

**INSIDE:** MIKEY D CAM ARCHER JULES EDDIE KAINÉ JON CONNER

WE PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE CULTURE



**ISSUE #22**

# VALIDATED.

## MAGAZINE



PAGE  
KENNEDY

GOODZ  
DA ANIMAL

P. FRANK  
WILLIAMS

5IVE MICS

**DJ NEWMARK**

**THE THROWBACK KING**

SPRING 2024

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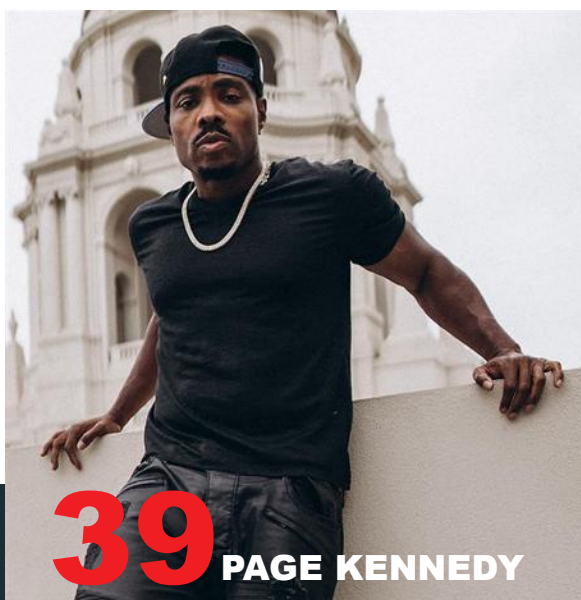




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*"We Pay Allegiance  
To The Culture..."*

# EDITORIAL

In the 22<sup>nd</sup> issue Journalist KB Tindal speaks with actor and artist Page Kennedy. The Detroit, Michigan native discusses Macbeth in Compton, Straight Bars V project, 25 years of acting and rapping and much more. KB also sits down with Sacramento, California DJ Newmark. The radio personality discusses having a friendship with the late great DMX, The DJ Newmark Experience, his love for Hip Hop and music as well as Herby Hancock's influence on him. KB Tindal interviews Oakland, California Executive Producer P. Frank Williams. They discuss the recent Freaknik Documentary, new media company For The Culture, By The Culture and Busta Rhymes Documentary for starters. Bronx, New York rapper Goodz Da Animal chops it up with KB regarding new music and entrepreneurship, including colognes, apparel, sneakers, Cognac, Slick Talk Cypher and new board game Tap Out. Brooklyn, New York rapper 5ive Mics talks faith in God, All Entertainment Media Group deal and recent album "The Drop Is In".

KB Tindal also interviews Queens, New York emcee Mikey D and discuss earning his props battling and his role in LL Cool J's stage name. KB chops it up with Buffalo, New York rapper Pretty Bulli about her new project "Then And Now" and being chosen by RZA for the Cypher Continues on Sway In The Morning. San Bernardino, California rapper Cam Archer sits down with KB Tindal to talk Banner Boys project with Grammy Nominated Producer Nabeyin and his Over Everything camp. Writer Barsquiat interviews Lakeland, Florida "nerd turnt rapper" Jules. They discuss him charting on iTunes To 50 Hip Hop Albums as an independent artist, praise from Sway and recent EP "Ghost Stories 2". Tamal of Carrying The Culture weighs in on "The B-Boy's Forgotten Influence On Hip Hop Culture". Writer Deme D taps in to Brooklyn rapper Eddie Kaine and producer Big Ghost LTD latest project "Last Exit to Crooklyn". Deme D also sheds light on Flint, Michigan rapper Jon Conner pushing the culture forward and one to keep an eye on. Deme D gives props to Brooklyn, New York rapper Debanair and his recent album Alchemy. Journalist John Sabbia selects his must listen to indie picks - XP The Marxman and Currister "TerreMotto", 100GrandRoyce and Dame Grease "On Me", DJ Muggs and Mooch from Da Cloth "Trumpets", Jae Skeese and Superior "Skyscrapers", Daniel Son and Raz Fresco "Northside" and Reno RX featuring UFO Fev "Motion Picture".

Don't forget to check out ValidatedMagazine.com for "Hip Hop from Buzz Worthy to Legendary".

"We Pledge Allegiance to the Culture..."

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*"We Pledge Allegiance To The Culture..."*

# REDEMPTION

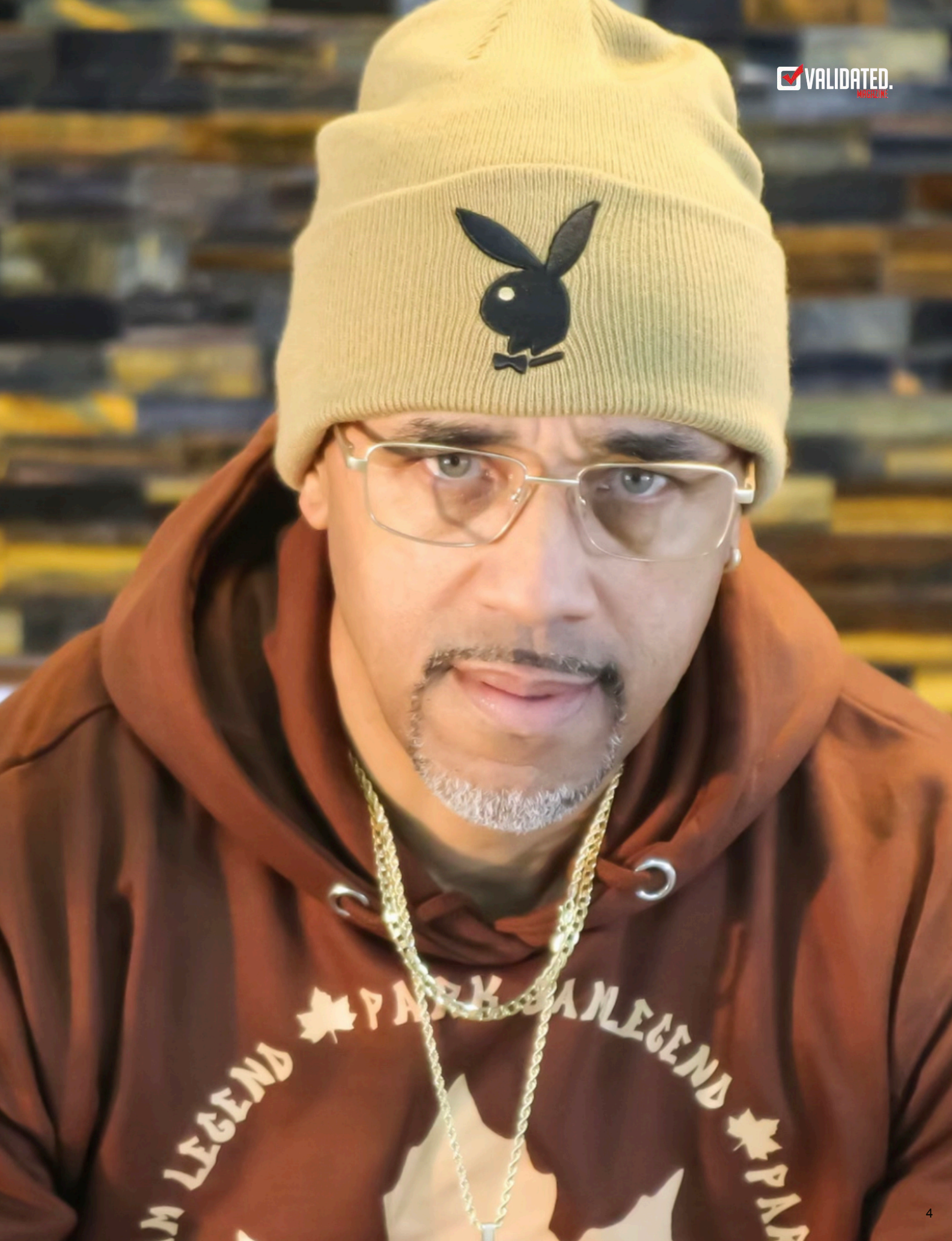
*Mikey D*

INTERVIEW @KBTINDAL  
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**Queens, New York Emcee talks earning his props battling, his role in LL Cool J's stage name, and more.**

Laurelton, Queens birthed this legend. His writing and freestyling abilities are top notch. He is someone that has consistently kept his skills sharp for 40 years in this rap game. He was the frontman for the LA Posse, Symbolic Three and Main Source after Large Professor departed. Some even say he controversially defeated Melle Mel at the Battle for World Supremacy at the now defunct New Music Seminar back in 1988. He played a major role in suggesting to the iconic LL Cool J what his stage name should be. He's traded bars with the likes of Jadakiss, Sheek Louch, Kool G Rap and more. If you don't know who he is then pull up Google and do your research about the one and only, original battle emcee, Mikey D.







Validated: How did Queens mold you as a youth man?

Mikey D: I mean, when I was coming up in Queens, man, it was a mixed block. Back then, you know, the neighbors were your neighbors. Your neighbors were like your family. Back then your next door neighbor was qualified to whip your behind if you stepped out of line. Everybody's doors were open. I mean, the kids knew each other. Parents played poker, all of that type of stuff. So back then it was a neighborhood and it was diverse. We had white. We had Puerto Rican. We had blacks on the same block. Man, listen, it was just the good old days. Come on. I was born in '67. So I came up in the '70s. We were outside playing run, catch, kiss, freeze tag, red light green light. So that's basically how I came up. I was kind of like a shy kid. I wasn't really into the streets because I was raised by my grandparents. So they were strict and they weren't strict. It was like, good cop, bad cop. Nana was the bad cop. My grandfather was the good cop. That's who raised me. So yeah, man, I had a pretty decent childhood.

Validated: What's your earliest memory of Hip Hop, man?

Mikey D: Man, listen, I remember it like it was yesterday, man. It was 1979. Me and my man D Money one of the members of my very first group before I even knew what Hip Hop was. He hails from Harlem. His grandmother lived next door to where my grandparents raised me, so he would come out every summer. And this one particular summer in '79 he bought a cassette tape, and he had his brother's big radio. He brought it out on the steps and he was playing a tape and it had Grandmaster Caz on it rapping. And that was the first time I heard it. And from the time I heard it, I knew that's what I wanted to do. So D Money introduced it to me. And yeah, he bought it to Queens from the Bronx man. It was on and popping. And I never looked back after that, bro.

A matter of fact, right after hearing that, later on, I went next door, and I wrote my very first rhyme. When I finished the rhyme my grandmother my Nana was the first person to hear me rap.

Validated: That's dope.

Mikey D: She said I sounded pretty good. I got my first cosign from my Nana.

Validated: That's the best cosign in the world right there.

Mikey D: Word up.

Validated: I know I had seen a couple of interviews and you talked about Grandmaster Caz's rhyme "Yvette."

Mikey D: That's crazy because yeah, he had the Yvette rhyme and the first rhyme that I wrote was "Kim." I used his blueprint for storytelling and made it sound as believable as possible, because I wasn't getting nothin back then but made it seem like I was.

Validated: Yeah exactly. I'm gonna '67 baby too, so I know. Definitely. I gotta shout out the boy Geechie Dan for plugging the contact in. I had grown up around Geechie. He probably don't remember a lot of shit. But I remember growing up around him. And I remember seeing

him kind of challenge LL to a battle one day and that didn't turn out too good for him.

Mikey D: I know it didn't.

Validated: But he's always been a staple. And he's always been a part, you know, representing this culture to the fullest man. So, definitely shout out to the boy Geechie for the link up.

Mikey D: Word out. That's my man right there. I remember when I met Geechie. Geechie was rapping on 90.3 FM. This was when Dr. Dre was on WBAU at Adelphi University. I called in because I used to be up there all the time and I got to talk to him. I was like, "Yo, you dope". And he wound up coming to meet me up at Pop and Kim's on Merrick Boulevard.

Validated: Pop and Kims with the Cold 40s.

Mikey D: You already know!

Validated: Definitely. I have heard the story before. I'm sure some people have heard it. But maybe some people haven't. Tell me the story about why LL Cool J gives you the credit for helping him create his stage name. Tell me that story so our readers can hear from your point of view.

Mikey D: Like I always say, I mean it was a suggestion that happened to work. It was a suggestion that did really well. When me and L first met, his name was Jay Ski. I was already running the streets. You know, I was already making a credible reputation for myself as far as being this young battle rapper. My name was Playboy Mikey D at the time. And at that particular time I had a bunch of friends like Ever Loving Kid Ice who introduced me to rap. Lovable Little B. We had Romantic Lover Snow. Lover Boy TC.

So everybody had a nickname, right? Cool J his name was just Jay Ski. So when we started hanging out one day, he came through and he was like, "Yo, Mike, I changed my name. I changed my name from Jay Ski to Cool James". I was like, "Yeah, that's dope. That's dope. Cool J. Okay, Cool James." I said, "Damn, you need a nickname or something in front of that, you know, blah, blah, blah." We was probably going to get a beer because I know we was on Merrick Boulevard. And I probably was like, "Yo, you always talking about the ladies loving you. How about Ladies love Cool J or something like that." And from that point on, he was like, "Yeah-yeah that's it. That's it. And then LL came from once he got on Def Jam. They thought it was too long for the labels and all of that, but he wanted to keep it so the acronym LL Ladies Love. So it was a suggestion that worked out.

Validated: No doubt. 40 years later, man he's still representing the culture to the fullest and definitely a icon man. A staple.

Mikey D: Yeah, absolutely man.

Validated: Yeah, absolutely. I remember throwing rhymes back and forth with LL at 118 Park on Farmers Boulevard one day. And I ran out of rhymes. I ain't even gonna lie.

Mikey D: Well, that's the thing. That's why I was so impressed with L when I first met him because, you know, we had mutual friends that would talk about me and they wanted us to connect. And when we finally met we didn't

Well, one thing with me, I never changed. I always remained in my lane. I never sacrificed my character, or my happiness as an emcee to be something else. I've always stayed in that pocket.

battle. We kind of compared notes. So I was impressed because he had the same energy I had. He had the same growl, the same voice texture, the cadence was similar. And we had bags of rhymes man. Like, he's just like me, he lives with his grandma. I live with my grandma. It was one of those things. And I only got him beat by a couple of months. Like my birthday is November and his is in January. We the same age, but I got him by a couple of months. So everything was so parallel with us. I mean, the only difference was, he wanted to be industry and I wanted to be in the street.

Validated: So you've been in a lot of groups man, Tell me about your evolution as an emcee as you honed your skills, making records, as opposed to battle rapping as you came up through the ranks in these groups?

Mikey D: Well, one thing with me, I never changed. I always remained in my lane. I never sacrificed my character, or my happiness as an emcee to be something else. I've always stayed in that pocket. Like, for instance, with the Symbolic Three, the only reason I wound up rapping with them is because back then, I used to be like a master of parody. When somebody would come out with a record, I would take his record, flip it into my own words and make it funny, like the first one I did was, "It's Yours." I did "Your Drawers." And Whodini came out with "Big Mouth." and I had "Big Head." And then with the Symbolic Three, one of the girls was my girlfriend, she was in this group. And I was dealing with a manager at the time Author Armstrong who used to own the Ecstasy Garage. And he knew Jerry Blood Rock from Reality Records. And that's when "The Show" came out from Dougie Fresh. And that's when people started doing the answer records this, that and the other. So he said, it would be a great idea if we had some girls on that record and bring that record out on the



same label. So it just so happened, you know, I'm with this girl and she got a group and I do that. So I wrote "No Show." So certain points, I was rapping on it and all of that. But, you know, that was me being me creative with the parodies.

