

Rap artist Eminem and his popular tirade against Donald Trump

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Multi-platinum rap recording artist Eminem (Marshall Mathers III) has released a four-and-a half-minute a capella verse attacking President Donald Trump.

The piece, “The Storm,” aired Tuesday at the twelfth annual Black Entertainment Television (BET) Hip Hop Award show and has generated a torrent of media commentary. By Wednesday afternoon it had been viewed on YouTube and Facebook over 20 million times.

Although much of Mathers’ recorded material to date has been characterized by juvenile and anti-social outbursts, when he finds a worthwhile focus, the rapper is capable of giving sharp, if limited, expression to some of the social angst and oppositional feelings held by wide sections of the population, especially young people.

Mathers’ latest effort reflects uneven and contradictory impulses. He expresses justifiable disgust and horror at Trump’s war threats, his attacks on immigrants and democratic rights and his fascistic appeals to the police and military. On the other hand, he praises Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, at least by contrast to Trump.

Eminem begins, “It’s the calm before the storm right here,” echoing Trump’s own recent menacing comments. After sympathetically invoking the image of a Muslim “inside a mosque on Ramadan,” the rap artist goes on to “give Obama props/’Cause what we got in office now’s a kamikaze/That’ll probably cause a nuclear holocaust/And while the drama pops/And he waits for shit to quiet down/He’ll just gas his plane up and fly around ‘til the bombing stops.”

Mathers follows this with an excoriation of Trump for “his endorsement of [fascist advisor Steven] Bannon and support for the Klansmen,” in reference to

Trump’s half-hearted denunciations of neo-Nazis who recently stormed the streets of Charlottesville, Virginia. He refers to the fascist marchers: “Tiki torches in hand for the soldier that’s black/And comes home from Iraq/And is still told to go back to Africa.”

Elsewhere, the rapper expresses his solidarity with Colin Kaepernick and other National Football League (NFL) players protesting police violence and asserts that Trump seeks “an enormous reaction/When he attacks the NFL so we focus on that in-/stead of talkin’ Puerto Rico or gun reform for Nevada.”

Mathers goes on, in addition to holding up Obama and Clinton (“tormented” and “slandered” by Trump), to declare “We love our military, and we love our country, but we f----- hate Trump!”

Mathers, no stranger to conflict or political commentary, has made numerous denunciations of Trump and other right-wing political figures in the past, in song form or otherwise.

“Campaign Speech,” which was released last year to coincide with the US presidential election, featured comments labeling Trump as “a loose cannon who’s blunt with his hand on the button.” Mathers’ 2004 song “Mosh” contained a scathing rebuke of president George W. Bush, including the lyric, “Let the president answer a higher anarchy/Strap him with an AK-47, let him go fight his own war.”

Reflecting further contradictory impulses, Mathers, a Detroit-area native and resident, has been on “both sides” of the 2009 Detroit auto-industry bailout. In 2009, in the midst of the industry’s bankruptcy, the rapper demonstrated his sympathy for the city’s workforce by leading a contingent of 200 laid-off autoworkers to the stage for a performance on Jimmy Kimmel Live. However, Eminem later appearance in a 2011 Chrysler commercial, which promoted the myth

that the auto bailout, which enforced poverty wages on workers and was overseen by the Obama administration, had somehow revived the city.



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