

I DON'T WANNA GROW UP
HOW DO YOU MOVE IN A WORLD OF FOG
THAT'S ALWAYS CHANGING THINGS
MAKES ME WISH I COULD BE A DOG
WHEN I SEE THE PRICE YOU PAY

WHEN I SEE THE FIVE O'CLOCK NEWS
I DON'T WANNA GROW UP
COMB THEIR HAIR AND SHINE THEIR SHOES
I DON'T WANNA GROW UP
I DON'T WANNA GET ME A BIG OLD LOAN
WORK THEM FINGERS TO THE BONE
I DON'T WANNA GROW UP

TOM WAITS/KATHLEEN BRENNAN
BONE MACHINE
1992 ISLAND RECORDS

Tom Waits isn't a teenager. And yet, the soulful lyrics of *I Don't Wanna Grow Up* may reflect the perspective American teenagers have on the world.

Teenagers. The generation Americans want to lock up, lock out and generally ignore.

The Young and the Violent was the lead editorial in *The Wall Street Journal*, 23 September 1992. The article highlighted the increase in violent crime perpetrated by America's youth and pointed to New Jersey. "New Jersey's Legislature voted last week unanimously and with Governor Florio's support, to let any town in the state declare a curfew for teen-agers from 10 p.m. till 6 a.m. Northern New Jersey is the nation's stolen-car capital." This action was prompted by increased crime committed by teens indicated in a recent FBI study, "...the violent-crime arrest rate for juveniles between the ages of 10 and 17 increased 27% between 1980 and 1990. The increase involved not only 'disadvantaged minority youth in urban areas,' the report says, but was evident in 'all races, all social classes and life styles.' That said, the arrest rate of black juveniles still soars; at 1,429 arrests per 100,000 black juveniles, it's about five times that of whites and 19 times that of 'other races.' Homicide is the leading cause of death among young black men (and usually the victims live in the neighborhood)." And what is the cause of this upturn in violent crime among our youths?

"...the FBI report notes the belief of many that the problem reflects the breakdown of families, schools and other societal institutions. That's true, but something else happened here. The rise in violent youth crime tracks the evolution of our current system of juvenile justice." The pitfalls of our criminal-justice system lie in its outdated construction. "Set up in 1960s via legislation and lawsuits, it's a rather lenient system. Back then, juvenile offenses were likely to be shoplifting or a random car theft, not murder, rape and epidemic car theft. Under the current, now entrenched system, juvenile offenders rarely get more than probation even for the most heinous crimes." As a result, "...because he is rarely made to pay for his crime, the juvenile offender doesn't get the message that crime doesn't pay. He may not even get the message that what he's done is reprehensible in any sense. How else to explain the recent spectacle of arrested young muggers who laugh their way through the booking?"

The future looks grim, too. Because the population of 10 to 17 year olds is going to increase significantly in this decade, the upsurge in this type of crime will rise accordingly. "Before it gets worse, we ought to revisit the assumption and rules of a criminal-justice system that the kids who commit crime regard as a laughingstock."

Excerpts from remarks Elizabeth Howard delivered at the fall convention of the International Council of Shopping Centers Convention in Nashville, Tennessee on 15 September. She chaired a panel titled: Marketing to Multi-Cultural Groups Without Alienating an Integrated Customer Population.

"...Let's look at another minority group: Teenagers. The generation a psychiatrist recently described to me as 'the kick-ass' generation. This group is unlike the twentysomething generation, who came of age during the twelve years of the Reagan and Bush administrations, and believe that the American dream is a quiche on every table and a BMW in every garage. They were teenagers when capitalism, conspicuous consumption and hubris were good. The contemporary teenager is grappling with riots in Los Angeles and significant paradigm shifts, like the demise of communism and a new world order.

HIP-HOP IS ONE ASPECT OF TEEN CULTURE THAT TERRIFIES MAINSTREAM AMERICA. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, SUBSCRIBE TO QUINCY JONES' NEW PUBLICATION *VIBE*. THE PREMIER ISSUE SOLD OUT ON THE NEWSSTAND. TRY TO FIND THE NEXT ISSUE.

"It's taken about 15 years for the mainstream to figure out that hip-hop is the most important music culture to emerge since rock 'n roll, that it's how a new generation communicates news, information, attitudes, politics, fashion, style, rage, hope. It took Quincy Jones about 15 minutes to convince the people at Time Publishing Ventures that hip-hop needed a voice.

...*Vibe* is a magazine that covers hip-hop culture - the music, the message, the mood, the moment. *Vibe* takes hip-hop as a given, not a fad. *Vibe* knows that hip-hop is the fastest growing populist music in America, and the most diverse. That it has survived and flourished by continually reinventing itself, by absorbing new and everchanging influence from jazz, rock, reggae, R&B, soul, funk, house, even metal. And *Vibe* knows that the music is just the beginning, that hip-hop is giving birth to a new wave of black (and white) artists, executives, and entrepreneurs who are taking the music's urgent, uncensored and uncompromising approach to unexplored territory."

The Editors/*Vibe*

Subscriptions can be ordered through the Circulation Department, *Vibe*, 301 Howard Street, San Francisco, California, 94105-2232.

There are over 25 million men and women in the United States between the ages of 16 and 22 years-old, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Almost half of these young adults are employed and have credit cards. You hear them described as 'mall rats' because they are flocking to malls in greater numbers than ever before. They go for two reasons: to see and be seen. And that involves hanging out. Yet, don't underestimate their buying power.

During the 1980s teen spending grew from \$39.1 billion to \$55.9 billion. Teenager spending on products for the family decreased to \$35 billion in 1985 and grew to over \$40 billion one year later in 1986. They are responsible for much of the family shopping (and brand selection). A Yankelovick study in 1980 found that of women aged 20 to 35, 71% developed their first brand loyalties as teenagers; 37% were still buying their original brand of packaged cheese; 34% were still using their original brand of mouthwash and 41% were still using their first brand of mascara.

Teenagers do more than shop and hang out. They deal with the problems of their single parents; they absorb the stress when a white collar parent is fired from a corporate position (the children of blue collar workers have a better knowledge of what this means) and they are still sensitive enough to recognize that the world is changing and they must assume responsibility now -- at fifteen and sixteen. They are restless, and rebel out of frustration.

If teenagers are causing a problem in your mall, I would suggest doing everything possible to work with them and identify solutions that will work for both of you. Kicking them out, and having security guards moving them along is done at your own risk. You are offending the consumers of the future who are going to keep your mall in business through the 1990s"

Retailers, educators, politicians and even parents, it seems, are ignoring this generation. Forgetting that they are the consumers, parents and leaders of the future. The generation that will live in the unexplored territory governments are attempting to chart. If President George Bush and Governor Bill Clinton had a clue about hip-hop, perhaps there would be hope for the future.

On a political note: Elizabeth Howard & Company received tapes of both President George Bush and Governor Bill Clinton's speeches that were delivered at The Detroit Economic Club. If you wish to receive a copy, please contact Ms. Sarah Hoekelman, Telephone: 212.972.3370.

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