

Book Review: Hiding In Hip Hop by Terrance Dean



Twenty-six years of gangsta rap promoting alpha males from the street meant everything about him and around him was hard, straight and untainted by the feyness of homosexuality, the scourge of hip-hop. Misogyny did not transfer to an intimate love of one's brother and homophobia kept fake gay male hip-hop wannabes from attempting to pollute the culture. [Terrence Dean's](#) decade-plus career in the entertainment world in various positions with MTV, CNN and a down low network of gay and bisexual men promises to break the calcified image with clueful confessions. The general deception and debauchery of the industry allowed him to present a sexually non-descript exterior by day but accept numerous invitations to down low sex parties from all sorts of men after work. Executives, artists, songwriters and everyday masculine-looking men tryst with him and they all form a chorus with the same words of "sex is great but our secret society must exist to protect our careers and public image." After so many years of this scenario and a discontented relationship with his Detroit-based family Dean decides to withdraw from the lifestyle for a while to do some self-discovery and he starts a men's support group. His leadership of the organization Men Empowerment, Inc. lifts his esteem and lands him speaking engagements among hip-hop's powerful but invisible brokers. Readers will ponder the names of people that Dean describes and sometimes his hints are obvious blog fodder but tips for names that would heat the book up are too general to peg any one person.

Dean locates the origin of the lifestyle to Black communal condemnation of homosexuality starting with the church. But men secretly sleeping with men has gone on since the 17th century and was never relegated to any specific group of men, in fact before Christianity there was no homophobia. The success of the first Black groupie tell-all by Karrine Steffans underscored the rock star status of the men she wrote about and made the public want to know more even while they dissed her. Anticipation around Dean's title initially caused

the same interest but his presence is stronger when he writes about his family relationships. The processes he undergoes in surviving the loss of two brothers and his mother to A.I.D.S., never knowing his dad, having his siblings moved around yet finding comfort in the hands of his grandmother are engrossing and therapeutic. However the lack of a discussion about hip-hop music, its homosocial intersections with homosexuality and the naming of the actual hip-hoppers he bedded does not expose a concealed down low world in hip-hop but keeps it in hiding.