Mikey D and LA Posse, originally, LA Posse was supposed to be Boom Bap, that was the name of the clip, because that was the name of the crew we ran with in the street. But management thought it might not be a good idea to use that street name in the industry because it might bring some negative attention this, that and the other. But we wanted to let people know who we were and where we were from. So you know, anybody from Laurelton they know that that means LA, if you from Queens that you know, LA. Everybody thought we were from the West Coast, which is cool. And back then we used to run with our Posse. That was our clique. That was our crew. So LA Posse was the crew and it was also Boom Bash and with Paul C and those guys and Jonny Quest.

We never really tried to make commercial records. Every time you hear me rap, I was a little edgy. I was a little harder than your normal commercial rapper. I still had that street edge. I wasn't polished because I was drinking a lot of 40s at the time. So I was already on I'm gonna keep it real stuff before keeping it real was a thing because I never wanted to be transformed into something that I wasn't because I just didn't believe in that. So I always stayed myself even with the Main Source thing. If you really listen to the song I said, "Here comes Mikey D with the Main Source". I never said "Here comes Mikey D and our Main Source" and I'm taking Large Professor's spot now. I said, "Here comes Mikey D with the Main Source." Because I didn't want to take his spot. I didn't even know what was going on with him at the time. I just wanted to be a part of that crew because it was full circle. These guys were mentored by a brother that was down with my group. And I thought it would be something dope, Paul C, Yo, this is the guy that I started with. Now he's with the guys that I mentored. I thought it would be dope. That's why you never heard me really try to make a hit record with Main Source. Everything on there you can hear the battle stuff. But that's just me. But like the evolution now this is my redemption because I don't drink anymore. I'm happy as hell and I don't have anything else to prove as far as being a dope rapper because I did that with the contests. I already proved that. Now it's time for me to prove that I can make some hit records. So I just started making records. And I feel even greater now with the pen.

**Validated:** That shit is so dope for real. To stay in that time-frame a little bit now, a lot of people probably don't even know or don't remember that you traded bars with Sheek Louch and Jadakiss on "Set it Off" right?

Mikey D: Yes.

**Validated:** And they were still going by the Warlocks around that time.

Mikey D: Yeah.

**Validated:** You literally traded bars with some of the best in the business including L. Tell me at this point in your career, or at any point, you know, in your career. Was there ever any emcee or producer that made you want to step your pen game up?

Mikey D: LL always made me want to step my pen game up. My younger brother Lotto always makes me want to step my pen game up. Other than that I don't like to listen to a lot of different people. So what I try to do instead of competing with them is I compete with me. The rhymes that I wrote yesterday, I try to top those today. Switch the cadence up, reinvent myself and stuff like that. Because even with like Sheek and them, we were introduced to each other. I never knew who they were. They didn't know who I was. We met in the Bomb Squad's basement. Cutting and them bought us together. And because I was the frontman of Main Source, we wanted to do another "Live At The Barbecue." type of thing. And he wanted me to listen to these guys, you know. And I fell in love with them as soon as I heard them because they had that street edge and they was hungry like I was hungry. Man, we just were rhyming the whole time. And we never knew they were going to become The LOX. They didn't know I was Mikey D. It was just a mutual respect off this rap thing. Nah, nobody really ever made me want to step it up except L and them they always kept my pen sharp. Like they say, "Steel sharpens steel".

**Validated:** In that time era when you were becoming a part of Main Source. From what I read online, I'm not sure if it's true or not but that happened through Jeff Redd the R&B singer?

Mikey D: Oh, yeah.

**Validated:** And that's the same Jeff Redd that brought Mary J. Blige's to Puff right?

Mikey D: Yeah. Jeff yo, he's so damn humble. And just nonchalant like. I used to hang with a brother named Mike Beasley. He's a great dude, man. He was managing me at the time. Mike Beasley was the guy that used to run the numbers and, you know, he drove the white Lincoln with the blue rag top and all. I'm riding shotgun instead of listening to the music, I'm freestyling. His cousin was the brother that was married to Melba Moore. Charles and Bow Huggins of Hush Production. So they had this office in Manhattan. And we used to go there all the time to just hang out. This particular day, we were downstairs and they had this grand piano down there. And somebody was tapping on the piano, and I'm just rhyming. I'm just freestyling. And Jeff Redd walked through. He was like, "Yo, that sounds good". He said, "Yo, I know a group. They're looking for a rapper." He said, "They're already established. I'm not going to tell you who they are. I'm just going to give you this address and this number. So make sure you call and go visit them."

So me and Mike Beasley we was like "Thanks, bro". We ain't think nothing of it. But we follow through the next day. And sure enough it was Sir Scratch and we met and they got K-Cut on the telephone with me. And I sent a rhyme to him. And it was a done deal after that. The next week, I was on my way to Canada. Thank you, Jeff Redd.

**Validated:** So after a while, man, you took a break from rapping and from the industry in general. Why did you take that break and what put the spark or the battery back in you to make you really go hard again with this emceeing like you're going today?

Mikey D: What it is, is this is just something in me. Hip Hop is a part of me. As many times as I tried to put the mic down. It's like a crack pipe.

It always calls me back. And I don't care how long I'm inactive. I can still pick the pen right back up and just go right in. So sometimes, I'm inspired by if I might have heard something that inspired me. It didn't have to be rap. It could have been a song that inspired me. But most of the time, I'm inspired off of life. I'm inspired off of experience. Stuff that I go through, I have to write it because that's the only way that I know how to express myself. Because when I was young, I used to bottle everything up because I didn't know how to let it out. But when I found Hip Hop, that's the way that I let it out. Like the first time I took a break it was because Paul C and his untimely death. We're just finishing up our album, everything is about to hit the fan, we about to be that shit. Excuse my language. And then Paul C gets murdered in his sleep.

**Validated:** Wow.

Mikey D: Come on, man. So that kind of threw me off. And at the same time, we were going at it with Def Jam, because that's the same time my brother LL came out with the Bigger and Deffer album and he had the other LA Posse producing him. Now this is the LA Posse. Like I said I wanted to be in the street, not the industry. So I'd never learned the business. We never trademarked our name or copy written our name. We just jumped out and came out like that. These guys took care of the business. Although they came out after us. And it made more sense because they're from Los Angeles, LA, boom, boom, they did all the paperwork correctly. And because they were on Def Jam, Def Jam had the machine behind them, they had Columbia. Sleeping Bag was still an independent label. They didn't want to fight the lawsuits because they didn't have it like that. They wanted us to drop our name. We lost all. All of this stuff is coming down at me all at one time. I got this new baby and all this and it just man, it just made me take a back seat for a little while. And then at the same time, the gangsta rap was coming into play. NWA's was coming out. I could rap like that, but I just didn't feel like that was me. Like, why am I talking about killing people and I don't do that. I kill people with rhymes. I don't even have a gun. I just took backseat. But then, you know, I've moved to Miami for a little while. I was down there with my boy TC and we made some records out there. We was running with Luke and Marquis from the Two Live Crew. And the lawyer that we had wound up just putting the record out on us. And that kind of gave me a new spark. I was down there as Cordless Mic because I didn't want people to know, I was from New York because you know, Miami bass and New York they didn't like each other. If I wanted to fit in, I had to be a little different and change it up a little bit. So I did that for a while. But then Hurricane Andrew came through. That hurricane chased me out of Florida and I'll be honest with you, I've never been back to Miami since. That was like '92. I ain't been back since man. Then I was working a regular nine to five doing the security thing and that's when I was hanging out with Mike Beasley and just rhyming and all of that. And then Jeff Redd came through with the Main Source thing. We went through all of that, things didn't work out. Because, you know, whatever the issues that management had with the label at the time, it didn't work out. And the label wound up keeping the album and putting it out years later, so I'm like, "here we go again."

**Validated:** Typical industry stuff.

Mikey D: Yeah. So I fell back. And then like a

96 or something I just said, "I'm gonna just start rhyming again". Then I just started going for the neck and all that. And that was that. Then I started getting used to the nine to five thing. And when I was working in Kennedy Airport, I was doing security out there driving cars. And I started working in the office for years and all of that. I didn't have time to do the Hip Hop and the job thing at the same time and drink. I just didn't have enough time to juggle all of that until I moved and came up here. I stopped drinking, I put it down.

**Validated:** Where you located now?

Mikey D: I'm in Wappingers Falls where they had that big explosion today. It was a big explosion. But I moved up there and I got a job. You see the time I'm on right now.

**Validated:** I see it yeah.

Mikey D: I got a job that I love. And this is Pepsi. This is the real Pepsi. My position is just dope. I got my own office. So what I did was, I invested in the Isotope Spire studio, so I got a little portable studio. Man I write rhymes and my music, I got my speakers in my office and all of that. So I get to do everything that I want to do. Like with the music, my lady supports it. I don't drink. It's like life couldn't be better right now. The age that I am now. I'm way better than I was back then because I'm in a better space in life.

**Validated:** Yeah, absolutely. Man, I can identify man. You know, like you said, I don't know if it's still 11 years, but I know you said you stopped drinking 11 years ago. First, let me say congratulations, man.

Mikey D: Thank you, brother.

**Validated:** Yeah, I'm in my eighth year. So I definitely feel you and I know exactly where you're coming from. If you don't mind me asking, what were some of the things that led up to you making that decision to quit? And what was the final straw that pushed you over the edge and you just said, "You know what I'm just done?"

Mikey D: Man, my whole thing, I was always raised not to be a quitter. So every time I would try to quit, I'd be like, "I'm no quitter, man gimme that". And so, I got a DWI, I bought a brand new car. The day that I drove it off the lot I got a DUI. We had the car up for a while and this, that and the other. Man, I had to go to all of these programs and all of those alcohol programs. I was still going to those things while drinking too. Nothing was stopping me. I wasn't ready to stop. I tried the programs I tried the AA. I did the church. I was going to these places drinking like a wine cooler or or something. I met this woman. And what's crazy about it is I met the woman that I'm still with right now. And I don't know. It was like, it hit me like, "Damn, I found a jewel right here." I found a gem in this woman. Like, she makes me happy. I make her happy. We just have fun. We laugh. Yo, it's just such a beautiful thing. But sometimes I get this little attitude and shit. I got a choice. And I had to think about it. I was like, "I can either keep drinking and f' this up. Or I could keep this and just just be happy and do what I got to do. So that was the choice. I wanted to stay in that pocket over here with this woman. And what's so crazy about it is that she used to drink socially, like when she came home, she would have a glass of wine. Or like on the weekend, we go to a bar, have a drink

and whatever. When I said I wanted to stop I didn't ask her to stop. She stopped as well, just to support me. I've never looked back since then. And it has never been so easy. But it has never been so easy to stop doing that to do something that I really really love. I don't look back at all and not regret it. And I tell people, man the programs and all that stuff, don't work unless the person is ready to stop, that's when he's going to stop. If he ain't ready you just wasted a whole lot of money. I was definitely ready. Believe me man since I've quit I've been through tragedies man, tragedy after tragedy after tragedy with my family life but I've never once looked back at the bottle. A couple of surviving family on my mother's side will tell you that I broke the cycle. Because everybody in my family on my mother's side, my father's side everybody got they sip on. I broke the cycle.

**Validated:** That's dope.

Mikey D: Word.

**Validated:** That's amazing bro. Absolutely, man.

Mikey D: Thank you.

**Validated:** We're gonna backtrack just a quick minute. The New Music seminar, Battle for World Supremacy 1988. The legendary Melle Mel. I heard you call Melle Mel, "The Randy Savage of Hip Hop" and I fucking lost it bro. As soon as you said it, I saw the image in my head, and I was like, "That's Melle Mel bro. I heard Grandmaster Caz tell the story too about how Mel was egging you on and everything. And he wanted to try to prove himself from having the belt from the last year and he wanted to defend it. You was trying not to. You was like more like "Nah let me respect the elder. Let me respect the legend." He kept egging you on.

Mikey D: Yeah.

**Validated:** So, at that point, were you kind of nervous or did the battle skills and the New York attitude just take over in the moment, and you just let it fly?

Mikey D: I thought it was a setup. I thought the whole thing was set up. I thought it was gonna be like, Yo, they want to get this belt back or whatever. And my whole thing was, I'm taking this back to LA Laurelton Queens and I'm showing off. No, I'm not battling for no belt, or none of that. Blah, blah, blah. He kept on poking the bear. He kept poking the bear. I was trying to show him respect, and all of that. And you gotta remember, I'm from Queens. I'm from the new-school and I'm this year's champion. He's the official champion. He's from the Bronx and he's from the old school. So it's already...

**Validated:** And this is 1988 when New York was a lot different than it is now.

Mikey D: Right. You had "The Bridge Is Over" and all that, you know, what I mean? So what happened is, he basically bullied me into a battle because he tried to make me look like a sucker. And the crowd "Yo, Mikey. Yo-yo". After hearing all of that, I just had enough. I don't think he understood like that battle stuff that's the cloth that I'm coming from. Right. So I'm not scared to battle you. I'm trying to give you a chance to bow out gracefully and leave this alone. Because to myself, I'm like, "He really can't be serious. I still think this is an effing setup. Like, he kept running his mouth. I'm

gonna have to give it to him." And what happened-happened.

The first rhyme he said to me, was like an educational rhyme he was preaching man. I'm like "No man this is a battle, man. " I'm going for blood. And that's what Caz was saying, "Oh, his rhyme was better." Yeah, but we were battling. I could of compared rhymes with him and spit some red black and green rhyme but no, we battling. And he really looked like a wrestler man. He had tight shorts on. He got the muscles. And Grandmaster Caz had on a referee shirt, man, a black and white striped shirt. Come on, man. That's why I thought it was a setup. I said, "I'm not doing this WWF stuff".

**Validated:** Oh, that's a classic, classic, classic moment in Hip Hop, bro.

Mikey D: Word up.

**Validated:** Definitely. I know he walked away with the belt. But I know you ended up getting one on the back end. And you still got that today. So congratulations on that too, brother.

Mikey D: Yes, sir.

**Validated:** Give me from your opinion, one pro and one con about Hip Hop from the 80s and 90s and Hip Hop today.

Mikey D: Internet, independence, business. Because the cats from the 80s, cats like myself there's a lot of us we basically were nailed to the cross in order for these guys to make it today. We are the ones that got all of the bad contracts. We had to go through the hardships of the business in order for you guys to go on a smooth paved road. We didn't have the internet back then. God man, if I had the internet back then ...what!?

**Validated:** Would have been a different game.

Mikey D: These guys they make videos on their phones now. We doing this now. Come on, man.

