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Risky New Journalism Podcast Format Pays Off

Veteran Alt-Weekly Journalists Join Forces with Hip Hop Producer/Advocate to Create Disruptive, Genre-Bending Podcast 'News Beat' Melding Investigative Journalism & Original Scores, with Dramatic Results

Syosset, NY—News Beat, a groundbreaking podcast launched in January 2017 combining investigative journalism and music to challenge conventional wisdom and rectify widely held beliefs and narratives, is wrapping up a wildly successful first season today with the release of its eighth episode and finale “Why We Riot,” an eye-opening look into the underreported, ongoing, institutionalized socioeconomic, political and cultural conditions that have historically contributed to social unrest within minority communities across the United States.

Described as “*60 Minutes* meets *Hamilton*,” News Beat was launched in January 2017 by Morey Publishing, now Morey Creative Studios, with the mission of utilizing relentless, fearless journalism and unique rhythms, rhymes, verses and melodies to tackle topics and issues deemed “radioactive”—those largely overlooked and/or intentionally ignored by mainstream media. Its inaugural episode was an educational deep dive into the lesser-known initiatives of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s legacy, punctuated with historical audio clips and telling interviews set to a moving musical score.

News Beat’s team consists of award-winning journalists Christopher Twarowski and Rashed Mian, both formerly of the alt-weekly *Long Island Press*—once the sixth-largest alternative newsweekly in the country and the recipient of more than 400 accolades over the past 15 years—and award-winning New York hip-hop journalist Michael Conforti, aka Manny Faces, founder of hip-hop publication *Birthplace Magazine* and nonprofit The Center for Hip-Hop Advocacy.

Despite its short existence, News Beat’s genre-breaking format has attracted big names from academia, journalism, politics and entertainment. Its crew was invited to join multi-denominational religious leaders and tolerance advocates from across the country at a widely attended national “Knowledge Ends Extremism” summit at the Carnegie Institution for Science in Washington, D.C. The News Beat podcast team has also been fielding inquiries from a number of organizers and educators at various universities and conferences to collaborate, develop lesson plans, and present this innovative, musical-news vehicle to students and others.

News Beat’s first season featured interviews with renowned academics, activists, authors and journalists, including: Harvard University’s Dr. Cornel West; renowned lecturer and activist Rosa Clemente; CIA torture program whistleblower John Kiriakou; award-winning journalist Mehdi Hassan, among many others—and unique musical compositions by notable artists such as Silent Knight and The Band Called FUSE, LiKWUiD, Kayem, and Greg Tannen.

Averaging just 16 minutes per episode, season one has covered such polarizing and controversial topics as: the true origins of America's ongoing global "War on Drugs" ("The True Origins of the War on Drugs, Episode 2 – Hint: It's not Nixon nor Reagan who started it); the "hijacking" of the word Jihad as a synonym for holy war instead of its lesser-known historical meaning ("Hijacking Jihad," Episode 3); the lack of automatic compensation for those wrongfully convicted and exonerated ("Exonerated and Broke," Episode 4); the whitewashed revelations of U.S. Army whistleblower Chelsea Manning's disclosures ("Collateral Murder Cover-Up," Episode 5); America's ongoing unconstitutional wars and the little-known law which justifies them (AUMF: The Latest Weapon in America's Illegal Perpetual War," Episode 6); and the discrepancies in covering and combating domestic far-right extremism as opposed to radical Islamic terrorism ("Radical Caucasian Extremism," Episode 7).

News Beat podcast will be returning January 2018 with season two, beginning with another alternative look at MLK Jr.'s legacy, to coincide with the civil rights leader's national day of remembrance and birthday on January 15. Other upcoming episodes include a critical examination of the cash bail system and forensic analysis of the many challenges currently facing press freedoms within United States.

"News Beat is a podcast exposing underreported, often shocking truths, in the most aggressive way possible," explains Twarowski, News Beat's editor in chief. "Now, as they say, the truth may not always be so easy to hear. Yet with News Beat, it is—in fact, it's really quite infectious."

"The *Long Island Press* didn't initially start out as the sixth-largest alt-weekly in the country," he continues. "We got there through our fearless journalism and relentless pursuit of the truth. We tried to do the best job we could and shine as much light on as much darkness as possible."

"We do this at News Beat podcast, too, though this time the truth literally possesses rhythm, melody, and is set to a groove," adds Twarowski. "Our collaboration with Manny Faces and such talented artists elevates the storytelling and transforms the journalism from simply words on a page into powerful auditory dynamite that you not only hear, but *truly feel*."

"Thank god for you all, News Beat," says Dr. Cornel West. "And most importantly—what the media doesn't do and what you all do—because in the end, without the role of the arts, we're doomed."

PRESS INQUIRIES/TIPS

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