



BACKGROUND GUIDE

WAMUNC XXIV

East Coast West Coast Rap Beef 1996

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Hello Delegates!

My name is Elliott Morton, and I am super excited to be your chair for WAMUNC this year! I'm a freshman at GW majoring in political science with a minor in philosophy. I'm from Baltimore, Maryland, where I started in MUN four years ago. I cannot wait to share my passion for MUN with all of you! When I started sophomore year, I was TERRIFIED of public speaking, and MUN helped me become a better speaker and more confident leader. I then got more and more involved until senior year where I co-founded my high school's own MUN conference! Serving as the Secretary-General of Operations for THSMUNC I was an incredible opportunity, and I look forward to applying those skills to chairing my first committee come April.

Outside of MUN, I'm a huge fan of rap music. More specifically, I love drill (fun fact – Pop Smoke and I were both born at the same hospital in Brooklyn). I'm an Eagle Scout and I still teach at Scouting's National Leadership Seminar.

While this committee may take place twenty years ago, its problems still plague hip-hop. With the recent murders of Young Dolph, King Von, Pop Smoke, Nipsey Hussle, XXXTentacion, just to name a few, we know this is still a very real problem. The fact that Wikipedia has a page titled "List of murdered hip hop musicians" proves my point. Filling the shoes of the greats allows you to rewrite history as you see fit. In typical crisis fashion, I fully expect you to take advantage of the position you are given and come up with the most creative solutions you can.

I'm very excited to meet you all in just a few short months! Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions about the committee, crisis, or Model UN as a whole. My email is emorton1@gwu.edu. I've done plenty of crises so feel free to ask me anything!

Best,
Elliott Morton

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

Committee Premise

The date is June 5th, 1996. Tupac Shakur just released the incendiary diss track “Hit ‘em Up,” aimed square at The Notorious B.I.G. and his wife, Faith Evans. It is a scathing diss track in which he claims to have had sex with Biggie's wife, and threatens violence against many members of Bad Boy Records. Many believe that retaliation is imminent. A west-coast rap titan and leading member of Death Row Records, Shakur was known for his superior daftness at crafting lyrics and unwavering passion for social justice. He never strayed from conflict, which contributed to the growing east-west coast rivalry. Two years prior, Shakur survived a gunshot wound during an attempted robbery - many suspected Combs, Biggie, and other east-coasters. It appears that hip-hop is on the verge of descending into an endless cycle of retaliatory violence unless a decisive act is made to stop it.

At the time of this committee, Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G. are ALIVE. The remainder of the committee will loosely follow real-life events. That being said, no individuals are bound to the same fate. Anything that happens after June 5th, 1996 is up to you.

A Note On Procedure

This committee will run based on standard parliamentary procedure. Moderated caucuses, unmoderated caucuses, crisis updates, and voting on directives will constitute the majority of committee.

This committee is a crisis committee with full crisis elements. Delegates are encouraged to utilize their character’s assigned and implied powers to influence the events of committee. We deliberately do not define what powers your character has – you begin with your implied powers, and can gain more through crisis notes and front-room directives.

The best crisis notes are ones with strong justification, creative solutions, and clear goals. The notes with the most feeling and fit with your character are often ones that will be most effective.

Other Policies

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. You may not bring into committee any pre-written material for your directives, crisis notes. This is defined as having specific language written outside of the scheduled committee sessions. Model United Nations is one of the best ways for you to develop problem-solving and crisis management skills, and prewriting your directives defeats the purpose of being here and robs you of the benefits of coming to this conference.

An excessive use of swears by anybody in committee will result in them being prohibited for all committee members, and you must refrain from using any words that would be censored for radio play. Derogatory language of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to:

Hate speech or slurs of any kind, regardless of the identity of the user

Language discriminating against any race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, ability, and/or sex.

Any language or implication that makes other delegates or staff uncomfortable

Other speech deemed inappropriate by the chair.

Recommended listening & viewing

The committee will heavily revolve around the following albums – listening to them all the way through will provide solid context for the committee.