**Validated:** Yeah.

Mikey D: I'm kind of sorry that I didn't learn more about the business. You know, like I said, L did everything that he was supposed to do. He learned the business and paid close attention to everything. Me, I didn't really care about it like that. I just wanted to be the dopest rapper in my hood. I exceeded that mission because I conquered those streets. And I went from borough to borough and made it all the way to Soul Train. I didn't know anything about no writers royalties. I didn't know anything about publishing. Yo, they used to make you sign your publishing away as soon as you signed with them. We didn't care. We were so happy to be on vinyl. I had platinum tapes in the street before I made records. But you know, I'm thinking "Damn, if our tapes is banging like this, imagine when we make records. Like they always say, show business is 10% show, 90% business. So yeah, man, I wish I would have learned more. But I mean, it's all good. Because it molded me into what I am now. All that age and all that stuff that's dead to me. My job now is to motivate my peers and inspire the youth man. I'm not competing with nobody. I'm here for that purpose, man.

**Validated:** Tell me how important it is to have a 9 to 5 or any kind of job to have stability and to

**U** Me, I didn't really care about it like that. I just wanted to be the dopest rapper in my hood. I exceeded that mission because I conquered those streets. And I went from borough to borough and made it all the way to Soul Train. I didn't know anything about no writers royalties. I didn't know anything about publishing. Yo, they used to make you sign your publishing away as soon as you signed with them. We didn't care. We were so happy to be on vinyl. I had platinum tapes in the street before I made records.

fund the dream.

Mikey D: Yeah, that's cool. I'm just saying especially these younger cats, man, these younger cats they still living with moms, man. Get a job. Invest in some microphones and some clothes into your brand or whatever. And you'll be Gucci. A cat like me see, I'm getting older. I don't want no tooth aches and I don't want nothing to go wrong with my health. So, Hip Hop don't have no medical coverage.

Validated: You got that right.

Mikey D: So my job takes care of my medical coverage, you know, I got enough time off where I can go on tour and I can do all of that too. But the j.o.b. keeps the lights on. Everybody gotta have a plan B man. Rap is something that I love. Rap is what I love. And I'm going to do that for the rest of my life. But a j.o.b. I'm gonna hold that down too. Now if something in the rap thing comes like something bigger comes along, hey I'm with that too. But I'm always going to be able to work as well. I don't have an ego that's big enough to say I don't need a job. No, I'm not one of those dudes, like these cats around here at work matter of fact, man, if I brought this into my office, I got two platinum plaques hanging up in my office. So the young guys that work here, they'd be like, "Damn, Mikey D, why are you working here?" I say, "Because I gotta pay the bills, man. Same reason you working here. They respect me. They respect me. I take the respect anytime."

Validated: Definitely. Tell me about your distribution company Pass The Torch. What are you currently working on? Is there a new company that you're under? What's going on with you on the independent side right now?

Mikey D: It's funny you mentioned that because I just got off the phone. Right when I was getting ready to log on here, I was on the phone with Rob Schwartz. Rob Schwartz is Who Mag.

Validated: I know him.

Mikey D: Yeah, he's also the one that you know, hooked me up with the Pass The Torch thing, this that and the other. Now, originally, I did Pass The Torch a couple of years ago. Pass The Torch was basically I wanted to bridge the gap and stuff like that. And I wanted to put music out when I wanted to put music out and I wanted to go against the grain. But I haven't been putting music out consistently because I be all over the place. You see me, I be moving. So I haven't been able to do that. So just now I was telling Rob what I want to do with Pass The Torch is I want to switch it from Kings from Queens, Kings from Queens distribution. That's what I'm representing right now this whole Kings from Queens movement. I want to support some of our older brothers and sisters from Queens. Man, listen, there's like a suitcase full of gems in Queens that people don't know about. These are the people like me that got nailed to the cross early. So I wanted to do that for them.

I'm also working with Herb Middleton. Herb Middleton is a great producer, he was down with Teddy Riley and P. Diddy, and all of them hit makers and all of that. And he has a company called "Moontower Records and Publishing". So I'm working with him on some things too. And so that's it. Actually we working on my album right now "Redemption."

Validated: Looking forward to that. Any idea when you plan to drop that Redemption?

Mikey D: I know we got a joint coming out on January 20th, which is my mother's birthday and the day she passed away. So I have an anniversary celebration joint for her. It's gonna be like the new "Dear Mama" out this piece. And then Redemption. I'll say maybe spring to summer of 2024 the whole album Redemption will be ready. But I want to do something different. I don't want to just give the people music. I want to give them the experience. I might have to let the album be the soundtrack to the autobiography, the audio book, slash film or documentary. Give the full experience because you'll be able to feel it through the music, but to see it and really understand it, you'll understand what my redemption is.

Validated: I'm a big audio book fan so that's definitely something I would tap into. What has been your most memorable moment as an artist so far in your life?

Mikey D: Soul Train.

Validated: Absolutely.

Mikey D: Being able to kick it with Don Cornelius. But this is when he was first beginning to get sick. So when we went on is his when he had weekly celebrity stars hosting the show, so I went on when John Witherspoon, rest in peace, John Witherspoon, pops was the host.

Validated: Okay, gotcha.

Mikey D: He interviewed us and all that. Don Cornelius was there though because he was still the Executive Producer. So I got to chop it up with him and get the autograph for my moms.

Validated: That's dope.

Mikey D: I'm on Soul Train. From Pop and Kims to Soul Train baby.

Validated: If that ain't monumental I don't know what is bro.

Mikey D: I'm trying to tell you man.

Validated: Absolutely. All right my brother, last question, man. Hip Hop just officially turned 50 years old this year. With that being said what does Hip Hop mean to you?

Mikey D: Everything man. Hip Hop means everything to me, man. I walk it. Talk it. You know, speak it, teach it, eat it. Whatever. You look at me, you're looking at Hip Hop. This is what Hip Hop created man. Hip Hop raised me. So Hip Hop means everything to me. I represent Hip Hop to the fullest. It's my religion. It's my culture. It's everything. It's everything. The streets raised a lot of people. Hip Hop raised me. Hip Hop taught me how to maneuver through the streets. Hip Hop gave me a voice. Hip Hop taught me how to express myself. Hip Hop is also my therapy when I'm down, I write about it. Whatever's on my mind I know how to channel in through Hip Hop. So Hip Hop is everything to me bro.



# NO CREATIVE BOUNDARIES

## CAM ARCHER

INTERVIEW @KBTINDAL

**West Coast MC talks Banner Boys project with Grammy Nominated Producer Nabeyin and his OE - Over Everything camp.**

Cam Archer is a West Coast MC that was born in the Inland Empire and raised in San Bernardino. He grew up as an avid fan of gaming and comic books. He's been inspired by the most common and uncommon artists from Jay-Z, Wale, Lupe Fiasco, Lloyd Banks to the legendary Nirvana and Daft Punk. His early album influences were Gorilla Warfare from the Hot Boys and of course The Slim Shady LP by the one and only Eminem. He has released a full length project almost every year since 2010. He has a strong presence in the game with over a decade of time as an artist. His raps exude references of street life that he scarcely avoided along with some knowledge, pain, comedic humor and of course that strong sense of bravado that any pure MC brings to the table. I last interviewed him back in 2017 when he won the Open Bar Challenge with DJ Caesar and Coach PR on the Weekend Work Show on Shade 45 on Sirius XM Radio and in the last seven years he's been consistently putting in work. He's barred it down on multiple platforms including Bootleg Kev and most recently he dropped a seven minute freestyle, as he won the Corner Store Challenge and tore that platform down as well. We got into all the smoke about everything from his upbringing to what keeps his pen sharp. Tap in with San Bernadino's own Cam Archer.





**Validated:** Since the last time we spoke in 2016 you've released multiple projects including; Spirit Gunner, Inside Voices, No Apologies, Midnight Run, El Guapo 2 and El Guapo 3, Cam Is Outside, Don't Mention It, and The Pleasure is Mine. Too many singles to mention including your latest one "What You Make It" featuring Kidd Dryden. Tell me man, what keeps you motivated to keep putting out bodies of work the way that you do and what keeps you from getting frustrated with this game?

Cam Archer: I mean my whole creative process is basically more so about me and what I'm going through in life anyway. So a lot of times I fall into the same pits of those artistic holes that I feel like every artist probably falls through a lot like me. So you get in those moments you're like "Man I ain't put nothing else out. I'm tired of this." I feel like we all fall into those pitfalls. But I feel like eventually if you really love the craft like you're going to want to keep putting stuff out. And it's kind of just almost like for the sake of your own mindset that's kind of how I look at it. This is more so for me than it is for anybody else. I got to keep putting out quality work to keep myself in a place of peace mentally.

**Validated:** I noticed a trend in a lot of your projects where you don't have a lot of features.. Is that by design? Why is that usually the case?

Cam Archer: I don't want to say it's by design. I think a lot of the times I look at it a few different ways. When I'm putting out an album a lot of times I go into it with an idea and kind of like a whole fleshed out concept in my head when I start anyway. So a lot of the times, I kind of look at it as how am I going to paint this picture and tell this story. I don't even think about other people being involved. I've tried to be better at that. I usually have singers I want to put on there or something like that. But I don't usually have too many rappers. So I'm trying to work on that as I work on these newer projects. I'm trying to think like "Okay. Who else would I put on this. If I were to put a verse on it, who would be on it?" That type of thing. A lot of times that's where my head goes with it. It's more so vocally who can help me do what, who can bring what I can't bring to this project as a lyricist already. And oftentimes maybe it's a little bit of me stacking my plate too much. But yeah I usually just end up not needing any of the rappers on there.

**Validated:** Not to knock any other artist or anything like that but do you find that your level of competitiveness and your level of lyricism is not what a lot of artists bring to the table?

Cam Archer: I don't want to say that. I feel like I'm pretty fortunate to at least in my circumstance of people that I work with, I can't say that. I can say that anybody that is usually around me is pretty lyrically inclined. I don't have to worry about like, "Oh so and so." If I hit so and so up for a verse, is it gonna be good or anything like that. I don't have to worry about that. So I'm pretty fortunate from that standpoint. But yeah I feel like there are some pockets where that could be an issue. But fortunately for me I don't have that issue.

**Validated:** Who's the one MC or producer that you work with regularly that brings out your sharpest pen game?

Cam Archer: I feel like as far as production goes I mean I've been working with Oh Gosh Leotus since Coco Mania very heavily. So it's

just kind of like we mesh very well. So he knows exactly what I'm looking for and I know that his beats are so dope. I don't have a choice but to go crazy on his beats, like it's almost disrespectful if I don't. So he and I work very closely now with another affiliate of mine Nabeyin, who is a Grammy nominated producer. He's worked for a lot of people. He's also from the Inland Empire from San Bernardino. He's a Ghanaian American producer. He just was on the Travis album. He's produced on Drake's albums. He's like been on everything. He's produced for Jamla artists for Nights Camp. He works with everybody. We have like a different dynamic as opposed to me and Leo where it just kind of flows naturally. Nabeyin will be more hands on with the input of, "Oh this hook should sound like this or you should redo this verse or something like that." He has his ideas of things. So that brings a whole different vibe to the table than what I would normally have. So that's always a welcome thing too.

**Validated:** What's your earliest memory of Hip-Hop?

Cam Archer: My earliest memory. I don't even know if this counts technically but my earliest memory of Hip Hop is Positive K.

**Validated:** That definitely counts bro for real.

Cam Archer: That was the first song that I was singing when I was really little.

**Validated:** Which one? Which Positive K song?

Cam Archer: "What's Your Man Got to Do With Me?" Apparently that was my joint. According to Moms she said that I was really big on that record.

**Validated:** That's what's up.

Cam Archer: So that was probably why I was probably like three years old like singing that song, and my mom was tripping out about why I would be singing that song.

**Validated:** That's super super dope. I think MC Lyte was the female on that song if I'm not mistaken. But yeah that's super dope dope. What's been your most memorable moment as an artist so far?

Cam Archer: My most memorable moment as an artist, well I got a couple now. The first time I opened for Lupe was probably the first time I got like that moment of "Oh like people realize and respect how I do this that don't even know me." That was the first time I had people like I was selling CDs and stuff and I ran out of CDs and people were like "I don't care if you have any more here just take money." They were like "We just want to see you keep doing your thing." That was important because maybe a year later, I would open up for him again at a different venue and there were people in the crowd that came to see like waiting in line as I was going in for soundcheck, who recognized me and were like "Yo I still got the shirt. I still got the CD." They were excited that I was there to open for Lupe. So that was pretty big for me to kind of give me that validation of "Okay it's not just people in my city. It's not just when you got friends who just want to support you. It's more than that, like the talent is really something I could probably do something with." And just recently having a song produced by Mike Shinoda from Lincoln Park was pretty mind blowing for me. Those are probably the

two things that are up there the highest right now.

**Validated:** Like I said man you've been by all by all standards consistent. Even if you feel like you haven't been in certain areas or you took some time off and didn't put out a project as quickly just looking at the body of work it's very consistent. I think that's where a lot of artists fail. They're so gung-ho on just trying to get the one hit record. They don't grasp the concept that continuing to write no matter what the goal is, like always keep writing, always keep putting out work. You've done that bro. So, I commend you on that. Absolutely.

Cam Archer: Thank you.

**Validated:** I saw you accept an award for the Only Empire Now verse of the year for "Forgotten Heavy." You mentioned your competitive spirit as well the multitude of talents that needs to be recognized in the IE. What's the mission to get more of these artists recognized and what's the energy like in the IE? Are the bulk of these artists supportive of each other or is there some type of tension that goes on in different places and stuff like that? Talk to me about that a little bit.

Cam Archer: I feel like the only issue with the IE right now is just how many different demographics and pockets there are musically because it's such a big area. There's millions of people here so the only downside, I could really say, is people are supportive but they're supportive of the people within their pocket. So it doesn't always expand out of that. I would never say there's any tension. I feel like every city probably has a little bit of that crab in a bucket mentality. But for the most part like each pocket is super supportive of everybody in their pocket but it's just in their pocket. And there's so many different styles that it might seem like there's a divide or a difference. It's just that people don't know who's who. There might be a lot of people who might not even know who I am in the IE just because of how the pockets are separated. So it's really on us as artists to kind of try to bridge the gap as much as we can and bring everybody together to kind of help people to realize there's so much talent out here. There's talented lyricists. There's a talented artist making commercial style music if you will. We do everything out here. So it's just a matter of making sure that we display that as much as we can as often as we can.

**Validated:** Two albums in 2023, Don't Mention It, The Pleasure is Mine and Cam Is Outside. What has the feedback been on those albums outside of your circle? Has it opened up doors? Have you gotten surprised at people coming at you saying, "Damn bro, I listen to these projects," and you've gained new fans along the way? What's that been like for you?

Cam Archer: The thing about Cam Is Outside is that it was just me ultimately being petty. So that was the only reason why that project happened. That was just me being petty, kind of just showing that I have one of the most versatile pens in my city period, so I can do whatever. I do a lot of what I do by choice. You can't box me. You can't box me into any sound. I can do whatever I want. So that was kind of the point of Cam Is Outside was to do that and it was dope because it got like a lot of love from people who aren't in my "pocket," of like, the "rapper-rappers." It kind of let them know like "Oh yeah Cam can do whatever he wants, he got it." That's it. It was just kind of like I know. It



was just reminding y'all that I can do that and it's just by choice. So that's why it was called Cam Is Outside.

There was a specific list that came out that my name wasn't mentioned in by somebody who wasn't from the city. This list was made by somebody who isn't even from the city. So when they asked, like people were asking like "Cam why aren't you on this list?" I just replied to them when "I'm not outside. I'm in the house. I'm not outside trying to get on a list like this. Don't get it twisted if I want to be on something like this I can be." So that was the impetus for that.

