



Kickin' the Ballistics: Reflections on the Hip Hop Generation, Poverty and Power

Ralph E Godbolt

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With the removal of the economic life base of once stable inner-city communities, the introduction of crack cocaine, the mass incarceration of young black and Latino men, the high school dropout crisis, high rates of gun deaths for young black and Latino men, misogynist views of black women and the HIV/AIDS crisis, the Hip Hop Generation has continuously been pushed close to the edge. Invisible in mass media, the Hip Hop Generation has used rap music and Hip Hop culture as a means to both navigate and communicate the jungle that is far too often the realities of high poverty urban communities. Kickin' the Ballistics uses rap music as a means of exploring the Hip Hop Generation and its thoughts on poverty, sexual orientation, relationships, crime and education. Kickin' the Ballistics explores the historical impact of economic and public policies on the Hip Hop Generation and argues that issues of poverty, crime and education are not an indication of laziness or immorality on the part of the Hip Hop Generation, but is in fact the consequences of a unique mix of both deliberate and unintended harsh and discriminatory public policies. By using the lyrics of old school and more recent Hip Hop artist like Grand Master Flash, KRS-One, Ice Cube, Kayne West, Jay Z and Lupe Fiasco as a powerful tool to explain the unique circumstances facing the Hip Hop Generation, Kickin the Ballistics is a realistic look at the past, present and future of urban America and a page turner for anyone interested in social justice and equality.

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