all that its worth, the inanimate response to the Sean Bell verdict reveals a troubling truth. It is apparent to me, that the mind of the average black male/female has undergone a sort-of "Novacaining" process that

renders the soul numb and inactive. It is disconcerting to see such an inappropriate reaction – such as the Rev. Al Sharpton’s “mock pray-in” last Wednesday - to a fearless display of “police-megalomania.” With a history replete of such go-getters and thoroughbreds as Harriet Tubman, Nat Turner, Sojourner Truth and Marcus Garvey, our submissiveness to the system of oppression is embarrassing. If it were convenient, our people would have no problem being “professional waiters,” “bus-boying” for the structure of exploitation. Through intimidation and fear-mongering, radicalism has been savagely reduced to lunacy, and the younger generation sees it unfit to actively pursue a path of freedom-fighting. This precisely is what accounts for the selective amnesia directed at historic-organizations like the Black Panther Party and MOVE. The promised land has stared us in the face all along, but our “corpse-mentality” has steadfastly prevented us from entry into it. I’m hopeful in the midst of melancholy, for as the Jamaican musician, Damian Marley, recently sang, “I know we’re gonna make it, it’s not too late, no we’re gonna make it!”

BlackCommentator.com Guest Student Commentator, Tolu Olorunda, is an 18-year-old local activist/writer and a Nigerian immigrant. Click [here](#) to reach Tolu Olorunda.



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