

## ***SLINGSHOT HIP HOP (94 min.)***

### **Notes for the teacher to convey to the students:**

**Introduction:** This is a film about the first rappers and hip hop music in Palestinian society. You are going to learn a lot about Palestinian culture and history, politics and economics. It takes place in three places: inside Israel, in the West Bank, and in Gaza (refer to map now or after the first segment). You will see that these Palestinians are very different from each other in some ways, very similar in others. Partly what makes them different is their political and economic situation in the places where they live. We will be doing a CBA about a culture and what happens to a group of people when they move, either voluntarily or forced by natural or human causes. We will compare the Palestinian culture as it moved from one geographical place to another; we will compare economy, political organizations, and society. But for now, let's enjoy the movie!

**Language:** In this DVD, people mainly speak Arabic and Hebrew. There are subtitles, so we won't ask you to write much during the film. We will ask you to fill in an information chart whenever we pause the film.

**Violence:** There is no blood in this film, but there are scenes where you can hear shooting. One man appears shot in the arm. There is a covered body at a funeral. But overall, there is way less violence shown on film than if you watched a blockbuster movie. There is lots of destruction (destroyed houses) and economic "violence" (poverty).

**Swear Words:** There are a few swear words in the film. They are all written in the subtitles and I'm going to hold up a folder when the swear words appear so you won't see them (or not, depending on your school and students). You will see that the words are not gratuitous; most of them occur when something really bad has happened: a friend is sentenced to a very long time in prison or someone's career is thwarted or the electricity goes out during a recording session.

**Smoking:** A Palestinian tradition is to smoke a "hookah" or "narguila", that is to smoke tobacco through water. You will see people smoking in the movie. But they are not doing drugs other than tobacco, though the hookah may look like a bong! In fact, when you listen to what the people are saying, you will realize that this is a very anti-drug movie.

**Minor note:** at the very end of the movie, it says "Fresh Booza Production". "Booza" in Arabic means "ice cream".

## Movie Chronology & Suggested Breaks With Discussion Questions (can also be journaling questions)

1. 0-17 minutes: introduces DAM (this means “blood” in Arabic), 1st Palestinian rappers in Israel in city of Lyd (Lod); history of Palestinians 1948 & 1967; connects rap growing out of American Blacks’ pain with rap growing out of Palestinians’ pain; introduces the occupation; they first try to rap in English; influenced by Tupac, Chuck D, Public Enemy; they understand that drugs are a dead-end; they start rapping in Arabic; 2000: 2nd Intifada

\* at 14:40: “bullshit”

### Discussion:

The rappers see a parallel between “fear of the Black planet” and “fear of the Arab planet”, what do you think they mean? (there is racism against Arabs in Israel, just as there is racism against Blacks in US; in general, there is racism by Europeans/whites/Jewish Israelis and fear of people of color)

They say their hip hop is 30% hip hop, 30% literature, 40% they point out the window -- what is it about how they live that might inspire their rap? (treated badly by Israelis, living in poor conditions)

Why do you think “Who’s the Terrorist?” was such a meaningful song to them? What does it mean? (Palestinians are called terrorists, but feel that way more violence is visited on them by Israelis than the reverse)

What kind of coexistence does Mahmoud want? (50-50 equality, not 99% for Israelis...)

2. 17-30 minutes: More in Lyd, more talk of occupation, Gaza’s first rappers (PR), map of Gaza, Gaza’s problems, including checkpoints

### Discussion:

Why do they say that the enemy is Occupation? (they see their lack of services and opportunities as caused by “occupation” -- eg. Israeli rule and discrimination-- and see this leading to drugs, demoralization, prison or death. Point out to students that they can put these problems into the column on problems for their movie notes)

What advice do the rappers have for Palestinian kids in the camp? (speak up)

(Point out to students that they can put the kids’ camp and the rappers encouraging them into the column on hope for Palestinians)

3. 31-38 minutes: Gaza rapper Mohammed tells how being injured during the 2nd Intifada made him realize that he could resist with rap; DAM from inside Israel goes to West Bank (Dheisheh Refugee Camp/Ibda’a) for the first time; they write a rap song with kids there; those kids are imprisoned in a raid a few months later; DAM talks to the kids on the phone from prison and learn about conditions there and that one has been sentenced to 10 years in prison; we see the Wall.

