

“Is Ludacris Ludicrous?”

by

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Is the Billboard Hot 100 climbing rap single “Runaway Love” by Ludacris ludicrous? You may think that this effort to temper the run-a-way Hip-Hop money machine is ludicrous. So we’re even. I think that Ludacris may be ludicrous and you feel the same way about me.

Let’s see who’s really ludicrous. No question about it, no child should suffer abuse and one is too many. However, I think that when “Runaway Love” is broadcast without the related video, it may be interpreted as telling a sad and possibly overstated story that could be linked directly to Black girls because Ludacris is unmistakably Black. All of a sudden, the proverbial “strong Black woman” has become the helpless child victim of sexual abuse and gang violence. Is this recently recognized “reality” the precipitator of the “strong Black woman” phenomenon, or is it just another play on the short-lived consciousness of the world?

Short-lived, because a new, hot Hip-Hop single comes around every few weeks; each replacing its predecessor. These singles tell a story, create a mood, or start a fad that is over in short order. How many youth can identify the top, hot Hip-Hop single from last February?

A play on the consciousness of the world because the world hears and loves Black rap music. At the same time, any living, conscious human being who hears the story of runaway girls Lisa, Nicole, Stacy, and Erica, without seeing the related video, is likely to develop anger toward the men who are perceived to be playing these dastardly roles in these girls’ lives. Enough anger to come to hate the boys and men who do drugs, beat and sexually assault young girls, and impregnate them before walking away.

If the stories in “Runaway Love” can be construed to depict what is occurring in the Black community, leaving aside for the moment their veracity, what else can we expect as reactions from each other and the rest of the world? We can only expect to be despised, accused, and abused by those who have the power to do so, because we create hell for the least among us.

Moreover, what is the world to think about a people who have transformed the safest and most secure haven that we know—home—into hell?

But how true are Ludacris’ lyrics? How often are adult Black males convicted of sexual assault involving minors? It’s hard to say, because data on this specific crime category are not readily available. The Federal Bureau of Investigation’s *Uniformed Crime Report* for 2005 indicated that adult Blacks were charged in 32.4 percent of all reported forcible rape cases and in 23.7 percent of sex offense (other than forcible rape and prostitution) cases. However, a 1995 Report from the U.S. Department of Justice indicated that “women of all races and Hispanic and non-Hispanic women were about equally vulnerable” to violence (sexual and otherwise) by persons they know. Interestingly, a 2006 report from the Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault revealed that, based on a study of exonerations during the period 1989-2003, 50 percent of exonerated

rape defendants were Black males. The reality is that rape and violence against women is a huge problem in nations around the world. Should Black American males be singled out?

How often are females the victim of gang violence? It is common knowledge that gangs and the related violence overwhelmingly concern males. Yes, the media can be counted on to blow up a story when a young girl is killed tragically by a stray bullet. But the preponderance of cases involving gang-related homicides (intended or unintended) involve mothers and fathers weeping over the loss of their sons, not their daughters.

On Black teen pregnancy, Ludacris is way off. Yes, the rate of Black teen pregnancy is high, but it has been coming down precipitously over the past decade; it fell by 40 percent from 1990 to 2002 according to the Guttmacher Institute (one of the top three sources for statistics on teenage pregnancy in the United States). That is not to say that teen pregnancy is not a problem; but it is a problem that Black Americans are addressing and the statistics bear this out.

Ludacris may be ludicrous because in this African American History month, a time when we can boldly explore our history and our positive contributions to American culture, he could be rapping about the positive instead of about the negative. But just as negative news sells, negative and incriminating (true or false) Hip-Hop singles sell. It appears that Ludacris and Mary J. went for the—shall we say—bling-bling, not for the upliftment or preservation of Black people and Black culture.

If Ludacris thought that he was doing Black folk a favor by telling “the story,” again he seems ludicrous. In the context of human history when people of the world judge each other, Ludacris has given the world justification to call Black people, especially Black men, inhuman and unfit for inclusion around the table of humanity because of what can be perceived to be an overstatement of Black male abuse of little Black girls.

To prevent this outcome, Ludacris should require that “Runaway love” be broadcast only with video.

Happy African-American History month!

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