

# 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.

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## Throwback: Public Enemy-Can't

# Truss It



Public Enemy's "Can't Truss It" is from their 1991 fourth album *Apocalypse 91...The Enemy Strikes Back*. The group's sound changed out of necessity for this album because the original productions were stolen. The Bomb Squad, Gary G Whiz and The Imperial Grand Ministers of Funk gave the group funk-oriented sonics that were less frantic and used more live instruments. "Can't Truss It" was about slavery and how the slavemaster's doctrine to separate Africans proliferates in contemporary America. The video featured an auction block, plantation, cotton field, modern-day factory and the police. The brutalities of slavery were juxtaposed against police misconduct and the clip ends with a lynching. MTV played the video for "Can't Truss It" more than any other Public Enemy video. *Apocalypse 91* went platinum in less than two months and "Can't Truss It" did well on the charts. Their fourth outing was critically acclaimed and had the same powerful attacks on racism as *It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back* and *Fear Of A Black Planet*. Public Enemy released their DJ-Premier produced single ["State Of The Union \(STFU\)"](#) criticizing Donald Trump in the summer of 2020. [youtube id="am9BqZ6eA5c"]

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## Media Questions Of The Week

<https://www.instagram.com/p/B9Df6nzndDm/>

Should Flavor Flav put his dislike of Bernie Sanders to the side and perform with the rest of Public Enemy at one of his rallies because as Chuck D has said it's "not really an endorsement but a call to action?"



How will the fear of the Coronavirus continue to influence everyday life in America now that the first death from it has been reported in Washington?Â

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## Throwback: Flavor Flav-Unga Bunga Bunga



[youtube id="ap0lCHfr7NA"]Flavor Flav's "Unga Bunga Bunga" came from his 2006 self-titled solo album. The Public Enemy hype man had worked on his solo music for seven years releasing the first single, "Hot 1" in 1999. At the time of the album's release Flavor Flav was popular because of the reality shows *Strange Love* and *Flavor Of Love*. The video for "Unga Bunga Bunga" showed Flavor Flav sharing his talents as a multi-instrumentalist because he plays the drums and bass guitar. His Public Enemy bandmate Chuck D appears in the video holding a copy of the album for the camera. The nonsensical chant later appeared in season two of the television show *Breaking Bad* where many people heard it for the first time. Flavor Flav's 2006 solo project is his only one to date. Flavor Flav was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame with Public Enemy in 2013.Â