Don't Mention that the Pleasure is Mine was actually a compilation that I did for a show that I was doing at The Viper Room. I got on a bill at The Viper Room and I was really excited about it. So I wanted to do something for people who were going to buy a ticket to that show. So I put together this compilation of songs that I knew had songs from when I went to New York and recorded them in New York at Quad Studios and at Platinum Sound. I had some songs just kind of sitting in the tuck that I was like I don't know where these are going to go. So I may as well just let people hear them instead of just sitting on these records. So I put together this compilation for anybody who bought a ticket but that was the year prior. So I was like this project never went on streaming, I'm going to put it on streaming. And what I liked about doing that was I like to see how songs are gravitated towards when you don't force them first as a single. So this is the first time I put out just a collection of songs and been like "Okay. What do you actually like?" Without me telling you this is the song you should like. So that's been cool to get the feedback on that and see what people are actually gravitating towards to listen to.

**Validated:** Where did the competitive spirit come from for you? Did you play sports as a kid? Where did it come from prior to the music?

Cam Archer: I am a sports addict. Everything that I ever wanted to do in life revolved around sports. My whole view of things revolved around sports. Everything in my childhood was pretty much sports. I wanted to be a baseball player then I wanted to be a basketball player. My pops played on a few teams professionally in football but he couldn't stay healthy. I should have played football. I was supposed to play safety but it just didn't happen that way because I was allergic to grass. That wasn't going to happen. It was just different stuff. I'm a big pro wrestling fan, obviously I love all that stuff. So it's like I've always had a competitive nature within me to my detriment sometimes. I guess rap was the next natural step. Because that's all rap is really right? It's very competitive at its essence.

**Validated:** Competitive bragging.

Cam Archer: Exactly. So I realized oh I'm actually nice at this and then I felt like in my head I'm like "Oh I'm realizing I'm not just nice I'm better than a lot of people at this," so it was in no time for me that I was like we gonna step this up and go crazy as we can with this.

**Validated:** Yes. I'm glad that you are continuing the work. Even from when you did the Open Bar Challenge and DJ Ceasar picked you as the winner and you went to New York like I had just come to Cali at that time. I came out here in 2015. That was around 2016/2017-ish. Yeah

man just to see you continuing the work. Because what happens is a lot of artists man and I'm sure you you've seen this they come out and you're like "Yo you dope like you really fucking nice". And then all of a sudden they just fall off. They just disappear.

Cam Archer: Absolutely.

**Validated:** They just don't want to stay on top of actually chasing-- I won't even call it chasing the dream. I would just say, stay on top of just being a creative person and just constantly doing some type of work. But I've seen you do that man so that's super commendable bro. Absolutely man.

Cam Archer: Thank you.

**Validated:** I know when we last spoke a long time ago at one point you said before becoming a rapper that you thought you were maybe gonna design video games. I know you still play. Are you trying to make something happen with any video game companies? Or if you have already and I'm just not aware of it? Or having your music featured in some or any possibilities of being a creative mind behind developing one?

Cam Archer: I've definitely tried to get my music into games and tried to contribute to it that way. I've worked alongside Mega Ran and stuff like that. So I get to pick his brain about like yo how would I go about this if I were going to do this because he's basically sponsored by Capcom so he's very tapped in and is very aware of how it goes. So I'm fortunate enough to be able to pick his brain on stuff like that. But not as of yet. I haven't been able to. And I've definitely pitched my music to video games, commercials, all that good stuff. The time just hasn't come yet but I'm patient. I'm fortunate and also like Oh Gosh Leotus and Nabeyin they do a lot of syncing and Licensing stuff. They've had their music used in a lot of places. It wasn't a video game but the one thing I was fortunate enough to be a part of was a show produced by LeBron James that ended up on ESPN called "Best Shot", me and my camp basically did the entire soundtrack for that and that was on Warner Brothers and got released. So I got to do that. Nothing video game wise yet but it'll happen soon. I feel like it's gonna happen. I believe that it will.

**Validated:** Is there a plan B?

Cam Archer: Is there a plan B outside of music?

**Validated:** Yes.

Cam Archer: Yes all my plan B even if it wasn't music it would still be some form of entertainment. So the only thing that I would do outside of this and I've done some of this as well probably voiceover work, things of that nature. I was fortunate enough to do a NBA commercial for when Vince Carter was retiring. I was fortunate enough to do the NBA Canada commercial for that where they were kind of like paying homage to Vince. I've been able to dip my toe in stuff like that and that led me to a couple other gigs that helped at a time when the money was needed, I needed a little bit of bread out of nowhere here comes a voice job. It's been cool to have those opportunities like that. Definitely something I would look into and I've continued to look into avenues of doing stuff like that. I try to not think about the safety net too often but that would definitely be it if I

# Hip-Hop is literally what gave me the voice that I have in general..

can't get the music off to a level that I would be comfortable with.

**Validated:** What can people expect from you that's upcoming as far as merch is concerned, as far as other projects that you're working on or anything that they should be looking out for from Cam Archer in the near future?

Cam Archer: I'm currently working on a project technically it'll be like a double thing but me and Nabeyin are working on a project. We've been working on this on the low-key for five, six years. It's called "Banner Boys." We're going to drop that pretty soon. We're putting the touches on that. Adding features, verses, vocalists and things of that nature to that.

I have a camp known as OE (Over Everything), myself, Jay Kaisai, Nicklaus Gray, CJ Westley.. We rap on everything and then of course Nabeyin and Oh Gosh Leotus just produced everything. We did like a week camp where we knocked out like almost 30 songs and we're cleaning all that up to put that out as a project this year as well. And then after that I'm going to start working on, as I like to call the "album-album." Because I feel like I haven't done an album, like a true album in the essence of what I do in a while and that's always going to pick at me and needle me. But at the same time I know I need to do this one correctly because I'm really passionate about the concept that I have behind it. That'll be the next step, so that might come out this year. It might come out next year. I'm not really going to rush it. You're going to get a lot more music from me for sure whether it's on an album, EP whatever that may be in the next 12 months for sure. And I'm working on some more shows out of state as well. Right now I was actually just talking to somebody. I was emailing back and forth with some people about pulling up on some of their dates and rocking a few shows out of state. So yeah just trying to keep busy man. Trying to stay as busy as possible.

**Validated:** Absolutely. Last question man. In the spirit of Hip-Hop turning 50 years old last year, what does Hip-Hop mean to you?

Cam Archer: Hip-Hop is literally what gave me the voice that I have in general, just the level of confidence that I was able to develop as I became an adult. Without Hip-Hop I wouldn't even have that because that helped me realize what my strengths were. Hip-Hop I'm pretty sure not on purpose helped me realize that I can accept criticism for the things that I do without taking it as a complete flight on me as a person. Hip-Hop showed me all of that. There was a very young immature, just not used to the everything is an attack, kind of mindset when you have that and then you put yourself out in any form or facet to the world and you're going to have to accept criticism and that in that light because it's no longer just yours. You just gave it to a bunch of people to take part in or just take it apart. So Hip-Hop gave me that and it just continues to give me a voice man. I don't know where I would be in all honesty if I wasn't able to have a creative outlet the way that I do in music.

# THE THROWBACK KING

## DJ NEWMARK

INTERVIEW @KBTINDAL

**West Coast DJ talks friendship with DMX, love for Hip Hop and music, Herby Hancock influence and The DJ Newmark Experience.**

I had the pleasure of sitting down with a legendary DJ who is considered the Throwback King of Hip Hop and R&B. His career as a DJ spans over three decades in six countries, 30 States and 90 cities. He's a tour DJ, music promoter, radio personality and an award-winning mix show DJ. He's rubbed shoulders with some of the best in the business. He's gained the respect from the who's-who of legendary artists and performers over the years. He has over 450 live concerts and show performances to his credit along with over 120,000 social media followers. Last year he released his dependent double album entitled Hot Tracks you can catch him on his show, The DJ Newark Experience on South Florida's number one radio station for classic Hip Hop and R&B, Yo 107.1 FM. And at 3 pm EST on the Flavor on Top of Flavor Mix Show on weekdays at 5:30 PM, and on weekdays at 6 PM As well. His Instagram page is followed by the legendary likes of LL Cool J, Jimmy Jam, Rakim, Jada Kiss, E-40 and most recently multiple World Series champion, Mr. October himself Mr. Reggie Jackson. If you don't know who I'm talking about right now you better tap into his live show and do your homework. Validated magazine is proud to chop it up with DJ Newmark.





Validated: I know you're a military baby and you grew up in multiple places. From traveling all the time how did that influence your love of Hip Hop seeing it in different places early on not like it is now but back then? How did that influence your love for Hip Hop and music in general?

DJ Newmark: Man, let me tell you being around servicemen that come from all walks of life, all different parts of the globe that bring their embodiment of Hip Hop of what it means to them in their hood, to be able to constantly go to these different duty stations and instantly be in the mix and get all of these different sounds and influences man, I consider myself one of the true disciples of Hip Hop. I hope I don't kill your thunder but one of the things I noticed with your past interviews is you always ask your guest, "what does Hip Hop mean to you?"

Validated: Yes.

DJ Newmark: For me KB you got me by a couple of years if I heard you correctly, I'm 53. Our generation literally was growing up with Hip Hop so by me being biracial before Hip Hop I struggled with an identity man. It was crazy being Black and Korean. I didn't have Tiger Woods out there as my front man representing all of us mixed breeds. I didn't have Foxy Brown out there representing. So I was kind of caught in this time period as a young man not understanding what my purpose was, not understanding who I was until Hip Hop. And one of the things that I certainly embraced that I think makes me a little unique compared to some of my DJ peers is that the majority of my DJing peers are from a particular area and so that particular sound is basically what they embrace the most because that is the music or the culture that raised them. Sometimes as a DJ you can form bias. You are from New York and then you hear some Texas stuff and you might be like "Nah son this is not Hip Hop. That's not rocking" or vice versa. You could be out there in Cali and you hear some Miami Bass joint right and you're like nah.

Well for me and while I've been able to play for a variety of crowds man is because I've been exposed to the diversity, the whole menu of what Hip Hop music is and everybody has their own swag. There's that movie Mortal Kombat. I don't know if you're familiar with that movie but there's a character named Shang Sung. What he does is, as he fights his opponents he takes their soul right before they die and that makes him stronger. I literally was that dude when it comes to Hip Hop. Every time I move somewhere not only am I bringing with me all of the different influences that I was exposed to previously, now I'm infecting or should I say introducing that mixture of sounds to that organic audience because they have their natural sound and now I'm getting more music because there's more servicemen coming from different areas. So that's what makes that whole thing such a dynamic topic for me and I think that's what separates me just a little bit from other traditional DJs.

Validated: When you were DJing in a lot of these places I know DJs hate this, but being servicemen I know being that they're from certain areas did you get a lot of requests? Did you get a lot of guys come up to you and say "Hey play this?" Because that's what they were used to hearing from their region.

DJ Newmark: No doubt KB and that's how I became really proficient in being a party rocker. As DJs there are different forms. You have your turntablists, those people who really go fast back and forth and they do a lot of tricks, do stuff with their nose, their elbows, they're spinning. I don't want to diminish that because that's definitely a technique. But it's hard to dance to. It's really hard to dance when someone is doing that. So I happen to play for a variety and a diverse array of audience people because like you said people always hit me with requests and just when I start hitting the West Coast somebody from the East Coast like "Nah nah play this." And then down south and all that. So I had to learn how to mix different styles of Hip Hop man at a real early age bro and I think that was the key man, to my longevity.

Validated: Nice. What's your earliest memory of Hip Hop?

DJ Newmark: It's funny the thing that I love about being a radio personality is I get to mirror a song and I get to connect to a listener emotionally, and it automatically timestamps a special event or a segment of their life. So my earliest memory of Hip Hop, honestly it would have been the Sugarhill Gang but as a DJ believe it or not it was Herby Hancock's "Rockit." That record right there is what actually propelled me to want to become a DJ. Hip Hop was Sugarhill Gang but the DJ was "Rockit" because that was the first song that internationally

had scratching in it. Again not the first song to have scratching but to be internationally heard was "Rockit." I'm like "Yo what is that sound right there?" How do you make that? We used to try to emulate that with jackets and we would zip our zipper up and down to make that sound. I'm telling you that sound was so revolutionary, to me at least, that I got to give all props to Herby Hancock.

Validated: He won a grammy for "Rockit" too.

DJ Newmark: Absolutely.

Validated: Yeah I know I remember when I was growing up I destroyed plenty of my mother's records trying to emulate scratching.

DJ Newmark: I remember a time KB where I would actually take a record and a coin and literally scratch the record. I went through that phase too bro.

Validated: So I know you got your name from, is it from Numark turntables or the Numark mixer?

DJ Newmark: It was all of them. I had the mixer and the turntables. That was the only thing I could afford man. I had always told myself KB that if I do anything with this DJing stuff that I'm always no matter how high I get, the way I thought as a 12 year old, I'm always going to give homage to from whence I came, know what I'm saying, and that was the equipment that I beat up. I wish I could have had a Fisher-Price turntable. I'd have had that my name would have been DJ Fisher-Price.

Validated: Wherever it starts from, wherever the essence is at man.

DJ Newmark: That's right.

Validated: What country would you say you've liked performing in the best?

DJ Newmark: Man I would say Germany. The culture over there and quite honestly man if you look at a lot of these artists I call them "Legacy artists," they do more overseas shows than they do here in the US because they're embraced a lot heavier over there than over here unfortunately.


Validated: Why do you think that is? Why do you think overseas is so much more in love with the culture the way that we used to be in love with it when it was new? They Herald it like that today. Why do you think that is?

DJ Newmark: Because it's not organic to them, for example why is a Mercedes so expensive over here and you go to Germany and it's not as expensive? Because they see them shifts every day. They see Mercedes every day. Their taxis are Mercedes. So over here that's not an organic product so that's why it is valued a lot higher because it's something that we don't organically make. So Hip Hop is the same thing.

Validated: No doubt. Makes sense. Do you prefer being on the radio or do you prefer rocking the crowd live? I know you love them both. If you had to pick one, which one would you pick?

DJ Newmark: KB it's not even close my brother. I want to be in front of a live audience 100% of the time, man. I only got into broadcasting because of Covid. And while a lot of my peers were on different platforms going live and making money that way, I kind of went a different route and had an opportunity to be a broadcaster. And I'm like "Yeah okay, I can get involved with this." But it was a weird transition because as you mentioned in your intro not only am I a radio personality but I'm a mix show host. Monday through Friday I got a 30 minute segment and then on the weekends it's an hour of straight turntable, mixing, vibing. And it's hard to get to read when you're looking at a wall. In the studio the turntables are set up against the wall. It took me a while to get over myself actually. It took me a while to say all right, trust my own instinct, play this cut and when to take it out. When you're live you get that feedback automatically. You put something on and they're like "Ohhh" like okay, I'm going let that rock a little bit. You put something on and they don't give you that reaction you're like, yep let me get on and transition up out of that. So it was a different man.

Validated: Right. Every artist, every comedian, every Sports person has a



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time in their career early on when they bombed. They got in front of a crowd and it just didn't work. What was that experience like for you? Have you had one of those? What was it like and then what did it teach you?

