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Earnest Bracey
Professor of Political Science, Community College of Southern Nevada, Las Vegas, NV

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Rap Music and Hip Hop on American College Campuses

Abstract
My session will cover how many young African Americans believe that Rap music and Hip Hop is more important and relevant today on college campuses than the Civil Rights movement, or learning about the great works'. But one must seriously question whether Rap music and/or the Hip Hop culture is more significant than the movement that gave most Americans in the United States a modicum of equally in our institutionally racist society.

Earnest Bracey
Professor of political science, Community College of Southern Nevada, Las Vegas, NY

From the outset, my presentation will discuss how Rap artists articulate a wide range of reactions and emotions toward the scope of institutional policing faced by many young black Americans. For example, the FBI tries to justify the targeting of Rap Artists by telling us that their songs allegedly advocate violence against police officers. Can we believe this assertion by the FBI?

Furthermore, one must ask: Is there a difference between the attacks made against black youth and white youth expression like with Heavy Metal Rockers on college campuses? Perhaps so.

Although it is true that young black men are as likely to be in prison as in college, Rap Music is a welcome articulation of the economic and social frustrations of these young blacks. Thus, Rap Music offers the release of artistic and creative expression and historical continuity in response to the disappointments many poor people face in our society today.

One must also ask: Will economic and social frustrations always be a part of the black community? Blacks have never been really shocked by the persistence of racism, as they have been able to overcome many obstacles in the confines of the dominant society and White Supremacy. Indeed, black Americans should be commended for their survival tactics.

Therefore, Rap Music should be understood as the predominant symbolic voice of black urban males, as it heightens the scorn and white middle-class objections to young black Rap Artists, in general. Rappers, of course, do not aspire to be white or abide by middle-class standards, so many are vilified and are approached with hostility and suspicion by the dominant group and white authority.

Consequently, Rappers, their fans, and young, African Americans are construed as conspirators in the spread of black cultural influence. Some even see Rap Music as the most visible form of black American "cultural expression" in contemporary society. Hence, it is dangerous?

Moreover, Rap Music has been the most important media outlet through which millions of listeners and young people of all races have been able to vent their anger, resistance, frustration, and confusion about our society and the plight of African Americans as the subordinate under-class.

Ultimately, political interpretations of Rap Music's explosive, vulgar, graphic, and resistive lyrics are critical to understanding contemporary black cultural politics and what is happening on college campuses.

All these issues will be addressed during my presentation, as well as a discussion of the growing importance of Hip Hop and Rap Music subcultures.

Presenter

Earnest N. Bracey is a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel, with over twenty years of active military service. He was commissioned through Reserve Officer Training (Distinguished Military Graduate) at Jackson State University, where he graduated with honors (Magna Gum Laude), and received his bachelor

of arts degree in political science in 1974. In addition, he received the Masters of Public Administration in 1979 from Golden Gate University, his Masters of Arts degree in International Affairs in 1983 from the Catholic University of America, and his doctorate of Public Administration (with emphasis in Public Policy) in 1993 from George Mason University. Dr. Bracey also earned his Ph.D. in Education from Capella University in 1999.

A recipient of numerous military awards and civilian honors, he is also a graduate of the United States Naval War College and the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and previously served as Director of Administration at the prestigious Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Washington, D.C. He was also recognized as Who's Who Among America's Teachers in 2002 and 2004. Chairperson, Political Science and History Department, Hampton University.

He serves as an editorial board-member for the Nevada Historical Society Quarterly. His work has appeared in professional journals and other publications, and he is the author of the books, Prophetic Insights: The Higher Education and Pedagogy of African Americans, University Press of America, 1999, On Racism: Essays On Black Popular Culture, African American Politics, and the New Black Aesthetics, University Press of America, 2003, and Daniel "Chappie" James: The First African American Four Star General, McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003. He also co authored the book, American Politics and
Culture Wars (2001). He is also the author of the novels, Choson (1994) and The Black Samurai (1998), and the book of short stories, Requiems for Black Folks, 2002.