

# College women, sick of shakin' it, take aim at rappers

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA — Maybe it was the credit card that rap superstar Nelly swiped through a woman's backside in a recent video.

At Spelman, the most famous black women's college in the country, a feud has erupted over images of women in rap videos, sparking a petition drive and phone campaigns.

Nelly planned to visit Spelman earlier this month for a charity event enlisting students for a bone marrow registry. But the rapper canceled the appearance after hearing that a protest was in the works because of his videos — especially "Tip Drill," the one with the credit card, which also shows men throwing money between women's legs and women simulating sex acts with each other.

Misogyny in pop music, especially hip-hop, has been around for years. What's new, students say, is an explosion of almost-X-rated videos passed around on the Internet or shown late at night on cable channels like Black Entertainment Television, also known as BET.

Never before, students say, have the portrayals of black women been so hypersexual and explicit.

"It's very harsh. This is something we have

to see and listen to on a daily basis," said senior Shanequa Yates. "Nelly just didn't want to come here and face the criticism for the choices he's made."

Not all students agreed that rappers are to blame, or that the images were harmful to society. At a recent meeting at Spelman to decide what should be done to protest rap music, some pointed out that women in the videos know what they're doing and are paid to do it.

The issue especially incensed some men studying at Morehouse, a black men's college closely affiliated with Spelman. "These are grown women. I'm putting the blame on the women," said Kenneth Lavergne, a senior who was loudly booed by the 300 or so women at the meeting.

Another student, Bradley Walker from Clark Atlanta University, talked about the credit-card swiping. "Bottom line, a woman let him do that," he said. "I do think sometimes the total blame is put on artists themselves."

Nelly's record label agrees. A spokeswoman for Universal Records, Wendy Washington, complained that the charity event fell apart just because women at Spelman were looking for a scapegoat. She said the feud unfairly made Nelly an example to fire up urban radio

stations and music writers across the country.

"He did not think it was appropriate at all for students to use that as a forum," Washington said. "I think he was profoundly frustrated. He was not the first, certainly, to do a video like that."

Spelman women have low hopes of getting a change from BET, which shows bawdy videos with genitals and breasts fuzzed out on "BET Uncut" at 3 a.m.

The network has no plans to stop running it. "Uncut" has developed an almost cult-like following because of the freedom of artists to express themselves," said network spokesman Michael Lewellen. "It is specifically for adults. These are music videos whose content is too strong for our day points. We exercise more scrutiny than is required."

That sums up the basic message Spelman women have gotten from rappers and TV executives — if you don't like it, don't watch the videos or listen to the music. But the student activists insist the stereotypes in rap music hurt black people even if they don't listen.

"Black entertainers have become the new myth makers, showing gangsters and bikini-clad women with hyperactive libidos," said Zenobia Hikes, vice president for student affairs. "For non-black children it creates a

gross misrepresentation of the black experience."

The next move is a petition drive, and a campaign to phone complaints to TV networks and radio stations that run offensive material. If Janet Jackson's breast sparked such a crackdown on indecency in the media, the students say, surely a woman shaking so violently her bikini bottom pops off should anger people, too.

"We need to organize and say no to this stuff, this nasty, disgusting stuff," said Beverly Guy-Sheftall, director of the school's Women's Research and Resource Center.

It won't be easy.

"I don't see a solution as long as you have people willing to do it," said senior Nikole Howard. "You have to demand respect, but I doubt these women even thought they were being disrespected. It makes me sad, makes me realize how much work we have to do to educate women."

On The Net:  
Spelman College:  
[www.spelman.edu](http://www.spelman.edu)  
Nelly:  
[www.nelly.net/main.html](http://www.nelly.net/main.html)  
BET:  
[www.bet.com](http://www.bet.com)

## Diet, exercise can help ward off arthritis in aging weight-gaining

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — As baby boomers get older and fatter, they're also more likely to come down with one of the consequences of age and weight — arthritis.

Although they can't prevent aging, boomers can reduce the risk from obesity, and diet and exercise can help them achieve it, doctors say.

Osteoarthritis, the most

common form, develops as cartilage that cushions the joints wears away, leaving the ends of the bones rubbing against each other. The Arthritis Foundation says X-rays can find signs of osteoarthritis in most people over 60.

The condition commonly begins to show up between ages 40 and 60, so most boomers are "right smack in

the target," said Bill Roberts, an associate professor of family medicine at the University of Minnesota and president-elect of the American College of Sports Medicine.

Extra weight on the cartilage brings extra risk of the joint disease. "The simple explanation is, you're putting more biomechanical stress on the joints," said Kevin Fontaine, an assistant professor of

rheumatology at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

Fontaine and his colleagues looked at survey data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and concluded that the odds of joint pain went up as weight did. People ages 60 and older had a 12 percent likelihood of pain if they were underweight but a 60 percent chance if they were very

obese, according to the study in the October edition of the journal Obesity Research.

Although the CDC survey did not ask whether the pain came from arthritis, Fontaine believes it did because the people polled were in the right age range.

Losing weight can reduce the risk of developing arthritis, said Dr. David Pisetsky, director of the Duke University Arthritis Center

and a medical adviser to the Arthritis Foundation.

"There is good evidence that people who are close to their ideal weight are going to have fewer problems," he said.

Pisetsky also said overweight people ought to give special consideration to physical activity because it offers protection beyond weight loss. "Many tissues just perform better when they move or bear weight," he said.

## Reducing sodas helps slim kids down

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of diet carbonated drinks they would benefit dental health," said the scientists, diabetes doctors and nurses at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital in southern England.

The program involved a one-hour session given to each participating class four times during the school year.

The first session focused on good health and the importance of drinking water. The children ate fruit to emphasize the sweetness of natural products and each class received a tooth immersed in cola to show its effects on teeth.

The second and third session involved a music competition in which classes were challenged to produce a song

with a healthy message.

The final session involved art presentations and a classroom quiz based on a TV game show.

The percentage of overweight and obese children increased by 7.5 percent in the group that did not participate and dipped by 0.2 percent among those who did.

Consumption of soft drinks dropped by 0.6 glasses a day among the targeted children, but increased by 0.2 glasses a day among the children outside the program.

All the children drank more water than before. They had been told it improves concentration.

It was not possible to prove the weight improvements were linked to the decline in soda consumption because

the children may have changed other aspects of their diet.

But experts said the important point was that the program reduced obesity rates through nutrition education.

Soft drink consumption has increased enormously in the United States and in Europe over the last three decades, and children are becoming increasingly overweight around the world.

The World Health Organization said that although the change in obesity in the study was small, the intervention was also modest.

"This is a promising finding," said Derrek Yach, who spearheads the agency's anti-obesity effort. "We would hope to see larger studies

with more intensive interventions ... What happens when you combine this with the removal of vending machines? I'm sure you'd see even bigger beneficial effects."

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