

Throwback: Public Enemy: Don't Believe The Hype



Public Enemy's "Don't Believe The Hype" appears on their sophomore album, *It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back*, released in 1988. Chuck D's warning about blindly following the media and The Bomb Squad's dense agitational noise truly personified the emcee's famous quote about rap music being the Black CNN. Flavor Flav's ad-libs were more than the role of hype man but integral parts of the song designed to gently wake up the listener's consciousness in contrast to Chuck D's authoritative baritone. "Don't Believe the Hype" criticized stereotypes about Black people and hip-hop and had a guest appearance from pioneering rap journalist Harry Allen. In 2024, the single is even more relevant because of the explosion of the internet and the rise of Donald Trump. *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* went platinum within a year but was recognized for its classic status immediately upon release. The album was remastered in 1995, and a deluxe edition came in 2014 with 13 bonus tracks. Public Enemy released their 15th album, *What You Gonna Do When the Grid Goes Down?*, in 2020. Chuck D was named a U.S. Global Music Ambassador as part of the U.S. Department of State-YouTube Global Music Diplomacy Partnership in June 2024.