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“A Reconsideration of Hip-Hop Music: Who is the Opposer?”

A recent TikTok post by KayeDeeNation vigorously condemned so-called gangsta rap as the villain responsible for the difficulties facing young Black men in America today.¹ More than that, this video recirculated an old blame game from nearly three decades ago. Of course, it was tragic then that C. Delores Tucker thrust herself into a fake protest against hip-hop (rap) music and specifically, the young Black men who wrote, performed, and recorded the music.

By 1993, shadow elites had commissioned C. Delores Tucker to speak out against what she would term the corrupting influence of hip-hop.² A fairly well-known figure at the time, Tucker was spoiling for a fight. As a former Secretary of State for Pennsylvania she had led a successful fight to lower the voting age from 21 to 18. Her devotion to speak out against rap music and young Black men, however, was misguided and quite counter-productive.

It appears she was a recruit to the cause against what has become the most popular form of music in the history of the world. She aligned herself with the police and elites, who represented the government. The government, reflecting the political dynamics of the time had shifted its focus. President Ronald Reagan and his administration began to perceive the threat against un-wokefulness.

Perhaps the most visible part of the government being exposed by rap music was the police. Urban police in heavily populated urban centers, such as Los Angeles, began to push back against rap music, which cast them often as villains. We will never know the names of those who orchestrated the media attacks and the rhetoric designed to sway public opinion against hip-hop culture, but we do know that Tucker, a Black woman, delivered one form of the message for the police. Did the Rev. Dr. Calvin O. Butts receive external influence and motivation to oppose hip-hop?³ We don't know.

¹ See KayeDeeNation (2022), “Message to the Black Man!!!” TikTok; https://www.tiktok.com/@kayeedeenation/video/7134484631637937454?r=1&t=8V3USMj31D9&is_from_webap_p=v1&item_id=7134484631637937454 (Ret. 091522).

² Jordan A. Conway (2015), *Living in a Gangsta's Paradise: Dr. C. Delores Tucker's Crusade Against Gangsta Rap Music in the 1990s*, Virginia Commonwealth University Scholars Compass (A VCU Master of Arts Thesis; <https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4822&context=etd>) (Ret 091522).

³ Clifford J. Levy (1993), “Harlem Protest of Rap Lyrics Draws Debate and Steamroller,” *The New York Times*; <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/06/06/nyregion/harlem-protest-of-rap-lyrics-draws-debate-and-steamroller.html> (Ret. 091522).

We know that Butts, Tucker, and other Black leaders of that time and today, had good reason to engage the fight against “spiritual wickedness in high places.” Tucker had been fighting for a long time. She had marched alongside Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the 1960s. By 1993, she had become a warrior fighting the wrong battle. On November 23, 1993, Snoop Dogg’s debut album, *Doggy Style*, was released. Tucker picked a fight and wittingly or unwittingly joined forces with White people who wished to keep Black people in an exploitation zone.

Herein lies the revelation that begs to be illuminated to Black folk, writ large, but especially those seeking to lead. In one of the most crucial pronouncements of the last century, Muhammad Ali spoke plainly when replying to queries about his intention to fight or not fight against the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War. Replying to White college students and the press, Ali hit ‘em with: “You my opposer.”⁴ By that statement, Ali meant not just the Whites in front of him, but White people generally. “You my opposer.”

Black folk must recognize collectively the war against Black men for what it is. It is a form of slow genocide, which has been executed by White males (from the KKK to police) historically and remains ongoing. Emblematically, in the execution of their policing duties and armed with lethal weapons, police have mastered the confession, “I felt in danger of losing my life.”

To an unarmed young Black man?

In the meantime, the police and those who gather statistics are fixated on gang-killings, reportedly high among young Black men, and so-called Black-on-Black crime. Law enforcement officials seemingly leap at the opportunity to highlight what the public now believes to be high rates of homicide among Black men.

Seemingly following Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s benign neglect philosophy in reverse, the FBI and all law enforcement agencies never, ever spotlight the extraordinarily high rate of so-called suicides in the United States—among White men.

Know this: Of the 45,979 deaths by suicide in the United States in 2020, 61.4 percent were White males.⁵

That turns out to be 28,242 White boys and men: Homicide. Or did you, too, buy into the fiction that a suicide is not a homicide? Or that so many of the “suicides” result from the last bullet fired by a White boy committing a mass killing? Now, wait a minute. In the same year of 2020, 5,123 White males were reported to have been a homicide victim.⁶ Doing the math, that’s a total of 33,365 homicides. By White men.

