

# WTJM calls in proven Power hitters

## Lover & Dre in lineup

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**T**he hip-hop radio wars heated up yesterday as the new kid, Power-105, put its veterans onto the playing field.

Ed Lover, Doctor Dre and Lisa G — who helped make WQHT (97.1 FM) a city institution in the '90s — returned as the morning team on WTJM (105.1 FM), triggering a round of high-fives from artists and listeners.

But after they mixed in old-school hip hop, dusted off the famous Roll Call and bantered with new partner Flavor Flav, the real punch line was delivered by Doc Wynter, a vice president of programming at Power-105's parent Clear Channel.

"Our weekly in-house tracking," Wynter announced to a packed studio, "shows that Power is already beating Hot-97."

As Wynter and everyone else knows, the measure of radio success is how a station holds its audience after the initial excitement and sampling.

But there's little doubt WTJM means to seriously challenge both Hot-97, the hip-hop brand name in city radio, and WBLS (107.5 FM), the R & B godfather whose ratings surged when it added

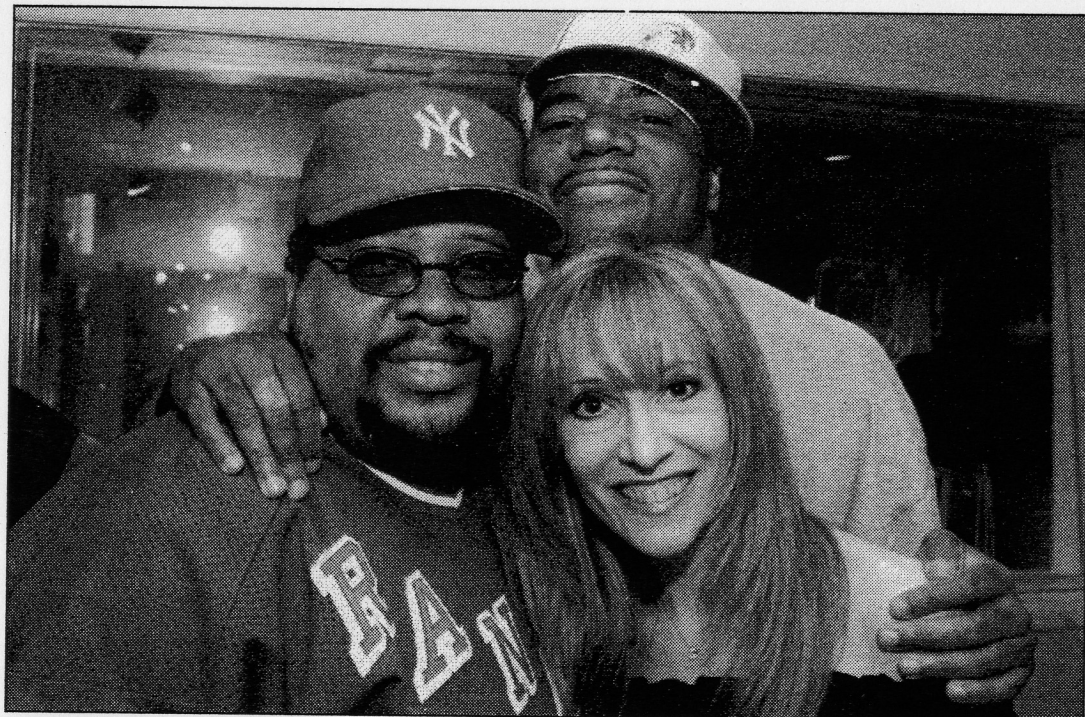
more hip hop and Wendy Williams in the afternoon.

"It be a radio war," said Michael Saunders, the new program director at Power-105. "I don't mean a lot of ugly foolishness, but competition, which brings out the best in everyone. It's good for the artists, the listeners and the radio stations. It makes the job more fun. It's healthy and I look forward to it."

Steve Smith, a senior vice president of programming at Clear Channel, said, "We see an opportunity to build a great radio station. We're giving listeners something unique. This isn't about demolishing anyone else."

"Of course, we also want to be No. 1. And we will be."

In the month since it switched to hip hop and R & B, Power-105 has taken many swipes at Hot-97 — suggesting it has too many ads and its playlist is too limited. Power also calls its own morning show "a hate-free zone," referring to Hot-97 morning man Star's description of himself as "the hater."



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**POWER PLAYERS: L.-r., Doctor Dre, Ed Lover and Lisa G have been reunited as team on 105.1.**

Hot-97 has made moves to keep people listening, like placing contests between ads. Next week it will give away a Cadillac, and there will be auditions for a new morning-show team member.

Hot-97 staffers haven't talked much about Power on the air, though Star — who has said Dre and Lover got lazy and dull in their last years on

Hot-97 — isn't reluctant off the air to acknowledge the competition. "Hey," he said. "If you got it, bring it on. We can handle it."

Dre shrugs this off. "The war is over," he said. "There is no war. To have a war, there's got to be somebody there."

WBLS program director Vinny Brown said it's too early to react to Power.

"So far they sound a lot more like Hot-97 than they sound like us," he said. "But since they haven't had to be a real station yet, with commercials and disk jockeys, no one knows what they'll turn out to be. To this point, it's all woofing."

"But it definitely shakes up the radio landscape — and that's not a bad thing."