- Straight Outta Compton – N.W.A. (1988)
- The Chronic – Dr. Dre (1992)
- Doggystyle – Snoop Dogg (1993)
- Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers) – Wu-Tang Clan (1993)
- Illmatic – Nas (1994)
- Ready to Die – The Notorious B.I.G (1994)
- All Eyez On Me – Tupac (1996)

I would also recommend watching the following movies, which will give you a good idea of the background:

- Straight Outta Compton (2015)
- All Eyez On Me (2017)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 1970-1982 – The early days of hip-hop
 - Hip-hop originated in the early 1970s in The Bronx, where DJs began isolating and extending the percussion breaks in popular songs to create beats. DJ Kool Herc and other New York DJs then began incorporating toasting, a Jamaican tradition of spoken poetry to create a blueprint for future hip-hop songs. The first hip-hop song to achieve commercial viability was the Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" in 1979. In 1980, the Roland Corporation released the TR-808 drum machine, an easily programmable drum machine that forever changed the direction of hip-hop.
- 1983-86 – LL Cool J, Run-DMC, Beastie Boys
 - Run-DMC, LL Cool J, and the Beastie Boys defined this era of rap, introducing the concept of the modern rap album. The Beastie Boys' 1986 album *Licensed to Ill* became the first rap album to achieve a #1 spot on the Billboard Hot 100.
 - In 1986, Ice-T released the song "6 'N the Mornin'," widely considered as the very first gangsta rap song
- 1987-1993 – Public Enemy, N.W.A., Snoop Dogg, Wu-Tang
 - 1987 – Eazy-E drops his first rap track "Boyz-N-The-Hood." It was written by Ice Cube and produced by Dr. Dre and DJ Yella, a precursor to the formation of N.W.A.
 - 1988 – N.W.A releases their standout debut album "Straight Outta Compton", widely regarded as one of the greatest and most influential albums of all time. In response, they received a letter from the FBI condemning their violent lyrics, and asking them not to perform the album. A year later, Ice Cube left the group, alleging he was never paid his fair share for his contributions. N.W.A. continued to splinter and broke up by 1991.
 - 1991 – Bronx rapper Tim Dog releases "**** Compton", a sweeping diss of LA rap music, containing violent threats against NWA frontman Eazy-E. The west coast responds with "**** Wit Dre Day" off of Dr. Dre's famed album *The Chronic*.

- 1993 – Sean “Puff Daddy” Combs forms Bad Boy Records, with widely successful releases by The Notorious B.I.G. and Craig Mack.
- 1993 – The Wu-Tang Clan releases their transformational debut album “Enter the Wu-Tang(36 Chambers)”
- 1994-1996 – The rise of violence
 - 1994
 - Nas releases Illmatic
 - B.I.G. releases Ready to Die, Bad Boy records’
 - Nov. 30, 1994 – Tupac was shot in the lobby of Quad Studios in Manhattan, and publicly blamed Combs, Biggie, and Andre Harrell for the shooting. Biggie then released “Who Shot Ya?”, a track commonly viewed as taunting Tupac that Biggie claims were recorded prior and with no relation to the shooting.
 - 1995
 - In March, Eazy-E died of AIDS-induced pneumonia. Over 3,000 people attended his funeral. His passing brought the estranged members of N.W.A. back into each others’ good graces.
 - In August Suge Knight made controversial comments at the Source Awards in New York, disparaging Puff and encouraging artists to sign with Death Row.
 - In September, Suge Knight’s close friend Jake Robles was shot and killed at a nightclub. Suge publicly blamed Puff’s crew for the shooting, while Puff denied any involvement in the incident.
 - 1996
 - In February 1996, Snoop Dogg was acquitted of a murder that he was allegedly connected to in 1993.
 - In March 1996, Biggie was arrested and convicted of second-degree harassment after threatening to kill two fans for seeking autographs.
 - In June 1996, Tupac released his famous diss track “Hit ‘Em Up,” widely regarded as one of the greatest diss tracks of all time. It featured violent threats against Biggie, Puff, Mobb Deep, and Bad Boy Records.
 - June 5th, 1996 – the start of committee

Committee Topics

- Topic A: Growing violence and division in the hip-hop community
- Topic B: Commercialization and growth of rap and hip-hop

Possible Solutions

- More collaborations between east and west coast artists to reduce overall tensions
- Nonviolence pacts
- Agreements on song content

Questions to Consider

- Is the growth of hip-hop inherently tied to conflict?
- Is hip-hop's model of violence sustainable in the long term, or does it fuel growth?
- Will legal challenges pose an obstacle to hip-hop artists?
- What steps can be taken to reduce the growing violence in the hip-hop community?
- Who is at fault for this rise in violence?
- Should rappers be affiliated with prominent gangs?

Character List

1. Sean "Diddy" Combs

After being fired from Uptown Records in 1993, Sean Combs then went on to form one of the most successful record labels of the 1990s, Bad Boy Records. Combs is an excellent promoter and organizer, having done so during his time at Uptown. He is known for developing Biggie, Mary J. Blige, and Usher as artists.

2. Marion "Suge" Knight

Suge Knight is one of the most feared people in hip-hop. He is the co-founder of Death Row Records, known for his threatening intimidation tactics. He formed Death Row Records with Dr. Dre and The D.O.C, paving the way for artists like Snoop Dogg and Tupac to make their way under his label.

