

Game Over: An Interview with Love & Hip Hop's Winter Ramos By: Michelle Cuttino

Winter Ramos has worked behind the scenes in the Hip-Hop industry for more than 10 years and has consulted as a wardrobe stylist for labels such as Ruff Ryders, Murder Inc., Full Surface and Def Jam. She is mostly known for her position as executive assistant to platinum recording artist Fabolous. From there, Winter took her talents down to South Beach and obtained a position as executive assistant to, the CEO of Slip-N-Slide Records, Ted Lucas.

Currently, Winter holds the title of Creative Costume Designer for Flavor Unit Films based in Miami. She recently wrote a tell-all book about her experiences in the world of Hip-Hop, titled "*Game Over: My Love for Hip Hop*" and serves up relationship advice in a bi-weekly, "Ask Winter" column for Hip-Hop Weekly.

Black Literature Magazine (BLM) caught up with Winter to ask her about some of the rumors and accusations swirling around the industry about her and her tell-all novel. BLM also wanted to help her set the record straight as to why this controversial book was written in the first place. Here's what Winter had to say...

Michelle: On April 1, 2013, you released your debut novel, *Game Over: My Love for Hip Hop*. Is this book only about your sex and love lives, or is there more to it?

Winter: *Game Over* is about all of my life experiences, not just the sexual experiences. I have a story to tell that will show determination, strength and the ability to overcome bad situations.

Michelle: Why did you choose *Game Over: My Love for Hip Hop* as the title? What's the meaning behind it?

Winter: I played a lot of games with the men in my life. While writing the book, the word "game" came into play often – so, *Game Over* was perfect.

Michelle: You published *Game Over* under the Life Changing Books imprint. Did you choose LCB, or did LCB choose you? Explain.

Winter: My initial meeting with Azarel, owner of LCB, was to turn some of their books into movies with Flavor Unit and the topic of my book came into play. Ultimately, a close friend of mine "Jadakiss" talked me into it.

Michelle: What was the driving force behind you writing a tell all? Was it all about putting people on blast, or more about telling your own story?

Winter: I figured I had tons of motivational stories to share with women interested in the music industry or trying to be a part of the industry. I've made plenty of mistakes with men but I think my story is more about my hustle and drive rather than sexual experiences. Don't get me wrong...the sex is there...but not the focus of *Game Over*.

Michelle: I've read so many articles where people have likened *Game Over* to Karrine Steffans' *Confession of a Video Vixen*. Do you feel the comparison is a compliment, or is it completely off base? Please explain.

Winter: The only people who compare are the people who haven't read my book. So before you formulate an opinion educate yourself. I do think the comparison is off base just because our stories aren't similar other than the fact that we both exposed sexual experiences. We ALL have had sexual experiences, right? Mine are just now discussed in a book.

Michelle: Unlike many others who have written tell-alls, you're one of the few to actually name names. Why did you decide to forego anonymity?

Winter: It wouldn't be my true story if I left out details.

Michelle: Several women have bashed you for sleeping with a married man, as was the case with Swizz Beats. What do you say to them?

Winter: I made a huge mistake. I'm not happy about what I did. I want everyone to know that it was wrong then and it's still wrong today; and to not go down that path because at the end of the day innocent people were hurt.

Michelle: You're currently working at Flavor Unit Films. In what capacity and how did you land this position?

Winter: I am the Creative Costumer for Flavor Unit. Ja Rule's manager, Ron Robinson, is a producer with Flavor Unit and brought me on board based on my past work ethics. The most recent movie I worked on just released On NetFlix, "Percentages".

Michelle: Congratulations on your pregnancy with your baby girl. Have you chosen a name yet?

Winter: Summer. How appropriate, right?

Michelle: Yes, Winter. It's very appropriate. Will you be spilling the beans about who the father is any time soon? Also, what was his reaction to *Game Over*?

Winter: He knew everything being written in the book. It was all a part of my past and he is well aware that that young lady in the book has grown to be an adult and has no intention of going back to her old ways. I'm not hiding him but I'm not having a coming out party either- LOL.

Michelle: Was this book a work in progress prior to your appearance on Love & Hip Hop New York, or was it written once filming started?

Winter: The book was almost completed by the time filming started.

Michelle: You've confirmed on more than one occasion that rapper Jadakiss encouraged you to write the book. In what way did he persuade you and for what reason(s)?

Winter: Jadakiss convinced me that sharing my experiences would be a positive thing. He's known me for so long and has seen me grow in this industry on a personal and professional level and felt my story would be helpful to women.

Michelle: Your relationship with rapper L'oreal is confusing to say the least. At one point, you agreed to remove her chapter from your book. However, some of her story is still included in *Game Over*. Why did you go back on your word and include her in the book anyway?

Winter: The chapter that L'oreal appears in doesn't focus a lot about her. The focus is on my relationship with someone else. So after I was portrayed negatively by L'oreal, I felt the real story needed to be heard. Also, I had no idea the book had already gone to print so even if I wanted to remove her...It wasn't possible.

Michelle: How do you feel about some of the men you mentioned in the book, like Slim Thug, for instance, who now deny ever being with you? Do you think they are just doing damage control? Explain.

Winter: I have yet to see proof of the denial. I did see him put up a surprised face but denial I have not seen. He doesn't seem to be the type to do something like that so if someone can show me proof then I can address it appropriately.

Michelle: It's been said that you have changed your phone number. If you have, why did you?

Winter: I've had that number for over 10 years and I am now on television. People were calling from everywhere. It was time for the change. It had nothing to do with the book. I did keep my business number but that personal phone was going crazy.

Michelle: What do you hope readers will walk away with after reading *Game Over*?

Winter: A better understanding of who Winter Ramos is and how my experiences shaped me. Also, if you are going through what I've been through or currently going through what I've been through maybe what you read will help you in same way. I also hope to expose the real deal behind the music business and not just the nice cars, clothes and jewelry you see on TV and videos. It's not all it's cracked up to be.

Michelle: At the end of the day, when it's all said and done, what do you want viewers, fans and readers to trust and believe about the real Winter Ramos?

Winter: I am real and completely honest. I have always been that way. I know sometimes people especially in this industry would like you to believe they are who they rap or say they are but I want you to know the real and true me. I'm normal just like you. I'm also not the messy, backstabbing person portrayed on TV. Remember that ratings are the goal in television. It's all entertainment. Get to know the real me.

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