

AIDS lecture 2/25/88
14/16 cover

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It was only one day since I had presented a lecture on AIDS primarily to a Afro-American audience in Roxbury, Massachusetts and I was particularly aware of the opportunity I had at Cardozo after having been through the grizzly statistics about the disproportionate spread of AIDS in Afro-Americans.

There were 3000 Black youngsters in a huge auditorium at Cardozo, filling the seats, sitting on the floor between the aisles, and standing around the room. This is, to my way of thinking, as tough an audience as you can speak to on a subject such as this. I have to say immodestly that according to the remarks students made to press and things that appeared in the school newspaper, the students accepted me as someone very interested in their future and even called me a "Cool Dude".

The audience was illuminated, but because of the high intensity of the spotlights trained on me as the speaker, it was impossible for me to see the audience beyond the first row. As with all my lectures, I have a long time for questions and answers afterward, and one of the questions I received here was probably one of the things that set me in a position of acceptance with these teenagers. Somebody asked the question: "Could I get AIDS sitting right here in this auditorium?" My answer was: "Not unless you're managing in some way to be having sex with the boy next to you or you're sharing needles and syringes with someone near you who is shooting up heroin." I had the feeling that both of those activities might possibly be going on, but the Q& A served to establish me as a "Cool Dude".

My remarks were really a summary of the things I'd said to an Afro-American audience in Roxbury the night before and my general presentation to youngsters of this age is to be a little flip in the presentation and even more so in the questions and answers.

Because of the similarity of these remarks to those I had made the previous evening, and the description that appears on the front sheet of that lecture, I will not repeat that material here, nor will there be no index.