⁴ See “Muhammad Ali – On Vietnam, Hardships, & the True Opposer & Enemy of Justice,” YouTube; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqOE2zTlg3E> (Ret. 091522).

⁵ Daniel C. Ehlman, *et al* (2022), “Changes in Suicide Rates – United States, 2019 and 2020,” *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (February 25); <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7108a5.htm> (Ret. 091522).

⁶ See “Murder in the US: Number of victims in 2020, by race/ethnicity and gender,” Statista; <https://www.statista.com/statistics/251877/murder-victims-in-the-us-by-race-ethnicity-and-gender/> (Ret. 091522). Statista is cited because it is the only published source on homicides by race/ethnicity for 2020. Apparently, official government sources are suppressing these data due to uncertainty concerning a severe spike in homicides during

In one year, alright?

Alright. Black men were the victims of murder 8,469 times (including those unarmed and Black men shot by the police) in 2020.⁷ Black males committed suicide 2,666 times in 2020 (homicides).⁸ That is a total of 11,135 victims of violence.

White men are three times more likely to be a victim of violence (most self-inflicted) than Black men. Why would you drop your head when Trump gets up to speak about all the violence in Chicago (“where the Black people at”)? When Trump would talk about sending the National Guard to Chicago to clean up the violence, why didn’t Black men dismiss him and tell him to go to the suburbs of Mar-o-Largo and stop the middle-aged White men from killing themselves?

We must get locked into: “You my opposer!”

As such, Whites who control this economy and the government are dedicated to convincing us over, and over again that Black people are inferior. They have never stopped attacking Black men. The violence (by police) is intended to immobilize Black men to remain under the stress of a low-level war right here in America. Simultaneously, others using sophisticated propaganda and brainwashing techniques keep us under the illusion that we are less than Whites. They push the idea that rap music is the culprit—responsible for death-dealing violence, decaying morals, and the absence of masculine responsibility. It is a clever distraction from the truth, straight from the deceiver.

Whether you are still in love with ol’ skool R&B, gospel music or European, so-called classical music, we should always reject the false notion of hip-hop being the root of all evil and responsible for pornography or misogyny. You already know Barbie was sexualized and given to our children as baby dolls. Ain’t nobody Black had nothing to do with designing and manufacturing Barbie—or Ken—to give to our children. We gave Barbie to our little girls because we were bamboozled.

Did Snoop Dogg advocate for the proliferation of opiates to afflict Whites in trailer parks in rural America? No! Snoop Dogg advocated for the freedom to smoke weed without interference from the po-po. They prosecuted innocent Black men for smoking weed but ignored medical doctors illegally writing prescriptions for outrageous amounts of oxytocin. In 2020 some 47,304 White Americans, compared to 11,574 Black Americans, were struck dead by opioid overdose!⁹ Nobody’s laughing. Nobody’s celebrating.

Death by suicides and opioids are nothing but homicides! White people killing themselves and each other in record numbers demonstrating the most devastating disparity—the unnecessary death

2020. See Mike Gonzalez (2022), “What the Media Doesn’t Want You to Know about 2020’s Record Murder Spike,” Heritage Foundation; <https://www.heritage.org/crime-and-justice/commentary/what-the-media-doesnt-want-you-know-about-2020s-record-murder-spike> (Ret. 091522).

⁷ Ibid. (Statista 2022).

⁸ Op. cit. (Elhman, 2022).

⁹ See “Opioid Overdose Deaths by Race/Ethnicity” (2022), Kaiser Family Foundation;

<https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/opioid-overdose-deaths-by-raceethnicity/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D> (Ret. 091522).

gap that Whites don't want to talk about. They would much rather for you and me to point a finger at each other. Or to dwell on reading and math disparities manufactured by the Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment for Education Progress (NAEP) to convince Black parents that their child has a reading and counting problem.

Instead, we are going to focus our attention on the real agent of mass destruction. From the beginning, the United States Government told the world that a Black man was only worth three-fifths of a White man. Later, the United States Government used Roger Taney to announce that "A Black man had no rights that a White man was bound to respect." Roger B. Taney did not say "Dred Scott," he said a "Black man." Examine this excerpt from Taney's decision in the Dred Scott case.

They [Black Americans] had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the White race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior, that they had no rights which the White man was bound to respect; and that the Negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit. He was bought and sold and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic, whenever a profit could be made by it.¹⁰

All of us, who are dedicated to the proposition that Black Americans should be elevated up from second-class status in this American drama, must likewise be dedicated to teaching our brothers and sisters how we are unflinchingly prepared to fight. And we know who the opposer is. The aforementioned TikTok video espouses the idea that Black people, themselves, are to blame for the condition we are in, and that young Black men, who wrote jolting lyrics and told the story of the truth they saw, are the perpetrators of the evils they rap about. We must insist instead that we join with each other to demolish the lies and the liars. In the battle for the hearts and minds of Black America, we must respond to the lies with truth, and, yes, that means necessarily telling some ugly truths about White people, which they work so hard to keep in the dark. We must prevent distractions rooted in stories about our inferiority.

