

Chuck D Talks State of Black America, Obama's Legacy and the Black Press

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire

To many hip-hop fans, historians and to his peers, Chuck D is considered one of the most influential lyricists in contemporary music.

In describing the Queens, New York City-born artist in the biography pages of his new book, "Chuck D Presents This Day in Rap and Hip-Hop History," the publisher notes that Chuck D helped paved the way for political, social, and culturally conscious hip-hop, both as a solo artist and as the leader of the ground-breaking group, Public Enemy.

In a wide-ranging exclusive interview with NNPA Newswire, the legend, whose given name is Douglas Ridenhour, addressed issues concerning Black America, including President Donald Trump, the importance of voting, and the need for the Black Press to reach even further around the globe.

"The state of Black America is always going to be a truncated state, if we don't expand to where we are in the world," said Chuck D, who just kicked off the wildly successful Prophets of Rage tour with Cypress Hill and Rage Against the Machine.

To date, the concert tour reportedly has drawn more than 3.1 million fans in over 27 countries.

"If [Black people] are going to rely on the United States of America to come around and give us answers, then we don't understand that we're all over the world, the majority...then we are doomed to be slaves in this country forever,"



Public Enemy founder and Hip-hop legend Chuck D says that the Black Press must get ahead of the curve and continue its global outreach efforts. Chuck D in Gothenburg, Sweden.

Chuck D said. "You've got to fight to get out of the box; to achieve in the United States of America was never going to be an easy ride for Black people, so we shouldn't cut

"I think he gave it his all for eight years and we didn't do all that we could

ourselves off from those who look like us in this 21st century."

In an era where new and upcoming hip-hop stars like Migos and Cardi B. are leaders, Chuck D remains universally revered.

His Public Enemy albums remain among the most critically-acclaimed works in rap music, including "It Takes a Nation of Millions to

Hold Us Back" and "Fear of a Black Planet."

Earlier this year, a writer for GQ Magazine noted that not only is he one of the greatest and most influential MCs in rap's history, Chuck D is also blessed with the sort of encyclopedic knowledge and staggering recall that places him among the genre's foremost historians and custodians.

"Chuck was there, and he got receipts," the writer said.

Chuck D said that Black America should have done more to embrace President Barack Obama and realize his limitations.

"President Obama was a statement to the world, a gateway to the world and an introduction to understanding what's in the world for us," Chuck D said.

Chuck D continued: "He was not there so that we could simply stay in America and get answers, when the next guy who comes along is a dysfunctional idiot and ev-

erything gets reversed."

The hip-hop pioneer added that Obama's presidency gave us a passport to understand where Black people are in the world.

Chuck said that he thinks Black people dropped the ball by not seizing on the opportunity while he was still in the White House.

"Waiting for Obama to do anything for Black

people was the biggest fault in my opinion, because he was the president knowing damn well that he couldn't make 'the Black move,'" Chuck D said. "I think he gave it his all for eight years and we didn't do all that we could and, even then, it might have taken 30 years to take advantage of a person like Obama in office; but we only got eight."

Still, voting is key, Chuck D said, as he applauded the NNPA-led effort to register 5 million, new African American voters this year.

"Voting is as important as washing your tail in the morning," he said. "Pay attention to the local level and think about the bigger ramifications of not voting."

Chuck D continued: "You have to tell young people to pay attention at the local level, because when they run past that red light and they get pulled into that kangaroo court, where they want to revoke your license, that's who you should look at when voting. The literacy of what voting is to our young people is

short-sighted and we can do better."

The recent shooting deaths of rappers XXXTentacion in North Miami, Florida and Jimmy Wapo in Pittsburgh, Penn., are as troublesome as the shooting deaths of his contemporaries, Notorious B.I.G., Jam Master Jay and Tupac, Chuck D said.

The mainstream media must share some of the blame, particularly in the case of XXXTentacion, Chuck D said.

"This is a serious issue. It's not trivial," Chuck D said. "I got on the [mainstream] media for pumping this kid up like he was going to die and when he dies, it's just another headline. What did you do to prevent this?"

Chuck D continued: "When a guy is in that much danger, don't give him coverage. The more you do that, the more of a target and a death sentence you give him."

To remain strong and relevant, the hip-hop legend said that the Black Press must get ahead of the curve and continue its global outreach efforts.

'Tag'

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TV show productions. Tomsic assembled a big-name cast, with Jon Hamm, Ed Helms, Jeremy Renner, Hannibal Buress and Jake Johnson portraying the protagonists of the bawdy buddy comedy.

At the point of departure, we find Hoagie (Helms), a veterinarian by profession, taking a job as a janitor at an insurance company just to be able to shock a rival, Callahan (Hamm), the firm's CEO. That gives you an idea of the elaborate ruses involved.

While this novel adventure gets an A for

creativity, its characters frequent resort to unnecessary cursing proves to be a self-sabotaging distraction. After all, "Tag" is still a little kids' game, even if it's big kids playing it. So, in this critic's opinion, the film would have worked better with a squeaky-clean script.

Nevertheless, the series of screwball stunts held my interest for the duration, despite the profusion of profanities. Best of all, were the priceless clips which ran during the closing credits of the real-life pals pulling off their pranks.

A nostalgic walk down Memory Lane courtesy of the ultimate game of "Tag." You're it!

Very Good ★★½

Rated R for pervasive profanity, crude humor, sexuality, drug use and brief nudity

View the trailer at TheSkanner.com.

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