\*at 37:24: “fuck”

Discussion: Why do you think Mohammed's injury influenced him to start rapping? What did you notice about the refugee camps? What do you know about the Wall? (see if they know that it's been ruled illegal by the World Court of Justice because its route does not follow the 1967 border between Israel and the Occupied Territories)

(If you are showing this in segments, you might consider showing the DVD *Children of Ibd'a* during the next class.)

4. 39-48 minutes: Gaza; traditional 'oud music and singing by a rapper's father; the parents support that their sons are choosing art not violence; rapper influenced by DAM and Eminem; can't meet with DAM; DAM's CD; DAM can't go to Jordan; and finally: the women rappers! also supported by their parents; rapper goes to Tel Aviv and feels badly treated as a Palestinian

\*at 43:44: "motherfucker"

\*at 48:19: "fucked"

Discussion: How do the parents react to the rappers? Do they seem similar or different to parents here? What did you notice about the women? (see if students have any stereotypes about Arab Muslim women...)

5. 49-59 minutes:

Palestinian-Israelis and how they are discriminated against is again a theme: the rapper rides a bus and raps about Zionist racism, Abeer, a woman, was fired by McDonald's for speaking Arabic on the job but she sued and won; on the other hand, we see DAM getting on Israeli TV and speaking Hebrew; Abeer's family is not supportive.

\* at 50:10: "suck my dick" "ass"

\* at 51:20: "bitches"

Discussion: What problems are the Palestinian Israelis facing inside Israel? What freedoms do they seem to have? How does Abeer react when her family asks her not to perform? (she doesn't perform, but she secretly records and gets famous)

6. 59-1:09 minutes:

1st hip hop performed in Gaza (at Red Crescent Society -- like the Red Cross) with a middle-aged audience not sure what to make of it, but enthusiastic; DAM & Abeer react with pride and surprise and admiration when they see footage; they all speak by phone; we meet Ibrahim from Khan Younis in southern Gaza and learn about the destruction there in 2004 -- demolished homes, 100s of bullet holes in buildings.

Discussion: What would it be like to live in a place where the police and government assumed you were criminals and that it was okay to shoot at you and your community? How would you react? (violently? nonviolently? what inner resources would you draw on -- art, music, writing,...)

7. 1:09-1:23 (end):

Abeer's (AKA Sabreena Da Witch) 1st performance in West Bank, along with DAM & WEH; they use a hookah to syphon oil into their car when they break down; Abeer is afraid of being seen by relatives or friends who don't know she's performing; Gaza at night during attacks, shootings, electricity is shut off during a recording session; funeral, tanks, demolished houses, uprooted trees, people crying, checkpoints; PR tries to get to Ramallah for a concert with DAM, but they cannot; at the very end of the movie, they do manage to get to Ramallah for the first meeting of Gaza and DAM rappers) -- strangers meeting like brothers.

\*at 1:13: "shit" "fuck"

Discussion:

1. Drawing on the notes students kept during the movie, ask what the problems were for Palestinians (especially as youth, and as artists). (Students should point to some of the problems of the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza; and they should also recognize that the Palestinians inside Israel are treated as second-class citizens, with their communities underfunded and serviced.)
2. What are their hopes? (organizing, speaking up, making common cause with each other and people outside Palestine...this may be time to bring up the topic of the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement, as well as nonviolent civil disobedience movements like the International Solidarity Movement to End the Occupation. These tactics worked during the Civil Rights Movement in the US and also in South Africa to end Apartheid).
3. What are the differences between how the Palestinians lived inside Israel? in the West Bank? in Gaza? who had more freedoms and who had fewer? who had more political and economic rights? Who was better or worse off? (Although Israeli Palestinians are subjected to apartheid, it seems they are still better off than the Palestinians living in refugee camps and under occupation in the WB and especially the GS where they live under martial law and have no representation in the real governing body). Note the political and economic problems that the latter have. Comparing one culture in two places is the basis of this CBA. The more you can model this comparison for your students, the better.

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DIRECTIONS: As you watch the movie, write notes to yourself in the two categories below.

<b>What Problems Do Palestinians Have?</b>	<b>What Hopes Do Palestinians Have?</b>