It really doesn't matter if White Americans or Black Americans, who would follow them, recognize the worldwide efficacy of rap or hip-hop. It seems that hip-hop is a cultural force that will be talked about a millennium from now. The brilliant young Black men, who invented and flexed this music and cultural force that is hip-hop, will be recited and studied in the future much as Shakespeare is studied today.

"I may have more in common with a White man who loves humanity than I do with a Black man who thinks he ought to call all women Bs and hoes," Butts said in a TV interview. "There is some point where we can't be pushed into this corner and say, you know, just for the sake of unity we ought to keep this quiet."¹¹

¹⁰ See page 12 of "The Dred Scott Decision: Opinion of Chief Justice Taney," The Library of Congress; <https://www.loc.gov/resource/lst.022/?sp=12> (Ret. 091522).

¹¹ Joel Anderson (2019), "The Reverend vs. Rap," *Slate Magazine*; <https://slate.com/culture/2019/11/slow-burn-tupac-biggie-reverend-calvin-butts.html> (Ret. 091522).

Rev. Calvin O. Butts, a pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem during the 1990s and still today, joined with C. Delores Tucker in condemning rap (hip-hop) artists of that day, some of whom are shown in the TikTok video. If Butts, Tucker (if she were alive), and KayeDeeNation relistened carefully to the music they have so vigorously condemned, and they still insist that rap artists (including those in the gangsta or g-funk category) are enemies of Black people, then they must be puppets in the hands of puppeteers.

Tucker, Butts, and KayeDeeNation all claim that rappers are used by the system; therefore, they are the enemy of Black people and Black culture. In the TikTok video, KayeDeeNation features a montage of rap artists ranging from Snoop Dogg-to-Jay Z, all while insisting they are the enemy. These three (Tucker, Butts, and KayeDeeNation) and others should clean up their thinking. Perhaps they should have really, really heard Muhammad Ali back in the day. When queried like the Scribes and Pharisees queried Jesus, Ali said: “You my opposer.”

Don’t get it twisted. Not the Viet Cong. No, no, no. “*You* my opposer.” Looked’em in the eye and told them.

Tucker (if she were alive), Butts, KayeDeeNation, *et al*, should look their benefactors in the eye and tell them: “You my opposer!” The enemy of Black folk is not Snoop Dogg who tells a story of South Central in which the character calls his woman “bitch.” If that’s his term of endearment for that particular woman, I ain’t mad ‘cause “they some Black women out here who will tell you in a minute, “I’m that bitch!” If Snoop or Biggie were to call certain women hoes who were trying to get on they tip cuz they wanted to get paid and it worked in the story they were telling, then why do I care? If I don’t like their artwork, then I’m not going to buy it—or listen to it. Since the records had a “Parental Guidance” advisory on the face of the album or CD cover, why you gon’ let your child listen to it? How about monitoring the music to which your children listen in advance of purchasing the music?

When you listen to the stuff these rap artists put out, the messages are not complicated or finessed. Two of the “messages” I have already distilled but here they are and others:

1. For America: I am growing up and living in poor conditions in my ‘hood.
2. The police are a big problem for me and all young men where I’m at.
3. I am trying to smoke this weed and I got to get around the police to get the weed.
4. I am going to make this money—this rap game is going to help me make this money.
5. I am gonna make this money and live a better life.

They knew the police were the problem. They knew the police were their opposers. They knew it was more than a rogue cop here or there. I wish I knew if, for sure, they recognized on a deeper level how the police were the puppets being manipulated by the elites—dedicated to making money.

Black people, such as Tucker (if she were alive today), Butts, KayeDeeNation, and the like, should discontinue promoting the misguided ideology that the victims of racist, systemic violence are the cause of the violence they suffer. These rap artists have continued to be truth-tellers about violence

and police brutality and the American dream to the whole world. Rap music has become the most worldwide music—in the world.

Snoop Dogg may be—probably most definitely is—the greatest single force to stand unwaveringly for the use of marijuana in the world. I cannot think of a single person who stood flat-footed for all these years celebrating smoking weed. Finally, some US state governments, but not the Federal Government, have decriminalized marijuana. Cannabis has been recognized as one of the most effective ingredients to include in treatment protocols for a variety of human ailments and diseases. In my view, Snoop Dogg is the first person, who comes to my mind when considering public recognition for an honor such as the Presidential Medal of Freedom. When is the last time you heard of someone being incarcerated for possession of a few grams of marijuana? That’s some freedom, right there.

