

BET News Presents Hip Hop VS. America, A Powerful 3-Part Special Addressing The Current State Of Hip-Hop



NEW YORK “ (September 10, 2007) “ Hip-hop culture and controversy have always made for familiar bedfellows. Yet, in the wake of the Imus controversy and in a year when the genre’s sales have tumbled, hip-hop finds itself under an exceptional amount of scrutiny and pressure “ and the stakes have never been higher. BET NEWS takes a powerful and compelling look at the state of hip-hop today in a three-part series titled HIP HOP vs. AMERICA . Hosted by BET’s own Touré and Jeff Johnson, this special showcases a candid, heated forum that will allow audiences to hear the opinions of prominent leaders in the hip-hop industry, the political realm, academia and the Black church. Part I of HIP HOP vs. AMERICA premieres Tuesday, September 25 at 8:00 p.m. ET/PT on BET, with the second hour airing on Wednesday, September 26 at 8:00 p.m. ET/PT. The third episode with additional exclusive footage will be available on BET ON BLAST, the network’s broadband channel (www.bet.com/ontv), immediately following Part II’s airing.

This three-part special features a passionate, lively and opinionated debate that tackles many sensitive issues, including: hip-hop’s relationship with criminality and the streets, snitching, police profiling and brutality; the images of Black women in hip-hop; and the embarrassment, pride and confusion Blacks feel over hip-hop’s public airing of the

community's "dirty laundry."

"The battle over hip-hop lyrics, images and values is the flashpoint of conflict and debate between almost every division within our community" between men and women, younger and older generations, between economic classes and educational backgrounds," said Reginald Hudlin, President of Entertainment, BET. "Our special relationships with the most important Black thinkers, icons and leaders allow BET to deliver the most complete exploration of this topic on television. This is the first of many Town Halls that BET will convene to address the most pressing issues facing our community."

"Generational gaps within the African American community have never been more prevalent when it comes to the hip-hop community," said Selwyn Seyfu Hinds, executive producer, BET News. "The issues may ring familiar" sexism, violent lyrics, degrading words and images "but this time the debate is different given hip-hop's complicated relationship with corporate America. This is why it was so important for BET to provide a forum for each voice to shed light on every angle of this issue."

Hip-hop recording artists Nelly, T.I., Mike Jones, MC Lyte, Master P and the legendary Chuck D; top journalists Keith Boykin, Diane Weathers, Jeff Chang, Farai Chideya, Kim Osorio and New York Daily News columnist Stanley Crouch; filmmaker and cultural critic Nelson George; Judge Mablean Ephraim; former video vixens Melyssa Ford and Karrine Steffans; music executive Valeisha Butterfield; music video director Benny Boom; ministers Conrad Tillard, Pastor A. R. Bernard; professor Dr. Michael Eric Dyson; and Reverend Al Sharpton lead the lists of outspoken panelists who take the stage and share their point of view on hip-hop. Other influential voices heard on the show include hip-hop pioneer Russell Simmons, professor Cornel West and writer and activist Kevin Powell.

Selwyn Seyfu Hinds is executive producer of HIP HOP VS. AMERICA , and Nelson George serves as a consulting producer.