



As A Matter of Fact...

BY AARON WOODS

If hip-hop died in 2005 when rapper Nas released his hit single, "Hip-Hop Is Dead," 2009 must have burned the remains. Hip-hop is officially dead.

In the late 80s and early 90s hip-hop was definitely alive and well. Rap groups like Public Enemy, and Body Count gave listeners stories that mattered. Songs like "911 Is a Joke" brought attention to troubling issues. Public Enemy was famous for this. "911 Is a Joke" showed the average American that ambulances are coincidentally slow to react when a problem is called in from the ghetto. Now, in 2009, instead of tackling controversy, rap artists seem more inclined to create it.

In my opinion, hip-hop died in the early 90s when rap group, 2 Live Crew hit the scene with their raunchy sex anthem, "Me So Horny." This particular song, or any other 2 Live Crew song, contains no lyrical meaning that is relevant to the culture which created rap. Since then, rap has become a breeding ground for mediocrity, and the mundane.

Famed rapper, Marshall Mathers, or "Eminem" is without doubt one of many "artists" to assist in the killing of hip-hop. If you were to draw an Eminem song out of a hat, odds are it would be about one of three things; killing his mother, killing his ex-wife, or dissing a celebrity. These violent and hateful songs are a far cry from what hip-hop once was; a means of communication to the world outside the ghetto. Hip-hop used to tell stories, real stories

Even classic hip-hop greats weren't without vulgarity, or violent themes, but when they were used they had purpose. "Cop Killer" by Body Count is so violent, it has been banned in several countries, including America. However, it brought an important issue to the minds of many.

Worse yet, rappers now release singles about absolutely nothing. It seems like anyone who can create a phrase like "A Bay Bay" or "Crunk" can become an overnight rap sensation.

In reality, every genre must die before it can return to its former glory. Metal was at its high point in the mid to late 80s with hair bands like Motley Crue, taking over the radio. After a while, the metal scene faded away only to make a strong return in the past two years with bands like Avenged Sevenfold, Killswitch Engage, and Bullet For My Valentine.

Hip-hop is dead, but I have no doubt that it will return better than ever in due time.

The Fray Headlines Utah, Jack's Mannequin Steals Show

BY AARON WOODS

USANA Ampitheater played host to The Fray, and Jack's Mannequin on July 18. Despite an amazing show, and a packed venue, the headlining act played to a lackluster crowd.

Opening band, Meese played a mediocre set, consisting of unknown songs, from a relatively unknown band. Despite an entertaining stage presence, their set list lacked any originality. Without even knowing a single song from the band, it wasn't hard to guess what type of song would be played next.

Special guests Jack's Mannequin played the best set of the night. The crowd was definitely responsive. A large pogo pit of jumping fans formed inside the grass, much to the delight of singer Andrew McMahon.

The group played various hits such as "Dark Blue," "La La Lie," "The Mix Tape," and "The Resolution," before leaving the stage.

Before the sun was down, headliners, The Fray, jumped on stage, opening with their smash hit, "Over My Head (Cable Car), and continued the night with songs off of their new self-titled album, as well as tunes off of their multi-platinum debut, "How to Save a Life."

Despite a highly entertaining stage performance and incredible live sound, the crowd didn't seem to enjoy the band as much as they did Jack's Mannequin. In fact, the majority of the audience sat down during The Fray's performance, quite the opposite of the energetic display of affection for Jack's Mannequin.

The encore consisted of a cover of Kanye West's "Heartless," which prompted the most energy, from a mostly lifeless crowd of their entire set.

The Fray definitely played a great show, but they were undoubtedly outperformed by Jack's Mannequin, and the majority of attendees that night would definitely agree.



Photo Courtesy: thefray.com

Teens Recruited For Terroristic Acts

BY AUSTN WEBB

Imagine a young fourteen year old girl sitting in an abandoned apartment complex with four adult men. Her clothes are torn and dirty, her hair and body haven't been washed for months. She kneels on the ground looking at a bomb made from a few wires, a small digital timer and some tightly packed C4 explosives all wrapped together with duct tape. If this young girl doesn't attach this bomb to her chest and walk out the complex with it, the men will kill her.

The violence that citizens hear about in the Middle East wages on every day. People are dying, problems aren't being solved (some of those problems being

the reason the United States is there in the first place).

When an individual thinks of a war, the first thought that usually comes to mind is adults firing automatic machine guns at each other from trenches or from behind the cover of a car somewhere in the desert. But the key word used in that image is "adult". No longer is war only concerning adults, children and teenagers are now tossed into the mix.

A teenager ranging from the ages of 13-16 are in most cases physically capable of more than that of an adult from the ages of 30-45. With that in mind, a small teenage girl can get from point A to point B with a bomb on her body a lot faster than a 40 year old man can. Teenagers can also fit into places that a lot of fully grown

men cannot. For instance; if an explosive device is attached to a small boy and must be detonated within the time limit given on the timer at a busy intersection lying half a mile away. The boy will most likely have to take some alley ways and backdoors, how many parents and adults can do that?

But what is being done to solve these atrocities? Why are teenagers even being allowed to kill at such a young age?

According to the Human Rights Watch website (hrw.org), Senator Richard Durbin introduced the Child Soldiers Prevention Act which restricts financing, training and weapon transfers to countries and armies which recruit child soldiers.

There are currently ten

governments which recruit child soldiers worldwide, nine of those ten governments receive military assistance from the United States.

Also, National Public Radio (npr.org) states that there were eight recorded female suicide bombings in 2007. That 8 females has grown to 14 in as little as two years, similar to the trend of using child soldiers.

Farhana Ali who is an international analyst with Rand Corp. simply defines these female bombings as "a new trend" which is reported on the NPR website.

In an interview stated on the NPR website, an Iraqi woman named Um al Harith says that "The guards just stare when a woman walks past, and they never search women."

Teacher Sex Crime Rates Rising

BY MELISSA LAMM

Several court cases have been going on lately of teachers who have committed crimes against students. The consequences are always different depending on the crime that was committed and the district.

For instance, in Ammon, Idaho, a 28 year old P.E. teacher, Kari Atkinson, was arrested this month for sexually encountering a 14-year-old male student at Sandcreek Middle School.

"Typically, the employee is put

on administrative leave while the school district does our own investigation," said Melinda Colton, Director of Communication.

The case is different if a teacher who has a criminal background comes in and wants a job. Then it really depends on different things.

First, the teacher must fill out an application, and on that application, at the bottom it asks about their criminal background.

The teachers are expected to answer the application truthfully,

but either way the district may do a background check just in case. If the teacher lies on the application, then they won't get hired. If the teacher is honest about their criminal background, then it has to go through the district.

The crime determines if the teacher will receive the job or not. It's not only the district that has to deal with criminal teachers.

"Everything that happens at the school, crime or not, falls back on the principal," said Principal Brad Sorensen.

As far as Jordan School District goes, there has been no recent serious crimes a teacher has committed.

"Criminal activity is not a common occurrence among our employees. It is the district's job to make sure we have the best teachers possible in our classroom," Colton added.

When it comes to consequences for crimes that teachers commit, it all depends on the crime and the district.