Had Tucker and Butts, the police, and the White elites behind them, managed to extinguish the brilliance of these rap (hip-hop) artists, think of all the wealth that they gained for their families, which would have gone directly to White artists instead.

The following is a list of rap artists, whose faces KayeDeeNation included as visual imagery in his diatribe against gangsta rap. They are brilliant, talented artists who have shaped and elevated American culture and world culture. Their artistic contributions are nearly incalculable. Here is what you should know about these artists—if you don’t already know:¹²

Jay Z [Shawn Carter]. Became the first rap billionaire. He used “99 Problems and a Bitch Ain’t One” in his song not because he thought all women are bitches, but to tell the story of a police stop by a canine officer. Jay Z has been married to one woman—Beyoncé—for over 14 years, got three kids and none of them ever lived in the ghetto or in a single parent household. Jay Z will probably be better known for his business exploits than his rap artistry.

Dr. Dre [Andre Young]. Not only produced and performed on Doggy Style but on Eminem recordings. There was speculation that he might have been a billionaire ahead of Jay Z, but it appears his net worth peaked at \$800 million. Now divorced, Dr. Dre was married to his wife for over 24 years. Dr. Dre, like Jay Z, turned to business and accumulated much of his wealth through business ventures.

Ice Cube [O’Shea Jackson]. Forged a solo career after splitting with N.W.A, then transitioned to movie acting, directing, and producing. His net worth is reported at \$190 million. He produced “[A Contract with Black America](#),” a kind of strategic plan for the future of Blacks in this country. Ice Cube is the husband of one wife and his family includes five children with that lady. They have been married for 30 years.

Snoop Dogg [Calvin Broadus, Jr.]. A rap artist, clearly in the gangsta rap genre, who Tucker tried to cast as misogynist and violent. He has spent his adult life married to one woman—Shante (Taylor) Broadus, although they divorced and remarried in 2008. Snoop Dogg has a reported estimated net worth of \$150 million. Beginning in 2009, Snoop turned to a variety of business

¹² The background given here for these, selected hip-hop artists is widely available on the Internet via simple Google searches.

ventures to increase his wealth. Several of his business ventures involve the sale of weed or cannabis.

The following artists are displayed in the KayeDeeNation TikTok video, but can in no way be considered part of the gangsta-rap genre. Typically, they do not dwell significantly on misogynistic or violent themes in their musical presentations. I would not consider them as part of the gangsta-rap genre.

Nas [Nasir bin Olu Dara Jones]. It seems the most appropriate way to list Nas' net worth is to peg it at between \$70 million and \$200 million as many of his investments have come in recent years. There is some volatility given the nature of the enterprises in which Nas has invested, leading to the wide range in his estimated net worth. Nas divorced his wife of five years in 2010. From that union came a daughter. Previously, Nas fathered a child with an ex-fiancé. Nas' album sales worldwide exceed 30 million.

Puff Daddy [Sean Combs]. Puff Daddy has not been married, but has six children from three different children. He produced not only Biggie Smalls, but Mariah Carey also. Recent estimates of Puff Daddy's net worth are in the \$900 million range. Early, Puff Daddy owned clothing lines and he invested in alcoholic beverages. A record industry executive, Diddy, as he has also been known, achieved success as a producer and performer.

Kodak Black [Bill Kapri, born Dieuson Octave]. Kodak Black was born and raised in a public housing project in Pompano Beach, Florida. Very early, he met with trouble in elementary and middle school, and ended up in Federal prison after doing time in local jails.

Nelly [Cornell Haynes, Jr.]. Nelly is a St. Louis rapper with heavy crossover appeal with White audiences. There is absolutely no reason to include Nelly as visual imagery in a video condemning gangsta rap. Nelly was born in Texas to a father who spent much of his life in the United States Air Force.

Finally, I consider two of the greatest of all time rap (hip-hop) artists are included in the images flashed during the KayeDeeNation TikTok video. Neither, can be considered gangsta, although Tupac Shakur was a member of the West Coast group, Digital Underground, before launching his solo career. Both Tupac and Biggie were born and raised in Brooklyn.

