

# Lyrics analysis of rage against the machine's down rodeo essay



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The musically vibrant, aggressive, and ever-raging socio-political quartet comprised of Zack DeLa Rocha, Tom Morello, Tim Commerford, and Brad Wilk is known as a force of heavy music and even heavier lyrics. The themes of their social and political views through song have spanned from stressing inequality among levels of society and communities to emphasize the importance of taking stand and action against every undue status quo. "Down Rodeo," a hit single from their second album, "Evil Empire," is no exception in explicitly underlining significant gaps among different classes of society. The song opens with profoundly sustaining melodies then breaks into an audibly crunchy riff, strong words of "So now I'm rolling down rodeo with a shot gun / these people aint seen a brown skin man / since their grandparents bought one" (Rage Against the Machine, 1996, n. p.

). The opening lines which also serve as the song's main chorus at once address both historical and present racial discrimination that was and is present in the illustrated scenario. It has to be taken note of that as a point of reference on stressing social inequality between the poor and rich, this song refers to Rodeo Drive, a shopping locality in Beverly Hills, California known for its high-end luxury and prestige branded merchandise. These lines are noticeably repeated then continues with, "Bangin' this bolo tight on this solo flight can't fight alone / Funk tha track my verbs fly like tha family stone / Tha pen devils set that stage for tha war at home / Locked wit out a wage ya standin' in tha drop zone" (Rage Against the machine, 1996, n. p. ).

These lines introduce the economic situation amongst surviving classes—having their backs against the wall and are unduly compensated and regarded for. Continuing with, "The clockers born starin' at an empty plate/  
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Momma's torn hands cover her sunken face/ We hungry but them belly full/  
The structure is set ya neva change it with a ballot pull" (Rage Against the Machine, 1996) which stress the prevalence of poverty among lower social class. These lines speak of functions of poverty deeply rooted in the social system and unfortunately will not change regardless of governing authorities because the system works for the rich and is in the opposite for the poor. The first verse ends with, " In tha ruins there's a network for tha toxic rock / School yard ta precinct, suburb ta project block/ Bosses broke south for new flesh and a factory floor / The remains left chained to the powder war" (Rage Against the Machine, 1996, n. p.

). These lines emphasize that more important issues of education and bettering living condition amongst communities are said to be poorly addressed and with such, priority is given to those in power, authority, and affluent standing. There is an obvious disparity between social classes and the situations they are in. The pre-chorus delivers with, " Can't waste a day when the night brings a hearse/ so make a move and plead the fifth 'cause ya can't plead the first / can't waste a day when the night brings a hearse" and then eventually sings the chorus (Rage Against the Machine, 1996, n. p.

). These lines relay a message of social defiance and realize that human and social rights that are unjustifiably limited by the government, especially in terms of constrained exercise of such rights like freedom of speech. The line which refers to pleading the fifth rather the first refers to the Amendments that are included in the United States Constitution. In this, there is also underlying emphasis that many are deprived from what they truly deserve.

The second verse starts with " Bare witness to tha sickest shot while suckas  
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get romantic / They ain't gonna send us campin' like they did my man Fred Hampton / Still we lampin' still clockin' dirt for our sweat / A ballots dead so a bullet's what I get" (Rage Against the Machine, 1996, n. .

). The defiance against intolerable treatment of government and unacceptable norms of the social system and the clamor of justice this time would not be unfairly dismissed. The second verse finalizes with, " A thousand years they had tha tools / We should be takin' 'em / [Expletive] tha G-ride I want the machines that are makin' em / Our target straight wit a room full of armed pawn to / Off tha kings out tha west side at dawn" (Rage Against the Machine, 1996, n. p.

). The verse only stresses the need for the need and urgency of change and how the injustice deeply rooted system and to those who govern have been stomached and that tolerance has run out. After a series of line in the chorus, lines of " The rungs torn from the ladder can't reach the tumor / one god, one market, one truth, one consumer" (Rage Against the Machine, 1996, n. p. ), follow and stress the cyclical injustice that has been and will be the everyday way of life for many.

After repetition of angst filled line of " Just a quiet peaceful dance," the song finalizes with whispers of " Just a quiet peaceful dance for the things we'll never have / Just a quiet peaceful dance for the things we don't have" (Rage Against the Machine, 1996, n. p. ). These lines speak of the of painful situation the unfortunate, marginalized, and the discriminated will still be in because injustice is deeply rooted in the enduring system of the ruling

government and society—the rich will only get richer, and the poor only poorer.