DJ Newmark: Without sounding conceited I can't honestly say I've ever had a bomb moment.

Validated: Okay.

DJ Newmark: I have had situations that were beyond my control however, like the power going out. So I'm just sitting up there on stage and obviously I am the only element that they could react to because you can't boo the wall socket. So, I was catching a lot of negative vibes but I knew not to take that personally because it wasn't me. But it was more uncomfortable than a motherfucker, I promise you that.

Validated: I bet it was. When you have absolutely no control you can't do anything about it. You just gotta ride it out.

DJ Newmark: Yeah. The takeaway from that experience was just something that I can internalize because although it was a very uncomfortable experience, I learned more about myself and how to handle those kinds of stresses. Especially when I know that it's a reflection ultimately of DJ Newmark. No one's ever going to say, "Man DJ Newmark was rocking it and the stupid power went out." It's not gonna be like that. 9 times out of 10 what it's gonna be is, "Man DJ NewMark was out there man and the power shut off on that motherfucker." It's kind of one of those things man I just had to get over

and learn.

Validated: That's good though man that you've never had a bomb moment. Not a lot of DJs, not a lot of artists, not a lot of performers in general can actually say that man, so kudos to you on that!

DJ Newmark: What I was gonna say is, I think the biggest reason why I never had that issue was because of our age. Hip Hop was in its infancy when I was out there first trying to play the music. So it wasn't so critical of an ear as a DJ about the mixing and the blending and all that. It was more so just hearing the music and not having the record skipped. And as Hip Hop started to grow and evolve, so did my talent. So if I was one of these newer DJs that are just now coming into the culture and coming into the profession of being a DJ, I think there's been five decades of expectation that this new DJ now has to have to uphold. So that bombing may be more relevant for a newcomer versus an OG like me and you.

Validated: Gotcha. What do you listen to when you are riding around in your car, man?

DJ Newmark: No cap me. I listen to myself man. I listen to my sets. No one's gonna be more critical about a performance than the performer. I'm always fine tooting my transitions. I'm always thinking that echo for example shouldn't have gone there. So I'm listening to myself but not as a fan, but as a top critic because I always want to make sure that I put out the best product possible. Whether it's through the radio waves or live when people have spent their hard earned money to see me in whatever capacity.

Validated: Right. I'm the same way when it comes to my interviews. I'll go back and I'll listen. And as you see my intros are something that's very important to me. I feel like a person should be brought in the right way. They should be given the credit that they deserve so I can understand it. I'm my own worst critic when it comes to doing a good interview.

Validated: So who's the most down to Earth artist that you've met in your travels like somebody that you thought wouldn't be the way that they are. Who would that person be?

DJ Newmark: Yeah man I've had a lot of surprises in 30 years in the music business. But my number one dude, someone that honestly, we had a mutual impact on the time that we worked together professionally, but then we had a lot of personal time, was Earl Simmons aka DMX. When I first met DMX it was right as his popularity and stardom was starting to come down okay. Everybody has their rise, and then I don't want to say fall but their relevance has peaked. So I was a Ruff Ryder. I was a Ruff Ryder not by way of music per se but I was part of their motorcycle division. And DMX and all of the Ruff Ryder executive leadership, Eve and all them, The LOX, they were pretty good. They were coming to each city that had a Ruff Ryder chapter and hanging out because we're all family Rough Ryder, Double R. So for my particular chapter, I was the DJ. I had been DJing all that time. So whenever we would throw a motorcycle event or whatever I'm that dude. So I'm in Louisville, Kentucky. I'm stationed at a place called Fort Knox. X came through and well actually let me backup a little bit. X was coming through and our state representative for Ruff Ryders had asked our chapter was there anybody that may be interested in going to pick him up from the airport which is like an hour ride. So I was like, Yo let me do it because we know similar people but although I've never met him I think I could have a better relationship and a better rapport with him. So when I went to the airport my first impression was that he was by himself like no entourage, no goons, no nothing man, no females he was solo-dolo. That right there wowed me. Because this man is a multi platinum recording artist and accomplished actor and he walked around the airport solo. Then when I was able to tell him, Yo , I'm here to pick you up, I dropped some names. And he was like "Okay good." Then on the ride home he was not on that Hollywood stuff. Man we was Jonesing, talking about each other mama. I was talking about how black he is. He was talking about how slanted my eyes were when he called me China man. I'm telling you and I was like "Yo would you mind talking to my wife, because she's a big fan?" He was like yeah. So I called my wife while we was driving. I give him the phone and he was talking to her like he already knew her, it was a trick because I mean he just went straight in "Yo ma what's up," and he just starts going in.

The experience was so odd for my wife that to this day she still got doubts that that was DMX because of the nature of the climate of that

phone conversation. So by far to answer your question KB, DMX, God rest the dead man that was literally my brother.

**Validated: That's what's up man. That's a great DMX story man. Definitely. Probably one of the best that I've heard absolutely. Up until this point in your career I'm sure you've had plenty but if you could pick one or two what would you say is one of your most memorable moments as a DJ?**

DJ Newmark: How I got elevated from being a local DJ to the opportunity that put me in positions to meet a DMX to meet TLC to meet various artists and to go on the road. So how I kind of got put on was I was stationed at Fort Dix New Jersey which is about 2 hours south of New York. In 2007 or '08 somewhere around there, military bases have their version of Walmart. So they try to have as much stuff on the base. So they really try to keep everything convenient so you don't have to go out there into the community and go to Walmart and maybe get into trouble or whatever they try to put everything right there on the base. At Fort Dicks, Russell Simmons had just signed a contract to sell his Phat Farm clothing line. And you know that it's not often you get a signature brand on one of these installations. So it was a big deal. I did not know that he was coming up there to do a press conference and they had this big roll out. I didn't know that that was going on. So I was the local DJ of the club on base where all the soldiers would go. After he got done it was a Saturday night and after he got done doing what he had to do he asked like "Where's the hangout? Where do these soldiers go? These soldiers are buying my clothing line. I want to kind of kick it with them." So they told him where to go. I'm not knowing he's in the crowd. I'm doing my thing and one of his men came up to me at some point and he was like "Yo can I get your number. I'm representing Earl Simmons." He said, "Mr. Earl Simmons and he's interested in maybe giving you an opportunity to DJ for an upcoming party." And I'm like, first of all it's hard to, one of my pet peeves is while I got the headphones on and I'm trying to get my shit right and everything is timed, for somebody to come talk to me. I'll see you let me give you the hold up. I acknowledge you but I have to get to you when I'm ready. But anyway, man he was right here. So I gave him my number. I really didn't think much of it. About six or seven months later I got a phone call. By this time I'm doubting everything. I'm like Oh man this stuff ain't going to happen. This dude I don't know where he got this idea to try to play me or whatever. It was Earl Simmons and he was like "Hey you interested in an opportunity?" "Sure." "How much do you want?" I'm like "No I'm not going to charge you anything like I'm a soldier number one. So this DJing stuff is just like my passion and hobby. I'm okay I'm a soldier and I got a contract. I ain't like a reservist like I do this every day like I'm a soldier. So he was so impressed with that. And I think too I fit some of the narrative of the initiative, the marketing initiative that he was trying to do. Now he's trying to say all right we got Phat Farm on here and guess what we got. We got a DJ that represents that military community representing the us as well. So I wasn't like the official DJ, obviously, of like, the military line of Phat Farm. But I was definitely an ambassador at that time, clean shaven and you know how it is KB man. A lot of people in the music industry are not right, they smoking, drinking whatever. From a business aspect it's not very inviting especially to those people outside of the culture. So I think I fit the mold and the narrative of what he was trying to push by that partnership with the Armed Forces.

**Validated: You dropped your album Hot Tracks last year. "Grams and Ounces" is one of the joints that I liked on there with Jack The Butcher. I know it was a long awaited project that you were trying to put out and everything. So did you produce the whole thing and what was the process like?**

DJ Newmark: Yeah this project was really something that is a compilation of I would say about 15 years of recordings. The thing about it is people have been telling me "Yo Newmark you a dope producer or whatever. You got all of this music man that you've made that's on the shelf and nobody in the world has heard it." And that's kind of a disrespect to Hip Hop culture because what people were telling me is that you can contribute to the universe. You can contribute to the music and you can leave a legacy that could potentially affect people way after you are gone. Music has that way of solidifying a legacy regardless of what record sells what your numbers are. Outside of that you have something that you made that's out there for the world. And there are some instances where a song ain't nothing until somebody dies and now all of a sudden their catalog blows up. I was thinking about the show business side of DJ Newmark as a brand, the likeness and perpetuity,

everybody talks about that right? I was thinking to myself, "All right I didn't put not one dime in marketing behind that album. It has 19 cuts which is unheard of. You don't hear about albums having 19 joints on it and it was the opportunities that I had working with artists from New York, artists from Cali, artists from Miami and Texas. And so these were basically soldiers to be honest with you. They're all underground and they had a passion and a love for Hip Hop and so I had all these different songs. I still got about 200 songs that are on the shelf but with the maturation of my production ear, I kind of picked the ones that I thought like, that I'm not going to be too embarrassed about. But again I'm going to be my worst critic. "Grams and Ounces" man, Jack the Butcher had won several local talent shows as a rapper. What really made me want to work with him specifically is that he actually took rapping seriously. And what I mean by that is I would have an agreement with the artist and I would tell him "Look we're going to work on this. You ain't charging me for no bars. I'm not charging you for no work but as soon as this thing is over. I'm gonna give you your copy. If you go and run with that thing and it blows up I'm not coming after you for nothing. Just tell everybody who made it. If I take my copy and run with it it blows up you ain't coming after me with no money. I'm just going to make sure I give you your flowers as the artist." He was one of the few that actually blew up in Texas and he included that particular song on his EP. And it did pretty well on Spotify and stuff.

**Validated: As a DJ man when it's all said and done, like you were talking about, after you're dead and gone and what kind of legacy do you want to leave. What is your ultimate goal as a DJ at the end of the day?**


DJ Newmark: Man KB that's a great question. No one's ever posed that to me. It's interesting too, it's funny man how the universe works man. It's crazy. It's bonkers. I've been thinking about my own mortality recently and I guess it's one of these types of thought processes as I look at myself in the mirror and I look at my kids and my oldest is 33 years old and I go "Damn," I think about like, I would want people to say that DJ Newmark was just a down to earth cool dude whose name is in the shadows because I'm not a household name. But when people find interest in really thinking about who I am, they come across a whole bunch of literature out there that like dang, and then they see the different endorsements when I'm having this individual like French Montana for example he has like 39 million Instagram followers and he's following like maybe 1,400. How did DJ Newmark get on that list to where he's being followed by a guy that got more followers than the president of the United States? It's crazy. I would want people to think of me as like that dude that was just really cool. I treated everybody with dignity and respect regardless of how they treated me because I know that people's opinion of me matters but it doesn't motivate me to move the way that I move. So that's what I would hope. And definitely as a father and as a husband, I have sons and I have one daughter. So ultimately I would want my boys to want to be like me in some capacity as they become fathers and grown men. And for my daughter I would want her to find a man that closely resembles me and my ethical boundaries and my integrity and a man of distinction.

**Validated: Man those are those are great qualities and great values to want to leave behind man. If we can't affect the people that we love in a positive way so that they can carry on tradition then what are we doing? What's next in the pipeline for you man? What are you working on? What can we be on the lookout for?**

DJ Newmark: Well first you asked me where I would say is my favorite place to perform. So I told you, Germany. But where do I feel that music is appreciated, Hip Hop to be specific is appreciated the most in Japan. They can't even understand the words and they are like reciting. They don't even know what they are saying and they're reciting everything syllable for syllable. I'm also talking with another promoter that I hope can get me on the Armed Forces circuit. There are a lot of entertainers that go and entertain the troops all over the world. And as a former soldier that's in entertainment I'm kind of trying to use that as leverage to make it appealing to put me on the bill and to tour around the world in that capacity. So that's what I'm working on man.

And I'm kind of thinking about, being that I have a lot of connections, I'm thinking about the podcasting thing as well. I'm kind of thinking that. So I promise you KB, I want you to be one of the first people on my podcast should that take off because it's been an absolute joy conversing with you brother. I definitely want to give you an opportunity to get your flowers and get your shine as well.





Hip Hop is the thing that gave me a sense of identity as a biracial kid that had no identity. Some places where I went people made fun of my hair and my eyes. Some places where I went some people made fun of my complexion. I was too young to really discover sports.

Validated: Thank you I really appreciate that and all you gotta do is make the call and I'm there man. Where can people find you online? We know they can find you at DJ Newmark But give out your social media and then tell everybody like if you got some merch out there or if you got any products that you're pushing or anything like that. Tell them where they can get that stuff at.

DJ Newmark: All right well I'll just say like this to make it easy for everybody if you just simply Google DJ N-e-w-m-a-r-k. Now mind you the other brother out there that's a DJ and his name is Numark as well he's the DJ for Jurassic 5. Cool brother but his name is spelled more conventional like the equipment N-u-m-a-r-k. So please people out there you want to hit me up, the little half Oriental dude right here hit up @DJNewmark And I will just say this as well, I have a team of people who monitor my social media. But if you definitely want to make sure that you get in contact with me Instagram is the platform that I personally manage. And sometimes my team doesn't advise me whenever there's an interesting DM or comment. And so I kind of get upset at them. But if you want to interact with me personally, that's Instagram.

Validated: Very good. And we touched base on it earlier but this is always the final question: What does Hip Hop mean to you?

DJ Newmark: Yeah man Hip Hop is the thing that gave Edward Alexander (which is my government name) a sense of identity as a biracial kid that had no identity. Some places where I went people made fun of my hair and my eyes. Some places where I went some people made fun of my complexion. I was too young to really discover sports. Where I was living we didn't have like all year round AAU Sports and stuff like some of these youth have an opportunity to do. I didn't have any love, no direction. And for some of y'all that are as old as me and KB y'all know before Hip Hop we were listening to soft rock. We were listening to shit like White Snake and "Pour Some Sugar", that crazy shit. Paul McCartney and Michael Jackson like that's what we were vibing to.

Validated: Yeah into some Def Leppard and stuff like that too.

DJ Newmark: Def Leppard, I'm telling you see what I'm saying like me and you we will admit that. A lot of people want to try to forget that part. Hip Hop KB gave me a passport. Like vibing with New York music made me feel as if I had been to the streets of New York. Running into people that's from BK. My wife is actually from Uptown. She's from Washington Heights. So like hearing all these different sounds from Miami from Texas from Cali and the amount of passion that these people that was bringing me the music had whatever their natural swag was made me feel like I had been to LA. Made me feel like I had been to Freaknik in Atlanta which I actually was a couple times. So it gave me a passport to the world and it opened up my senses on top of me literally moving around every 3 years of my life as well. So that's what Hip Hop did man. And that's why I still live Hip Hop because as long as I'm upright and the Lord gives me the power to move around on my own free will and accord man I'm always going to rep Hip Hop. I'll just tell you this as well KB, I find it disturbing whenever I hear this bias between the Hip Hop how it sounds today versus the Hip Hop of our time. I like to remind people to disclaimer, yes I don't go out and go out of my way to listen to today's Hip Hop. But the last thing I'm going to do is talk bad about it because that's what the disco era people did to Hip Hop to us. People thought that this would never last 50 years, let alone five years. So remembering how persecuted we felt and how we felt like we were rebels like you don't like this music and you don't like us spinning around on the floor like you mad at us with cardboard and stuff. We are going to do it right here on the street. I don't want to turn right around and be that generation that's not accepting the Hip Hop of today. So that's what Hip Hop means to me man. When I look in the mirror although I do see this ugly face I also see Hip Hop across my grill.