Tupac Shakur [Lesane Crooks]. Tupac was assassinated, September 7, 1996, in Las Vegas. His father and mother were members of the Black Panther Party. His assassination was no different than Fred Hampton's in Chicago back in 1969. Tupac was the target of the police and the elites—his potential to be the voice of the people was too large to ignore. The likes of Tucker and Butts were the voices raised to null and void rap artists and organize middle-class, responsible Blacks against them. There was no public outcry against the police and the system when the FBI refused to find Tupac and Biggie's killers. Tupac has sold over 75 million albums worldwide—most of these sales followed his assassination.

Biggie Smalls aka Notorious B.I.G. [Christopher Wallace]. Biggie is probably the most creative lyricist of all times. He was assassinated six months after the murder of Tupac in Las Vegas. The

Notorious B.I.G was shot down in Los Angeles in 1997. Over 58 million of his records have been sold. Biggie was married to R&B/hip hop vocalist, Faith Evans. He dated other ladies while married and fathered two children, one with his wife.

Although I can happily report that, despite the early murders of Tupac and Biggie, the progenitors of so-called gangsta rap, these highly talented hip-hop artists managed to do quite well for themselves in the music business. It is no secret that Black musicians have often struggled with making money in the music business. Record companies, producers, agents, and others managed to siphon off the earnings of many R&B performers.

It might be of considerable comfort for the Black folk, perhaps now old and greying, to know that, even as they were being influenced to be an opposer to the most dynamic art form in the world, these hip hop artists were not addicted to any particular ideology, except the doctrine of making money. Yes, indeed, they were very skilled at telling stories, chronicling what their eyes could see happening right in front of them in the hood, but they were simultaneously observing lessons to be drawn from America business. Therefore, many of them were keen to draw pertinent lessons in finance and in deal-making and in branding and in self-promotion—plotting their way to hefty pay days and keeping in mind how to keep large portions of they money in their pockets and in the bank. That they were able to do all of this is more than surprisingly impressive. After all, most were the products of middle-class values—paramount tenets of which are to do your schoolwork, get a good education, get a job, pay your taxes and social security, and get a good retirement.

Somehow, they broke with the Black American infatuation with, and the burdens of, belief in the Christian religion. Vast numbers of “successful” Black folk, believe they owe their success to a devotion to Christian beliefs, and in a rock-solid foundation of living right and doing right. Saying the right things and behaving the right way. When you do that, it is believed, you make it easier for the White man to let you sit at the table: “Come over here, where the table is spread, and the feast of the White man is going on.”

Tucker and Butts were both under the influence of the Christian religion, misappropriating the ideology undergirding racism which supported the entire idea of Black inferiority. They coupled to the ideology of race and racism an extreme devotion to identifying criminality and sinfulness to Black people. Their obsession with words found in the lyrics of so-called gangsta rappers trace to the need for Black people to shape themselves to standards of behavior and conduct as demanded by Whites. In the instance of early 1990s gangsta rap, the police used Butts’ and Tucker’s over-moralization of Black culture to fight against lyrics that called out the police, which suggested taking out the amoral police with the phrase, “187 on an undercover cop.”

The police strategy of using black surrogates to fight their PR (public relations) battle backfired. Hip-hop surged. These young Black men, who designed and delivered lyrics portraying what they saw every day in the ‘hood, are now middle-aged and rich. They stood on what they wrote. Yes, Biggie and Tupac were taken out and the FBI and other law enforcement agencies could not (did not) find their killers. However, the others became successful businessmen as well as artists. Today, Kanye West is reportedly worth \$2.2 billion. That places him in the number one spot in the world among music artists. Also, in the top ten of music artists is Jay Z, at \$1.4 billion. Sean

“Puffy” Combs is at \$900 million, sixth in line. Rihanna, not a rapper, but certainly hip-hop-influenced, is number 2 in the world with her net worth reported in June 2022 at \$1.4 billion.

Finding financial solvency and creating wealth despite obstacles presented by government and government’s ally (religion) is quite possible in this America. That is because America’s elites are most often businessmen, who are preoccupied with making money. No question about it, Black hip-hop artists have partnered with White businessmen and on their own generated a tremendous amount of wealth. Consequently, the examples that Snoop Dogg, Jay Z, Dr. Dre, Sean “Puffy” Combs, Kanye West, and other rap (hip-hop) artists provide should serve as deep inspiration for many young Black men and women. These young Black Americans can see that, not only can they be strong, destroy fake metaphors, and speak truth to power, but they can also pursue wealth-building successfully as they live honorable and respected lives. The hip-hop artists mentioned in this essay are businessmen and businesswomen who have waved bye-bye to the world of working a job for “the man.” They knew and know their opposers; they fought and are fighting their opposers; and they won and are winning, especially economically, to this very day.

Lindsey “Rob” Robinson

09/16/22

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