

Jay-Z Pushes Back Against Criticism of Cuba Trip

Written by Zenitha Prince
Wednesday, 17 April 2013 00:00

Untitled document



Hip-hop mogul Jay-Z has released a scathing response to politicians who criticized the rapper and his superstar wife Beyoncé for spending their fifth wedding anniversary in Cuba.

Scandal erupted in the past few days after the pair were photographed dining at local Cuban restaurants and touring historic sites in the country, which has been under U.S. sanctions for more than a half-century.

On April 11, Jay-Z released “Open Letter,” a blistering music track that slams the conservative lawmakers who sought an investigation into the trip.

“Politicians never did sh-t for me / except lie to me, distort history,” he rapped.

Jay-Z Pushes Back Against Criticism of Cuba Trip

Written by Zenitha Prince

Wednesday, 17 April 2013 00:00

“They wanna give me jail time and a fine – Fine, let me commit a real crime,” he added.

The hip-hop mogul even took a shot at President Obama, with whom the rapper has a close relationship.

“Obama said, ‘Chill you’re going to get me impeached’ / You don’t need this sh-t anyway, chill with me on the beach.”

U.S. Treasury officials on April 9 confirmed that Jay-Z and Beyoncé had travelled to Havana under an educational exchange license.

Responding to inquiries by Florida House Republicans Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Mario Diaz-Balart, Assistant Treasury Secretary Alastair Fitzpayne wrote in a letter that the hip-hop couple travelled to Cuba with a group authorized by the Office of Foreign Assets Control to promote people-to-people contact in Cuba by U.S. citizens.

Jay-Z Pushes Back Against Criticism of Cuba Trip

Written by Zenitha Prince

Wednesday, 17 April 2013 00:00

While it is illegal for U.S. citizens to travel to the communist country solely for tourism, licenses can be obtained for academic, religious, journalistic or cultural exchange trips.

Fitzpayne, alluding to suggestions that Jay and Bey were given an exception because of their close ties to the White House, said that “The Treasury Department applies these criteria uniformly and does not make any exceptions.”

But the GOP lawmakers, who represent Cuban constituents, questioned that claim and said such “scam endeavors” mocks the suffering of the people who are fighting for their freedom from the repressive regime.

“If the tourist activities undertaken by Beyoncé and Jay-Z in Cuba are classified as an educational exchange trip, then it is clear that the Obama Administration is not serious about denying the Castro regime an economic lifeline that U.S. tourism will extend to it,” Ros-Lehtinen said in a statement.

Diaz-Balart further called for the “people-to-people” exchange program to be eliminated.

Jay-Z Pushes Back Against Criticism of Cuba Trip

Written by Zenitha Prince

Wednesday, 17 April 2013 00:00

“The Beyoncé and Jay-Z trip is a high profile example of why the ‘people-to-people’ category of travel should be eliminated,” he said. “I have repeatedly spoken out against abuses that result from the ‘people-to-people’ category of travel because it provides propaganda boosts and hard currency to the Castro dictatorship, and harms the Cuban people’s struggle for basic human rights and liberties....This category of travel skirts the law.”