Validated: That's absolutely right. I tell people all the time my kids know it, people that are close to me know it and they know I am a Hip Hop man no matter what I do I'm always going to represent this culture to the best of my ability. I'm never going to put somebody down for what they do. I may not appreciate it or like it in that sense but I'm not going to dog you for what you do because Hip Hop is about your own self form of expression man. I would never want to take that away from anybody because they didn't take it away from me. So I identify with that. Absolutely. DJ Newmark once again thank you very much my brother.

DJ Newmark: Thank you. Thank you so much man for this opportunity again to share your platform and to talk to you personally. When we get off this thing, I'll make sure you get my direct digits in case you don't already and bro you ever come out here to Miami I might have to show you around bro. Yes sir, salute.

Validated: All right salute.



# BACK 2 THE ELEMENTS

BY TAMAL OF CARRYING THE CULTURE

## The B-Boy's Forgotten Influence On Hip-Hop Culture

The term "Hip-Hop culture" is one that has been thrown around very casually the past few years. It's not uncommon to hear phrases like "do it for the culture" or "it's about the culture" come up in many discussions these days. But like many trendy phrases that are parroted without much thought, a lot of Hip-Hop heads talk about "Hip-Hop culture" without knowing what the term culture actually means. What does Hip-Hop culture actually consist of? During multiple conversations with B-Boy historian Pluto 7 of The Bronx Boys, he eloquently described how many major aspects of Hip-Hop culture originate directly from B-Boy/B-Girl subculture. His line of thinking makes a lot of sense when analyzing the history of some of the cultural aspects of Hip-Hop.

Of course, the question can be raised how can one be certain that various Hip-Hop values and beliefs originate from B-Boy culture instead of another element like emceeing. It's important to note, that while the emcee/rap element is certainly now the most popular element on a global scale, this wasn't the case early on. Kool Herc and Grandmaster Caz confirm in the documentary "The Freshest Kids" that at parties and jams, the DJ and B-Boy were much more prominent than the emcee, who acted as more of a host than performer. The B-Boys would "go off" to DJ breaks and set the vibe for the entire party. The development of the emcee into what we see today didn't start to happen until the late 70's. Additionally, it is widely known and accepted that in the early days, graffiti existed outside of Hip-Hop and only later was it adopted as part of the culture. So one can say with a degree of certainty that the early B-Boys rocking at parties played a major role in laying the bricks for the foundation of the culture overall.

Before going further, we must first understand the term "culture". Scholars widely agree that there are 4 main components of a culture—shared values and beliefs, language and communication, social norms, and ways of expression. In looking at shared beliefs, perhaps the biggest influence of B-Boy culture is the idea of being original. Although many B-Boy or breakin' moves were (and still are) considered to be foundational prerequisites, for old school B-Boys and B-Girls it was absolutely critical that each practitioner added their own style to the dance to distinguish themselves from everyone else. Most B-Boy squads contained specialists in certain areas and also added their own twist to the foundations of the dance. This is still widely the case today.

The concept of "biting" or stealing someone's style originates with early B-Boys and was considered to be a major offense. Disputes over biting had to be settled, either through dance or violence and someone labeled as a biter often lost respect amongst their peers. Biting was a major factor in various beefs and conflicts over the years and this foundational principle carried over into rap, graffiti, and DJing, and continues to be the ultimate "no-no" in Hip-Hop. Accusations of biting have been at the heart of some of the biggest beefs in rap history. The "Roxanne Wars" is just one example. "No Biting" is one of the culture's major "rules" and it underscores the influence of B-Boy values in the greater Hip-Hop community.

Established social norms and customs are another aspect of what comprises a culture and perhaps one of the biggest influences on Hip-Hop that can be traced to the B-Boy is the formation of crews. It's widely accepted that a lot of New York B-Boy crews evolved from street gangs but these crews settled their issues through breakin' rather than through violence. In a short time, crews became organized and developed principles and values. They also created bylaws, hierarchies, handshakes, and other organized systems. From these beginnings, battling, or the street form of competing through dance became an important part of B-Boy life. This was an important measuring stick to either determine who was the best or to resolve conflicts and legendary crews like the Dynamic Rockers, Mighty Zulu Kings and Rock Steady participated in some of the most memorable battles in history. The concept of "crew culture" quickly spread to the other elements and we would see many memorable rap and DJ crews battle over the years (Hobo Junction vs. Hieroglyphics or X-Ecutioners vs. Invisibl Skratch Piklz). The practice of crews battling is still a major pillar in all Hip-Hop elements to this day.

Another aspect of the influence of B-Boy culture on the rest of Hip-Hop which cannot be overstated is the language style and communication. Words like wack, def, biting, and flavor all originate from B-Boys which as we mentioned, predate the modern emcee. Being known as "wack" or unskilled was (and still is) the kiss of death for a Hip-Hop head. Rock Steady Crew's Mr. Freeze talks about the importance of having "flavor" or one's own original style. Most of these terms are still in use today.

The B-Boy expression of style undeniably played a huge part in the development of Hip-Hop culture and its influence can still be felt to this day. The simple act of a Hip-Hop head posing for a picture will usually have him or her crossing their arms in a "B-Boy stance". Tilting one's hat to the side, lacing sneakers a certain way; these customs can all be traced back to B-Boy style and values. Even the "mean mug" facial expression (often associated with Ken Swift) was a favorite template for graffiti writers to use for characters and is still standard operating procedures for heads to use when posing for a picture.

For some B-Boy legends like Trac 2, Spy and Batch, the peak of B-Boying was the 70's. For others, it was the early 80's. One thing for sure is that its widespread popularity came and went rather quickly. And while it is still practiced globally by many, it is certainly a niche activity. Meanwhile, the rap industry took the world by storm and has become a financial and social juggernaut, with its reach extending into all areas of society. When the average Hip-Hop head thinks about Hip-Hop, rap music is the first thing that typically comes to mind. However, it is important to remember that many of the values, customs, and terms that are still prominent in 2024 have their origins in B-Boy culture. Without these pioneers, the foundation of Hip-Hop would look much different.





boom-bap, jazz, and soul into a sonic tapestry that provides the perfect backdrop for XP's lyrical onslaught. Currister's beats are not just beats; they are cinematic experiences, each track a journey through sound that elevates the listening experience to new heights.

"TERREMOTTO" is more than just an EP; it's a statement. It's a declaration of the power of underground hip-hop and a testament to the artistry of XP The Marxman and Currister. In an industry often dominated by mainstream sounds and commercial appeal, "TERREMOTTO" is a refreshing reminder of the raw, unfiltered talent that thrives in the underground.

XP The Marxman's lyrical content on "TERREMOTTO" is nothing short of incendiary. He tackles a range of topics, from the struggles of daily life to broader societal issues, all delivered with a fierce intensity. His wordplay is intricate, his metaphors vivid, and his delivery uncompromising. Whether he's reflecting on personal experiences or addressing the larger forces at play in the world, XP's verses are imbued with a sense of urgency and raw emotion.

Currister's production amplifies this intensity, creating a soundscape that feels both expansive and claustrophobic. The beats are dense and textured, with layers of instrumentation that draw the listener in and refuse to let go. The use of samples and live instrumentation adds a richness to the tracks, making each listen a new discovery.

## NEW MUSIC: TERREMOTTO

### XP THE MARXMAN AND CURRISTER SHAKE THE UNDERGROUND HIP HOP SCENE WITH "TERREMOTTO"

#### JOURNALIST JOHN SABBIA

Hailing from the fertile musical landscape of the West Coast, XP The Marxman is no stranger to the grind and grit of the hip-hop game. Known for his razor-sharp lyricism and unrelenting delivery, XP has carved out a niche for himself as a formidable MC. His verses are a blend of introspective musings, social commentary, and streetwise narratives, each line meticulously crafted to resonate with authenticity and power.

On the production side, Currister emerges as a titan of beats, a maestro whose instrumentals are nothing short of colossal. His soundscapes are rich and layered, weaving together elements of



# THE NEW NEW YORK

## 5IVE MICS

INTERVIEW @KBTINDAL

**Brooklyn, New York Rapper talks faith in God, All Entertainment Media Group deal and recent album “The Drop Is In”**

5ive Mics is a charismatic gentleman from Brooklyn, New York. He’s a fashion visionary when it comes to his personal style and an entrepreneurial hustler who really needs no introduction. We got to chop it up about music, gettin money, business endeavors, how important friends are in life and in this wicked industry of music and entertainment and his new signing with All Entertainment Media Group. Welcome to Brooklyn and the 5ive Mics interview. Enjoy.





**Validated:** Let's just jump right on into it man. Tell me a little bit about the history man. Like how did you get the name 5ive Mics? I know you grew up in Brooklyn. And it sounds like you grew up in Brooklyn in the 80s and the 90s or the 90s and the early 2000s you know when shit was kind of rough. New York's a little different now. How did New York influence you man and where did the name 5ive Mics come from?

5ive Mics: Well, I'm a Five Percenter that's one. So, there were a lot of different elements of the 5ive thing with me. But Five Mics from Source Magazine when they used to rate the rapper's albums in Hip-Hop at a certain time. When I came out I wanted to have a name that really stood for Hip-Hop. Even at the time when I was calling myself 5ive Mics it might have come off corny back then. It might not have been the name you even thought of, people were like "5ive Mics"? Back then if you call yourself 5ive Mics you gotta be nice nigga. That's what they say. So when I say corny, I mean from that perspective. It put me in the "you better be nice motherfucker type position." Over the years over the decades somehow I've lived up to it. So it's dope that people accepted me being 5ive Mics, even the people that made up the whole situation with it. So I just think it's dope.

**Validated:** What about Brooklyn man? What was the era that you grew up like and how did that influence you?

5ive Mics: I'm from Crown Heights, Coney Island, East New York. I lived in all those places. I grew up all over Brooklyn. I was homeless in Brooklyn. I played basketball all over Brooklyn. I was born in 1984. This year I turned 40. I'm not one of the rappers that lie about their age. I'm turning 40 this year. Yeah, I'm just from the era where a lot of things happened. I'm from that era where I'm not like the crack era. I'm like the crack era like the 80s era because I was a little baby but I'm like right under that. The biggest drug dealers of all time were my uncles. They the big homies, like such and such doing 100 years. I was out when they were doing their thing. So we have different codes and eras that we grew up in. Hip-Hop raised us too. So I'm kind of like a Hip-Hop baby and the certain codes and certain things we learned from the Hip-Hop culture affected me. I grew up in Brooklyn and it was very live. At a different time. Brooklyn is still live. But the time we grew up in was very hands-on. It was like, if you were not who you say you were, I wouldn't say you'd get beat up but you'd get called out for being a false thing. That was not really accepted, like being a phony. That just gave me growing up, a different edge of militancy like let me stop playing because you can't play around out here. One of the hardcore eras. I'm glad I did that.

**Validated:** Tell me about you signing with All Entertainment Media Group. Is it just a record deal or does this deal encompass more things that you've got in the pipeline? Things that you are planning on doing. What's the details behind the deal?

5ive Mics: This deal is futuristic number one. It's the first of its kind I think of, that I know of. I have a 50-50 partnership with them. We're just curating the biggest hottest New York City Hip-Hop albums that we heard in a decade. That's all we are trying to do. Me and Jeff and Brandon Steiner and everybody else, they just want to give me a chance. Somebody who's been in the culture for a long time that never

really got a chance to get his stamp of approval or his just due. All Entertainment is giving me a chance to do that on the highest level there is. I'm going to do Jimmy Fallon. I'm gonna talk to him soon. But yeah I'm going on Jimmy Fallon in like two weeks. Just dealing with certain things it just gives me a chance to elect the public and allow my music and my entertainment. I'm not just a rapper. I'm an Entertainer. I'm an actor. I'm a producer. I do so many different things. I'm a marketing expert, a marketing genius. So yeah, they just allowed me the chance for the world to be able to see what everybody has been seeing at a different level, at the lower level. Now it's time to go to the highest one. That's basically what's going on with All Entertainment Media Group. And they're very good at what they do. I'm excited.

I got my stuff. I didn't sell out. I got my Masters. You know all that shit man. We have a 50/50 split and there is money to get. You dig what I'm saying?

**Validated:** Yeah, that's what it is man. That's the type of deal that you want man. You keep your creative control. You keep your Masters and they help you grow to that next level. That's what it is man. I know you've released a couple of singles in the past year or two. You had the "I'm a Rap Star" joint. You had the remakes. That definitely sounds like classic boom bap with that "Mardi Gras" sample up in there. Where did that DMX verse come from on that joint?

5ive Mics: Yeah, it's crazy. Rest in peace DMX. Shout out to Caviar. Caviar is a secret specialist. DMX laid verse down that wasn't DMX AI. DMX actually laid his verse down a few years before about maybe a year and a half to two years before he passed away. The song actually belonged to another rapper, Noreaga. Shout out to Nore. But basically the song never came out. I ended up with the record but the record didn't sound like that. It was a different record. Macy Gray was on the original record so I got her to come back and sing it over. We got X's verse, mixed it, brought it to a different level to where it sounds now. It's like one of the best X verses we heard in years.

Especially with the mix, it's fire. I added Fat Joe. Fat Joe's my brother. He's a big supporter. I'm a big supporter of him. TS for life. I added Fat Joe for more Hip-Hop aspects. I had put Little Mama on the remix for the female aspects of Hip-Hop. And then put Macy Gray and then we added Kid Capri to put even more of a Hip-Hop stamp of approval for the 50 Years of Hip-Hop. So it just turned into one of those records. The original records inspired me too. I feel like those records later on will get more props. I feel it's okay but it's like that record it's like a personal record. I feel like later on it might get a little more recognition than it's getting right now but people love it but I just want it much bigger.

**Validated:** Another one that you had released a while back "The Pump Up the Volume" joint. I noticed a theme in your music man where you salute classic Hip-Hop you know what I mean? Boom Bap Hip-Hop, New York Hip-Hop. I'm sure that's going to be a recurring theme on this new album. But how important is that to you to keep that New York sound of Hip-Hop alive?

5ive Mics: That's where we come from. That's where we are. That's what's in our blood and veins. It's great that some of the masses and

some of the popular people in high places decided to play different music in different regions, which is great. But I'm just more focused on our core sound. If someone says, "Well you know that's the old New York". Well then, we're enhancing it. It's the new New York. Now we're tweaking. What y'all want to hear? Y'all want to hear some 808s on it but we're still going to tell stories. We're still going to talk articulately. We're still gonna turn up. We might make a dangerous song. But it's not going to be a bunch of blibber blabber bullshit. It's going to be a piece of art that's prolific and something that represents New York. Even if it is a new language or new lingo. It has to be well thought out, a great piece of intellectual property bro. It just has to be great art, and I've always had great art. And even the artists are so versatile and when you look at a person like Method Man, you look at um just the versatility a New York rapper like a Jadakiss. And Jadakiss is more of a simple one but he's so lyrical and so tactical with his wordplay, and as a superhero you gotta watch Busta Rhymes. It's like look at Fat Joe, you see these names, they're such an artist. These people I'm naming. So you know they take the craft seriously. And that's why I feel like New York music needs to reflect that as well. And I'm not saying nothing about the rappers in New York that make other sounding music, whether it's drill or whether it's on some pop shit. I'm not saying no stupid shit like that, because that's where I'm at with it. But what I am saying is the vibration has to change. And the vibration that we're on right now is definitely the high vibration of early New York City frequency waves, enhanced a little bit if you don't know. We're looking for the new Wu-Tangs. We're looking for the new Rock-A-Fella Records. The new this, the new that. In order to get that we're returning back to certain frequencies that bring the vibrations up, not down.