1. Calvin Broadus, A.K.A Snoop Dogg

Snoop Doggy Dogg burst onto the rap scene in 1992 with his feature on Dr. Dre's "Nuthin' But A "G" Thang." He then went on to release his debut album *Doggystyle*, which was certified four-times platinum. He fueled the ascendance of West Coast G-funk into the mainstream.

1. Craig Mack

Mack was instrumental in the founding and establishment of Bad Boy Records, as he was one of the founding members. He is best known for his hit 1994 song “Flava In Ya Ear”

1. Andre Young, A.K.A Dr. Dre

Dre is the co-founder and president of Death Row Records. He began his career as producer and rapper for N.W.A. He is regarded as critical in pioneering the sound of the early 1990s through his production for artists like Snoop Dogg and Warren G.

1. Faith Evans

Faith Evans was the first female artist to contract with Puff in 1994. She wrote and sung backup vocals for Mary J. Blige and Usher before releasing her own platinum album, *Faith*, in 1995. She married Christopher Wallace in 1994.

1. Jermaine Dupri

Jermaine Dupri rose to fame through his writing for the group Kris Kross, whose debut album *Totally Krossed Out* went multi-platinum. He is known for his production for Mariah Carey, Lil' Kim, Xscape, and Usher.

1. Ghostface Killah

Roommates of Wu-Tang co-founder RZA, Ghostface Killah is this committee's representative of the Wu-Tang Clan. Wu-Tang is generally regarded as one of the cornerstone groups of East Coast hip-hop, becoming famous through their 1993 album *Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)*.

1. Chuck D

Chuck D was the leader of the politically conscious rap group Public Enemy, which he co-founded in 1985 with Flavor Flav. His group's first four albums were all certified either gold or platinum and were regarded as one of the most radical artists of their time.

1. Ice Cube

Ice Cube began his career with N.W.A. in the 1980s, where he wrote many lyrics of the group's well-known album *Straight Outta Compton*. Cube left the group in 1989, where he went on to find success through singles like “No Vaseline” and “It Was a Good Day.”

1. Lil Kim

Kim was discovered by B.I.G. in 1994 and subsequently joined his group Junior M.A.F.I.A. She attended high school with Nas and Foxy Brown. She has completed substantial work on her album *Hard Core*, currently set to be released later this year.

1. Daz Dillinger

A younger cousin of Snoop, Daz was recruited by Suge Knight to join Death Row at age 19. He is one-half of the duo Tha Dogg Pound, known for their single “New York, New York” featuring Snoop.

1. Kurupt

Kurupt is the other half of Tha Dogg Pound, a Philly native who moved to California when he was 19 years old. Tha Dogg Pound’s single “New York, New York” was a scathing attack on the city. Moving away from the committee timeline, Kurupt has been cited as one of the greatest rappers of all time by both Kendrick Lamar and Eminem, displaying his artistic importance in the West at the time of committee.

1. Nate Dogg

Nate Dogg achieved prominence through the group 213 with Snoop Dogg and Warren G. He debuted on Dr. Dre’s debut album The Chronic. He is known for his song “Regulate.”

1. Jay-Z

A young up-and-comer at the time of committee, Jay-Z is a Brooklyn native whose debut album Reasonable Doubt is among the most anticipated works of the year, set to release in just 20 days. He was a hype man for New York king Big Daddy Kane and already has strong connections to Biggie Smalls and the Bad Boy Records crew.

1. Aaliyah

While Aaliyah is not as invested in the specific beef between Biggie and Pac, she has emerged as one of R&B’s most promising exponents from New York. Her debut album, Age Ain’t Nothing But a Number, was released when she was just 15 years old. She has come to redefine the sound of R&B and seeks sonic expansion beyond regional barriers.

1. Jimmy Iovine

Iovine is the head of Interscope Records, the record label that helps Death Row distribute their music. He has worked with artists such as John Lennon and Bruce Springsteen, expanding his musical credentials beyond hip-hop. As a man of business and numbers above all, Iovine recognizes the publicity and revenue that come with such a beef... and the dangers.

1. Howard Safir

Safir is the recently incumbent Police Commissioner in New York City and, as such, has witnessed the effects of gang violence in a different way than other members of committee. Nevertheless, his perspective is important to considering how this beef has affected the city of New York and keeping its artists safe.

1. Willie L. Williams

Williams is the Los Angeles Police Chief and the first African American to assume the position. He has a difficult mission of regaining trust in the department and has advocated for more internal reform, a policy that may inform his views on how this rap beef will affect safety in these cities and the safety of their artists.