

# Gil Scott-Heron, Message To The Rappers

Hey, yeah, we the same brothas from a long time ago  
We was talkin' about television and doin' it on the radio  
What we did was to help our generation realize  
They had to get out there and get busy cause it wasn't gonna be televised  
We got respect for you rappers and the way they be free-weighin'  
But if you're gon' be teachin' folks things, make sure you know what you're sayin'  
Older folks in our neighborhood got plenty of know-how  
Remember if it wasn't for them, you wouldn't be out here now  
And I ain't comin' at you with no disrespect  
All I'm sayin' is that you damn well got to be correct  
Because if you're gonna be speakin' for a whole generation  
And you know enough to try and handle their education  
Make sure you know the real deal about past situations  
It ain't just repeatin' what you heard on the local TV stations  
Sometimes they tell lies and put 'em in a truthful disguise  
But the truth is that's why we said it wouldn't be televised  
They don't know what to say to our young folks, but they know that you do  
And if they really knew the truth why would they tell you?  
The first sign is peace, tell all them gun totin' young brothas  
That the man is glad to see us out there killin' one another  
We raised too much hell when they was shootin' us down  
So they started poisoning our minds tryin' to jerk us all around  
And they tell us they got to come in and control our situation  
They want half of us on dope and the other half in incarceration  
If the ones they want dead ain't killed by what they instigated  
They put some dope on a brotha's body and claim it was drug related  
Tell them drug related means there don't need to be no investigation  
Or at least that's the way they're gon' play it on the local TV stations  
All your 9-millimeter brothas give them somthin' to think about  
Tell them you heard that this is the new word, they got to work that stuff out  
But somehow they feel in the wrong way with a gun in their hands  
They feel real independent but they just pullin' contracts for the man  
Five and five will tell you it's hopeless out there on the avenue  
But if they really knew the truth why would they tell you?  
And if they look at you like you're insane  
And they start callin' you scarecrow and say you ain't got no brain  
Or start tellin' folks that you suddenly gone lame  
Or that white folks had finally co-opted your game  
Or worse yet implying that you don't really know  
That's the same thing they said about us a long time ago  
Young rappers, one more suggestion before I get out of your way☐

But I appreciate the respect you give me and what you got to say  
I'm sayin' protect your community and spread that respect around  
Tell brothas and sistas they gotta calm that bullshit down  
Cause we're terrorizin' our old folks and brought fear into our homes  
And they ain't got to hang out with the senior citizens  
Just tell them, "Damm it leave the old folks alone"  
And we know who rippin' off the neighborhood, tell them, "That BS has got to stop!"  
Tell them you're sorry they can't handle it out there  
But they got to take the crime off the block  
And if they look at you like you're insane  
And they start callin' you scarecrow and say you ain't got no brain  
Or start tellin' folks that you suddenly gone lame  
Or that white folks had finally co-opted your game  
Or worse yet saying that you really don't know  
That's the same thing they said about me a long time ago  
And if they tell folks that you finally lost your nerve  
That's the same thing they said about us, when we said, "Johannesburg"  
But I think the young folks need to know, that things don't go both ways  
You can't talk respect of every other song or just every other day  
What I'm speakin' on now is the raps about the women folks  
On one song she's your African Queen on the next one she's a joke

And you ain't said no words that I haven't heard, but that ain't no compliment  
It only insults eight people out of ten and questions your intelligence  
Four letter words or four syllable words won't make you important  
It'll only magnify how shallow you are and let everybody know it  
And if they look at you like they think you insane  
Or they call you scarecrow thinkin' you ain't got no brain  
Or start tellin' folks that you suddenly gone lame  
Or that white folks have finally co-opted your game  
Or you really don't know They said that about me a long time ago  
If they finally start to tell people that you lost your nerve  
That's what they said about Johannesburg  
You ain't insane you have got a brain  
You haven't gone lame; you have got your game  
Remember keep the nerve  
Keep the nerve  
Keep the nerve  
Keep the nerve  
I'm talkin' about peace