**Validated:** No doubt. What's your earliest memory of Hip-Hop?

5ive Mics: I remember Hip-Hop from the Sugar Hill era. I was born in 1984. I wasn't in High School or nothing but I remember hearing that, seeing that and catching that. I remember going down the timeline even if I was years behind or a few years late, I remember. I'm such a connoisseur and such a person of Hip-Hop. I remember everything. I don't know because like I said when you say the first. I could probably answer that question if you ask me what was the first time that I was like "I love this shit." As I got older I appreciated Rakim and everybody from that era as I got older as a teenager. But a lot started with Michael Jackson too and I'm not trying to be funny either.

Biggie Smalls, Tupac, Jay-Z of course that whole era of certain artists. Too Short, Bun B and Pimp C affected me too. There were a few people that I saw. Not to be funny, TI is my brother. It sounds cliché but TI was another artist that early on, when I watched, I was really captivated. And even though I had a love for Hip-Hop before TI, I was at an age when TI came out and certain stuff that affected me more than other stuff you know what I mean? And now as an older person, now as I look at Hip-Hop as a whole now, I have my favorite eras. I have eras that I feel like outweigh others and stuff like that.

**Validated:** You always talk about having a very big background trusting your faith. Where does that come from? Did you grow up in the



church? I know you're a Five Percenter and I know what that's like as well. But where does the faith come from now that you're at a certain level and how do you keep that faith strong?

5ive Mics: Well, I definitely grew up in the church. I've been to many churches and I went through many religions because growing up first we were Catholic in the hood. My mom used to take us to the Catholic Church. I remember complaining to my mom, "I don't like this church mom. I don't want to come here." Just the fact that I didn't like the Catholic Church. I remember my moms you know she got more enlightened now so we ain't doing the Catholic thing no more. Then we started going to the Baptist Church. Then I went to Connecticut. I was with a white family, my step family. I love them to death. I say white family not to categorize them, and make it sound like I don't love them but I love them. I'm silly like that. But my family in the suburbs that adopted me, I love them. Shout out to Dola and Tanya. They raised me for a certain period of my life. They were Baptist. Pastor Frank was somebody I tuned in to listen to. I have my father as Godbody. I always had faith in the beginning. I feel like I'm God's child. Like I'm a chosen one. I'm a chosen one. I'm a special being. Nobody's perfect. I haven't done everything perfect in my life. I had a dark side early on. But I was always a person that was so in tune with God. I never ever could really cross over. Even if I did something bad. Whether I shot somebody, beat somebody up, robbed somebody it didn't matter. It was in self-defense or in survival. I never woke up to anything malicious in my life. We do have codes and rules to everything. I grew up militant and I just feel a connection with God. But one thing about me God showed me what I'm here for and he did it in front of the world. For people that don't know or people that do know I was in the music business a long time and I kept my faith and God allowed me the lane to do it how I wanted to. He already did it. Right now I'm on my second album that's like big and everything but like I already made millions. I already rapped with some of the people I always wanted to rap with. I already fucking shut down Louis stores. I already fucked the baddest bitches in America. All these things are done. Right now this is just destiny stuff now. Now it's like I'm supposed to be rapping. I already knew that. God put me here to do this. It wasn't just like a fluke because my last album did 7 million streams. It makes over \$15,000 a month independently. So it doesn't matter. That shit did what it's supposed to do and I think it's a classic. For me to be coming back again with another album and still have the New New York label on with Busta Rhymes, like again and that's a lot. And when I play many records for you, you're gonna see I'm not bugging like these shits are crazy.

Validated: For the people that don't know the story we know that you got you know some of your bread in the beginning from a beer company that you netted about eight million from. You went through a hard time trying to get that money. I heard you tell this story about how you had lost one of the certificates and then you had a background with a criminal record, and nobody believed that this was actually your money and that this stock had matured. After you got that money how long did it take for you to adjust to having that kind of money? And then what was the most valuable lesson that you had to learn to keep that money?

5ive Mics: Well, I'm still traumatized. I'm traumatized for the rest of my life till I die man

because it's like God came out the sky and talked to me when that shit happened. It was so surreal and so real and so like I know it's a God. And I know like you see what I'm saying? I can't explain it bro. It's like one day like God let you fly around the city for like 20 minutes. Some people might have seen it like nah bro I actually took off and he let me. Nobody can't tell you shit no more. So it's like from that perspective God showed me that it's so real and I'm still traumatized. I'll never ever look at life the same ever again. And another thing that probably doesn't get publicized much, but I was making money for a long time before I got into stocks. I never was like a bum ass nigga. Like even when I was a bum ass nigga I never was like one of those guys. I always had potential. Even if I had the same clothes on for a couple days everybody knows 5ive gon figure it out. But I always had spurts and times in my life where I always had money cause I've always been a hustler. That's where faith comes in. I always had faith and kept a little something. If you have nothing great, keep going bro, keep working. Don't fucking bitch about it. You have nothing but if you work you'll get something and something builds up. And if you get faith in God he will give you favor. If you don't believe and you don't work, you won't get shit and you won't succeed. It's like that simple, ABCs, one, two, three. Some people don't understand that shit. And when you understand like nah listen right now I'm going to put that work in. "How long it's going to take?" It might take a year. Who gives a fuck? Put the work in, lock in and you'll be alright because you're putting in work in. This shit is like mathematics and physics bro. You put the work in, you get a certain thing back. And some people don't understand that. They want to put a little bit of work in and try to time the universe. Like you can't fucking do that. You just got to go and you'll get repaid when you get repaid.

Validated: I know you said on your joint "Holy Ghost," you've been getting money, you don't care about selling music. You've got the Hip-Hop Pizza - 5ive Slices, you got your own ice cream flavors. What are some other business endeavors that you're currently into that we should be on the lookout for?

5ive Mics: Right now I got my own sneakers with Starbury. Shout out to Stephon Marbury, you go to my link in my bio right now click them you get them online. Pick your flavor shoe you want. But the Starbury Brand, the Xavier 3s, they're amazing. I got my own, like I said I got my own pairs coming out. I'm head of marketing as well. I'm just partnering up as a friend, as a brother and also as an artist and entertainer. So I'm really strong behind the sneakers. They are A1 quality. It's not like some bullshit sneaker from Payless or something like that. No bro. Top-top super fire joints. The culture will pick up eventually. This is not even something that we're trying to fake. We got the shoes. You want them, go get them, they're hot and the culture once they start accepting them, like we are not coming to bring no bullshit. I got the Vegan Splash. I'm opening a clothing store with the Xavier 3s and I'll be selling. Shout out to Giani Taylor. I will be selling vintage clothing, Hip-Hop clothing, real shit. Louie, Gucci and shit from the 80s and 90s that you'll never find anywhere. You can't get a duplicate. They won't be able to do it like the way we do it. This is the original. It's that Dapper Dan, It's that original Harlem fit you authentic fabric. It's not a game. I'm opening the store and have that kind of stuff going on. I got films, production. I'm just trying to be an all around Hustler. Yeah like I said I got the film coming. I've got a documentary

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coming. The documentary is one of the most important things even to me, even bigger than my album because my actual story is told the way I want it to be told. Because my story will be told for years and years to come. And I want to tell my own version at least one time.

**Validated:** I know you said the album's coming on 5/16/24. Tell us the name of the album and tell us all of the features and the producers that you worked with on the album?

5ive Mics: All right well the name of the album is called The Drop Is In. My Name is Big Drop. It's my alter ego I guess if you want to say or my aka Big Drop. The drop is in. It's an urban catchphrase that I made up. You could get your new kicks from the store. Oh drop is in. You get an email. You could fucking get a DM. The drop is in, you get paid at work at your regular cubicle job, get your paycheck. Oh the drop is in. You know what I'm trying to say? And when I call something the big drop, and the reason I call something a big drop, some people might not really get it but if you were following 5ive Mics early on, I told people that I was going to make it one day. I told people I have faith and I always put content up and it always looked like maybe one day I'll get something going. And I did get something going. And when I did, the drop came son, the big drop. And that's it. I call myself the Big Drop. By the way I see Kai Cenat, whatever his name. I don't have no problem. I love him. He's funny as hell. I have no problem with the young niggas. I hope he sees this. He got a homeboy that they called a Big Drop. I don't know his name but like Kai Cenat got the homeboy called Big Drop. And it's like there's only one Big Drop. I know his homeboy. But like come on man it's all good. This is the real world. So I'm not gonna freak out like "Yo it's already one Big Drop". But I'm not gonna stress it, but let's just be gentlemen. Let's keep it efficient. But I support that movement. I think they're funny as hell. But yeah he gotta get a new nickname for sure.

**Validated:** All right so I know you always big up TI. And I know that you guys are like family for real. I've heard you say that you know there was a point in your life when you lived with TI and the whole nine yards. Have you guys ever thought about doing a podcast together? Because y'all both charismatic as fuck. Y'all both funny as fuck. Has that ever crossed your mind?

5ive Mics: I'm on a couple episodes of his podcast. I'm co-hosting a little bit. I would do any type of work with TI if he wanted to. He'll just call me up and say, "5ive I want to do this". If I thought it was dope which I probably would, it's my boy I would do it. But as far as the podcast and stuff yeah he got his own podcast. But we got to figure out how the show is going to be because I'm a big talker. Me and him probably argue most of the show. That's my boy. Like we would debate and argue most of the show. But I think it would be banging for sure.

**Validated:** So you've got all these great relationships in this game and I've heard you talk about how people helped you when you were going through some things early on like Wood Harris, Mike Epps, TI and Jim Jones and stuff like that when you were coming up. What do these relationships mean to you now that you're on the other side of the struggle?

5ive Mics: I'm like a mafia guy bro in fact I didn't say mafia, I said I'm like a mafia guy.

Relationships are priceless. I'm appreciative to be acknowledged. I think that those guys you named I'm also a friend to them as well. I think that's a real thing. I'm a lot of people's friends too. I got a lot of mentors, a lot of OGs that help me and show me respect but I'm also a good friend to those people as well. I'm a spiritual guy. We feed off each other and we're family. I'm on this side now. I want to give a little more props. I have always been saying this but like they should get more props. Yeah a lot of the OG's that fuck with 5ive Mics, and cosigning 5ive Mics, working with 5ive Mics organically and keeping official that's what this is about. That's what the game is about and to see that actually take place with me yeah I deserve praise, deserve acknowledgement and it's pretty dope to be in that position. But I will say like I'm definitely playing the part though. I definitely make it easy too, you heard.

**Validated:** Up until this point what has been your most memorable moment as an artist in the industry?

5ive Mics: Wuh. A crazy question. At the end of the day "New New York" with Fat Joe was one of the pivotal moments in the New York history of Hip-Hop. Like I said we ain't gon to talk about it now, we going to talk about it though. Fat Joe I think when we did Times Square it was TI, Trae the Truth, Nems. So many different artists and rappers came out and we all were in Time Square as one. And we did "New New York" with me and Fat Joe. I feel like that was the day I felt like wow you know the police, every fucking body's out here. That was pretty dope to be an independent artist coming from off the street and be able to pull like those type of people out and be able to do something for Hip-Hop all from different places. It was just dope. And it also showed that the alliance like that's Atlanta, that's Houston, that's Florida. All these different places. All in Times Square in New York. I thought that was dope and it also shows that we all...that everybody appreciates Hip-Hop. And that was like for 50 years of Hip-Hop. So it's like the early fuse of certain energy.

**Validated:** Hip-Hop turned 50 last year in the spirit of that man, our culture is still really young when you think about longevity as far as music and everything. But in the spirit of Hip-Hop being 50 years old what does Hip-Hop mean to you?

5ive Mics: Hip-Hop is my life. Hip-Hop is everything to me. It's one of my favorite things I ever did or been a part of. And know Hip-Hop's a lifestyle bro. It's the only music that's a lifestyle. Hip-Hop is the future and people might not understand it. But it's like 50 years later Hip-Hop is alive and well. It's going to keep getting bigger and keep evolving. But it's very important to protect the code of Hip-Hop, the energy of Hip-Hop. A lot of people get mad at me, "Yo 5ive Mics who the fuck is you to call out this one? Who the fuck is you to say what Hip-Hop is?" Well, I'll tell you who the fuck I am away from a rapper. I'm a fucking fan of Hip-Hop. You don't have to be much. You don't have to have a platinum album to tell somebody what the fuck is Hip-Hop and what is not. I'm not against people growing. I'm not against music having dynamics. I'm not against overcoming oppression. But we're not going to have our fucking Hip-Hop emcee's wearing dresses and holding microphones kicking it to the public. If you want to wear a dress and kick some shit go ahead, there's so many different things But you won't be a part of Hip-Hop doing it because we don't need that. Like that's the

**Don't wait for someone else to tell you you're hot. Wake up in the morning, look in the mirror and say you're hot and then you fucking do it and do it a 1000% because 100% is not good enough.**

thing, it's like yo we're here to do something to elevate the culture. Oh it's rap. It's this. It's that. It's also education. It's also influence, it's also a big part of a fucking fabric. So to get up here and say, "Well Imma do this and do that". Yeah you could do it. Hey look you're raping go ahead do it. You're entertaining, go ahead. But you're not fucking Hip-Hop. "Oh well the Hip-Hop is bias". Yes nigga the Army is biased. Navy is biased. You can't go to these places and do what the fuck you want. And am I the all say be all of Hip-Hop? Fuck no. It's a part of it. And I'm allowed to speak up if I fucking want to. Not only that as a fan but as a participant, as a rapper and someone behind the scenes. I've been behind the scenes for 20 years with some of your favorite fucking artists. I was in the studio with Lil Wayne when he did The Carter II. I was in the studio with TI when he did Paper Trail. I keep going on and on and on about how many Legends I was there with when they did something, the hottest records that they ever did in their life. I'm definitely a Hip-Hop baby and yeah Hip-Hop is everything to me.

**Validated:** Final message man, what do you want to say to the people out there and what's the ultimate 5ive Mics message man that you wanna leave with the masses when this is all said and done and you return to the essence what's the message that 5ive Mics wants to leave behind for the people?

5ive Mics: Well first of all always keep your faith and be great. Don't try to be great. Don't try to do anything. Just fucking be great, be excellent and believe in yourself. Don't wait for someone else to tell you you're hot. Wake up in the morning, look in the mirror and say you're hot and then you fucking do it and do it a 1000% because 100% is not good enough. I can also say that I'm living proof that with having faith you get anything you want in life and if you don't believe just look at my story or look at what I'm about to do in the next couple years. It's just what it is.





