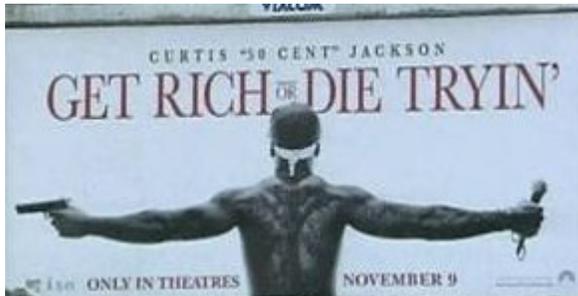


GET RICH OR DIE TRYIN' FILMED IN TORONTO

City plagued by gang violence played host to worst of the gangster rappers - film may be eligible for government tax credits

Toronto, Ontario, November 7, 2005 - In late October, a coalition of Los Angeles community groups¹ staged a demonstration to demand that Paramount Studios take down billboards promoting the movie *Get Rich or Die Tryin'* starring violent rapper 50 Cent, scheduled for release November 9.



BILLBOARD - PROTESTED IN LOS ANGELES

Najee Ali of Project Islamic HOPE said, "Gun violence is one of the leading causes of death for young black males in South Central Los Angeles and across urban America. ..we demand that Paramount Pictures remove these negative images of death and destruction, images that our young children are influenced by."²

Los Angeles County Supervisor Mike Antonovich included this comment in a letter to Paramount: "This billboard conveys to the students a disturbing message actively promoting gun violence, criminal behaviour and gang affiliation." Royce Esters, president of the National Association for Equal Justice in America, condemned the billboard as "glorifying a dope dealer and the gang culture". "They're recruiting wannabe gangbangers," he said.³ In response to this barrage of criticism, Paramount removed some of the billboards located near schools.

Last year, then police chief Julian Fantino told a Toronto town hall meeting that he had tried to prevent 50 Cent from entering Canada by writing to the federal immigration minister several times. Chief Fantino did this, he said, because 50 Cent's lyrics advocate raping women and murder.⁴ The Chief also mentioned that a man had been shot dead after a 50 Cent concert at the Molson Amphitheatre in July of 2003. Despite the Chief's efforts, 50 Cent was allowed into Canada and ten days later, a man was shot outside the 50 Cent concert in Montreal.⁵

This former big-time crack and heroin dealer has been credited with putting the "thug" back in rap music:

... he [50 Cent] is leading a renewed demand for, or at least acceptance of, rappers armed with a street-thug image and violent lyrics. Not since the 1996-97 murders of rappers Tupac Shakur and the Notorious B.I.G. has mainstream hip-hop been so filled with guns, gang-style feuds and songs about killing. (Minneapolis St. Paul Star Tribune)⁶

Continued ...

His concert last year in Hamilton featured plenty of gunfire:

As the lights dimmed in Copps Coliseum, a black curtain dropped to reveal a huge G Unit "Beg For Mercy" banner. The sound of a shotgun being cocked echoed through the arena as G Unit members Lloyd Banks and Young Buck walked on stage. After greeting the crowd, a half-dozen gunshots erupted from the speakers as 50 Cent strutted out of the shadows... (ChartAttack.com)⁷

In spite of all this -- his lengthy criminal record, history of attracting armed, murderous thugs to his concerts, glamorization and promotion of gang violence -- in June 2005, 50 Cent was in Toronto⁸ filming scenes from *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*. He also has a video game called *Bulletproof* scheduled for release in November -- a double gang banger whammy for his impressionable young fans.

Movie companies require permits: In order to film in the city of Toronto, companies require permits from the city's film office. A recent Ipsos poll revealed that 63% of the survey's respondents believe the glamorization of gang culture found in movies and rap music is contributing to the increase in Toronto's gun violence.⁹ Many of those people would be disturbed to learn that we hosted the filming of a movie by one of the worst thug rappers in the industry.

Film should be denied government tax credits: Movie companies don't come to Hollywood North for the weather, they come here for the generous system of tax credits offered by both provincial and federal governments. On October 26, Toronto anti-violence activist Valerie Smith wrote to Monte Kwinter, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, informing him of the situation and requesting that he contact the Minister responsible for provincial tax credits

to ensure that *Get Rich or Die Tryin'* does **not** receive tax credits from the province of Ontario. People living with gang violence should not be forced to fund movies that contribute to that violence. Federal politicians should take similar action to forbid the granting of federal tax credits.



50 CENT VIDEO GAME - WEB SITE GRAPHIC

violence while permitting the use of our city by gangsters like 50 Cent, who care nothing for the murder and mayhem they foster."

Continued ...

Donald Bakeer, Chairman of Project Islamic HOPE summed up the situation this way: "That slogan [Get Rich or Die Tryin'] is going to echo across the country while 50 Cent steps over dead bodies to get his paycheck."¹⁰ Well said.



GET RICH OR DIE TRYIN'- WEB SITE GRAPHIC

50 Cent web sites: To experience his glamorization of violence and gun culture, visit:

www.50cent.com

www.getrichordietryinmovie.com

About the Free Radical: The Free Radical web site (www.fradical.com) is maintained by Toronto anti-violence activist Valerie Smith to provide information on media violence, and strategies for combating it.

She is the author of the *Action Agenda: A Strategic Blueprint for Reducing Exposure to Media*

Violence in Canada, funded and published by Ontario's Office for Victim's of Crime. The report is available for free download from the Free Radical web site.

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¹ Groups involved in the protest included Project Islamic HOPE, The National Action Network, Justice for Murdered Children, NAACP, Stop the Violence Increase the Peace, Dr. Earl Ofari Hutchison (*Paramount's New 50 Cent movie targeted for protest*, Eurweb, October 25, 2005)

² *Paramount's New 50 Cent movie targeted for protest*, Eurweb, October 25, 2005

³ *Studio cut back 'get rich' billboards*, Los Angeles Times, October 29, 2005

⁴ *Fantino labels rap star 'criminal'*, Toronto Star, April 14, 2004

⁵ *Bullet-proof vest protects Montreal concert-goer*, Toronto Sun, April 24, 2004

⁶ *50 brings return of gangsta rap*, Minneapolis St. Paul Star Tribune, July 25, 2003

⁷ *50 Cent and G Unit go for broke in Hamilton*, ChartAttack.com, April 23, 2004

⁸ *But 50 Cent will not be in lineup*, Toronto Sun, June 17, 2005

⁹ *Gun crime biggest fear*, National Post, October 25, 2005

¹⁰ *Community activists protest billboard featuring rapper 50 Cent*, Our Weekly, October 27, 2005