



Summary Text

GRADE 11

Adapted Text

Bling'd: Blood, Diamonds and Hip-Hop

VH1's documentary *Bling'd: Blood, Diamonds and Hip-Hop* focuses on the tragedies fuelled by the diamond trade in Sierra Leone and features artists Raekwon, Paul Wall, Tego Calderon and former child soldier, Ishmael Beah.

The two most provocative pieces of information conveyed were:

1. The huge amount of human suffering involved in producing those ridiculously expensive, tiny pieces of rock.
2. Why do we place so much value on diamonds in the first place?

The hip-hop/reggaeton artists in the documentary did not all react the same way to the information in Sierra Leone. Some have said that consumers should demand "clean" or "conflict-free" diamonds. Others have said that the miners slaving away for food at the beginning of the production line should get greater compensation for their hard labour. They also argued that countries providing the raw materials for the diamond industry should get greater economic benefits.

Tego said little, but he did convey how disturbed he was by witnessing the cruellest side of the diamond trade.

In an interview with Leila Cobo, Tego said,

"I saw the way folks live. It's a place full of natural resources. The government profits; the rich profit, and the people don't even have electricity. I didn't take my jewellery off because I saw the poverty. It was because I saw the effects of us wearing diamonds. [...] I'm not asking other artists to develop that consciousness and to do the same. It's just that I did. [...]"

For Tego, the issue is more about flaunting wealth. He doesn't think it's right for artists to show off so shamelessly in front of fans who don't have the same resources. Once you've seen the slave labour and the human atrocities involved in diamond production, it's hard to look at those shiny little things and still find them attractive.

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