## NEW MUSIC: ON ME

### 100GRANDROYCE TAKES CENTER STAGE WITH LATEST SINGLE “ON ME” PRODUCED BY HIP-HOP HEAVYWEIGHT DAME GREASE

**JOURNALIST JOHN SABBIA**

In the dynamic world of hip-hop, New York has always been a breeding ground for talent, and one artist making waves in the city's rap scene is 100 Grand Royce. Known for his gritty lyricism and authentic storytelling, 100 Grand Royce has been steadily building a name for himself. His latest single, “On Me,” produced by the legendary Dame Grease, showcases the rapper's prowess and the powerful synergy between artist and producer.

The collaboration between 100 Grand Royce and Dame Grease is a meeting of two titans in the hip-hop realm. Dame Grease's production expertise, coupled with 100 Grand Royce's authentic lyricism, results in a track that captures the essence of New York's rap legacy while pushing the boundaries of contemporary hip-hop.

“On Me” is not just a single; it's a statement. 100 Grand Royce's second collaboration with Dame Grease signals a new chapter in his career, marked by artistic growth and a determination to leave an indelible mark on the rap game. The track has garnered attention not only for its powerful lyrics but also for the seamless production that pays homage to the roots of hip-hop.

With “On Me,” 100 Grand Royce and Dame Grease have delivered a compelling piece of work that pays homage to the rich history of New York hip-hop while embracing the evolution of the genre. As 100 Grand Royce continues to carve his path in the rap scene, collaborations with industry heavyweights like Dame Grease reaffirm his commitment to authenticity and excellence in his craft. “On Me” serves as a testament to the enduring spirit of New York hip-hop and the artists who are shaping its future.



# EVERYTHING IS GOODZ

INTERVIEW @KBTINDAL  
PHOTOGRAPHY @DIRECTED\_BY\_GTOWN

*Goodz*

**Bronx native talks new music and entrepreneurship including colognes, apparel, sneakers, Cognac, Slick Talk Cypher and new board game “Tap Out”.**

A Bronx-born and bred MC, The Slick Talk God aka Mr. I Came Here to Rap, has stood on many stages and battled the best of the best. He has over 42 million views on YouTube. His entrepreneurial spirit has spawned several apparel pieces, footwear, cologne and more. His calm demeanor is exemplified by his laid-back flow that encompasses hard bars, punch lines and slick money talk that makes the hardest hustlers stand up and give praise to his word play and leaves his fan base wanting more. Validated Magazine got the chance to sit down with the battle rap legend, Goodz. Enjoy.



Validated: So you're from The Bronx, the birthplace of Hip-Hop. What part of the BX are you from and tell me how the BX influenced you in your early years.

Goodz: I'm from University, 181st and University. I just spoke about this, it's crazy. I'm actually not too far from where Hip-Hop was born, which is Sedgewick Ave. I got used to being all up and down there. That's literally maybe 10 minutes from me, it's like right up the block. I guess being from over there, I guess rap just kind of flows man. It kind of flows, like you grow up wanting to be a rapper man. I grew up watching a lot of people in my building. My man D Boog is somebody that was a big inspiration to me. My man Fast Sam. They were people who were older than me and they were doing it. I used to watch them and be like "Damn they nice. I want to be nice too." They kind of pushed me to get to the level I am now.

Validated: What's your earliest memory of Hip-Hop?

Goodz: Oh man, do you mean like industry wise or in general?

Validated: I mean the first time you heard a song or saw somebody break dance or...

Goodz: Well it wasn't even that. My first introduction to Hip-Hop actually was battling.

Validated: Okay.

Goodz: That might have been the first thing I really paid attention to just coming home from school one day and being young coming home from school, having to get in the house by a certain time and I stopped and was intrigued by a crowd of people kind of squeezing through the crowd and seeing two people going back and forth rapping. And that's I think that's how I got introduced to Hip-Hop. I just wanted to know. After that I just wanted to know what that was. It was the crowd going crazy, it was just like it was a rush and I was like dang that's fire, what is that? I got home. I got in trouble. But I think that was it right there.

Validated: Where did the Animal part of your name come from? I know like I seen you on TV promoting the products and stuff and we know you go by Goodz. But where did the Animal part of the name come from?

Goodz: Rest in peace my man Bill Blanco. I had to be around 15. I think he was the first dude that was running around with me. We were going to every Cipher, every battle, everything like between the Bronx, Harlem, Queens between the Boroughs just going everywhere rapping in cyphers doing everything. And that's how my name was up in the streets. And the first name was Goodz and then he put "Street" on the front so it was "Street Goodz." Then that's when I was younger and then as I started getting older and like really doing the battle thing I was killing a lot of dudes like off camera the "Street" kind of fell off. He was like "Man like you an animal, you going be Goodz the Animal. You a animal, you're killing these dudes like that". That's kind of where it stuck right there.

Validated: I saw you recently post some bars over a new version of "Ain't No Half Steppin," the Big Daddy Kane joint. Is there anything in the works to make that a single or make that happen?

Goodz: Yes, I sent it to Kane. I'm trying to bait him to get on it. Big Daddy Kane is my man. He been showing love since I met him. Before I met him. I became one of his favorite rappers and that's like a very big thing for me. That's extraordinary. And ever since then he just showed me wild love. So I wanted to do something to kind of show him love in a way. So I said and I wanted to surprise him. So I had hit my producer up and said, do "Ain't No Half Steppin" over, and send it to me. "I'mma do a freestyle. I'mma do like a joint to it but I'mma lay it too but I'mma do it first like in the car." I did it and it got a good response. He fucks with it. I laid it already. I sent it to him. He's gonna get on there whenever he got time to and then yeah we go from there.

Validated: You've been battling for over two decades man. At this point in your career do you want to continue battling or do you feel like you're kind of phasing out of that due to the other endeavors that you're in that may be more lucrative or just more passionate for you at this time?

Goodz: I think that's the thing right there. Well right now I wouldn't kind of phase out of that because I got love for it and I'm not doing it for the money. I'm not doing it to pay rent because I need it. To each his own. But when it's more of something you could do freely as a hobby or as a sport and you can be happy doing it and there's no pressure where you got to do it or you are forced to do it, whatever it is, it's always better and your love lasts longer for it. When you got to do stuff for the money or you are being pushed to do something for certain reasons you are going to fall out of love with it because it's not coming from the heart any more. It's coming because you have to do it. So, I think because I'm able to do it like that, my heart stays in it and I got love for it because I don't do it as much as a lot of the other people. I might come out once a year or something like that and that alone keeps me hungry and wanting to do it just because I don't do it as much. So, as of right now I still got the hunger and love for it especially the way I come out and do it and because I don't do it a lot, I still got the love and hunger there. And it gives me time to still do everything else I'm doing because I only come out once a year. So, for the whole rest of the year I'm kind of caught up in doing other stuff like that.

Validated: I'm sure at this point in your career as a battle MC you get to pick and choose who it is that you want to battle. Is there somebody that you want to battle that you haven't battled yet?

Goodz: Nah for me being in the game for as long as I have I kind of battled everybody that made sense. And for me it's more of a make sense thing. It's not like I really have a particular person I want to battle. A lot of people don't know it's not easy work. It's hard man, especially leading up to the battle that's the hardest. You got so much on you. So when you finally get it off it's like a breath of fresh air. So yeah man, I've been in this so long ain't nobody I really want to battle. I like to take the battles that just make sense and that the fans, and the supporters want to see. So every so often, those battles come along. So me sitting out and not doing it, every time I'm going back into it is because they want to see me against this person. So I just wait for that and wait for everything to flow.

Validated: In your opinion who was your

hardest battle respectfully?

Goodz: Tay Roc. Tay Roc for sure. One of the dopest dudes.

Validated: So at this point what's your opinion on the state of battle rap and where it's heading? I've heard so many people say it's dying out. I've heard people say, it's still alive and well. What do you think as a legend in the MC battle space, is going on in that genre today and where do you see it going?

Goodz: I don't think it's dying out for sure. As long as you got new talent and new people that want to do it. And it's always going to be like that. So let me start from this. Back in the day we grew up wanting to be a rapper like in the industry. So we grew up wanting to be that type of rapper, we wanted to be signed. We wanted to be making music and doing videos. Nowadays the dudes coming up want to be battle rappers. You have a whole bunch of people that want to battle rappers saying what we do. So they prepped to be battle rappers. So as long as we got that, that strength like that to make people want to do it I don't think it'll ever die out because new talent is going to keep coming and they're going to come along, it's gonna be somebody else hot. I think it'll keep going.

Where is it now? I think battle rap always hits a plateau because it's big now. How much bigger can it get it? It can always get bigger but what can you do to make it bigger? So that's what happens every so often it comes. It's a plateau where all right we are here now. What's going to be the next big thing in battle rap? Maybe it might go to TV but they kind of tried that. Battle rap is funny man. Whatever you do with battle rap you got to keep it gritty because when it looks too commercial, it loses the essence and what battle rap really is. So you have to find a way to keep it gritty. And I learned that from when Eminem came into it when Joe Buttons battled I think battle Hollow Da Don. And the way they did it, they had nobody on stage, they had seats and it just was too clean. It ain't got that feel of real battle rap. So I think it'd be dope if somebody come along and did a TV show on it like HBO or something like that and they could keep it gritty and keep all the cursing and all in put it on something like that.

Validated: One of your most recent Bars on I-95 you said, "Shorty call me a dog I'm not a poor one. Matter of fact, I'm a clean dog, I get my paws done". Your punchlines be real mean like that. Why did you feel the need to state the Slick Talk Cypher? Was that just to showcase and get bread with other other battle MC's that you respect? Or was it a combination of trying to put on new MC's that wanted to become somebody in the battle space?

Goodz: It was solely on trying to bring light to new MC's. It ain't based on any like people that's already popping know what I'm saying. I think the last Cypher that I did on Bars I-95 that particular one right there, I've been on Bars on I-95 about twice or three times I think. So for me it's kind of nothing no more. So I wanted to give the people that did my Cypher and some up and comers that look because that's a big look for them. For me and Bars on I-95 it's even. But for them it's a gigantic look. That's like being on Flex. Bars on I-95 is probably the second dopest freestyle platform you could have. So I wanted to give some new people that look and that's what the Slick Talk Cypher is really based on giving new people that I think



is fire a look. And it's a lot of work. I'm gonna do another one. I'm going to put one in the works. It's a lot of work and a lot of things to do but I'm going to do another one soon and get some people in on it.

**Validated:** You've done a ton of singles with some of the best MC's just to name a few, Fred The Godson, Dave East, Ghostface, Method Man. I know you put out a bunch of singles and the Slick Talk EP. When can we expect a full project from you?

**Goodz:** I don't know man. It's hard now because like I said I remember at one point I wanted to be a rapper. But when you do the battle rap thing you get boxed in. And I don't understand it. I feel like why not take some people that already got a fan base, and are already known across the world, got the same fame as a rapper, like a rapper in the industry, probably just not the money and take them and build them and do that. I never understood it. It's an easy business move to just pick the right one, take them and do it. I don't know, a lot of people have been kind of on me asking me to do a project and stuff like that. What it is for me, is for a person like me you put all that work into the project right and I got my core fans that want to hear me do it. But you put all that work into the project and then you drop it and you don't get as much views and hits and likes as you would get if I did a battle rap. So it kind of makes me stray away from dropping like a project and maybe just dropping a single. A song with a quick video or something like that just to show rapping as opposed to dropping the whole project. But it kind of just makes you like I did all this work, and it be like that because like I said, I get millions of views battling. But it's like you got to convert those people over as opposed to you doing this. I have a nice little cool following on doing that but it's still not as much as if I did a battle. So it kind of makes me like ah I don't want to do a whole project because I don't want to put in all the work, and then it doesn't get the push that it deserves for all the work I put in. I've been thinking about doing it. The last one I did was Slick Talk and a lot of people didn't hear that because I didn't drop it on streaming platforms. It was on my site Slick Talk. I think when I did that it was maybe 2021. I think I dropped that in 2021. So I'm gonna go ahead and release that to the streaming platform and let that go out there and all. I'm working on an album maybe like a 8-10 song album maybe. I'm thinking about it.

**Validated:** We know you're a hustler by nature bro. Everything is on nothingbutgoodz.com with a Z. That houses all of your designer apparel from the leather hoodies to the leather jackets to the bucket hats, the Slick Walks, the cologne and more. Why did you decide to get into the fashion side of things and what are some of the best sellers out of your items at this point?

**Goodz:** The funny thing is when it came to doing clothes that's something I didn't want to do.

**Validated:** Really?

**Goodz:** It's very cliché to me. For me to just do clothes, I feel like everybody does it. As far as doing something like a cologne that's not that's kind of farfetched. People don't think. So I try to think outside the box and do things that everybody is not doing. But it still has to be something that fits my brand. I got into cologne deep in like 2020. Now I'm in with over 100

bottles of cologne. So I got deep into it and I started saying I want to do my own cologne. And then I just got into that habit especially around Covid time to stop saying I want to do something and actually going to do it. And I think that's what stops a lot of people, just saying they want to do something and keep it there. They don't go do it. I went and did it. I went and looked up the place. I Googled everything. And I actually did my own cologne. And it came out so fire that I wanted to put it out. I was first going to do it for me then it came out so fire and now I want other people to have this. I want to put this out. I want people to smell this. I wind up putting it out, and it went very well for me. And that was a big thing to see me create something and put it out, and people actually liking it. And then you got to think about it like this cologne; and this is why I say shout out to my supporters I love them to death; with cologne you can't sample it. I don't have samples. I can't send a sample out to everybody before they buy. So they are purely buying it off of me, off of what I gave them throughout the years and that style, fashion. All that smelling good goes with style and fashion and being clean and looking clean. All that goes together. So because that's what fits under my brand and that's who I am, they was able to, we call it "Blind Buying" the cologne off of my word and they loved it. And I just kept going from there. It was a dope thing.

I always wanted to do a sneaker. I think everybody wants to do a sneaker. Everybody wants to have their own sneaker. Once I did the cologne I said, "Oh I could definitely do a sneaker and I could definitely sell a sneaker because you can see it". You can't smell it or something. You can see the sneakers. I can show it on camera and then you can see it. So I wanted to do something that's, as you get older you want easier stuff to put on your feet you want comfortable things. You want something that looks nice but they're uncomfortable. I learned that just getting older I want something comfortable. I can slip on my foot and just go. So I created the Slick Walk which is a sneaker which weighs about one pound. Around there it slips right on your feet to go. You would never complain about the sneaker being uncomfortable. You can wear that sneaker for three days in a row it will never be uncomfortable because it goes to your foot. So it's like putting your foot in a sock. So it would never be uncomfortable. That's probably one of the most comfortable sneakers in the world and it ain't just me saying. I'll challenge anybody else on it. It's got a super soft sole. Everything was made just for that and his and his gear towards working out also. I got into working out doing that. So when you get into those things when you work out you want to be comfortable. If you walk around all day you want to be comfortable. That's what the sneaker is geared to. That went great for me man. I'm proud of that. I just wanted to do the sneakers and cologne. The clothes are not something I wanted to get into. Somebody was telling me "Drop some things to go with the sneakers." So I said, I'll drop a shirt here and there, something like that. But I didn't really want to get too deep into it. As I started doing it I said "Well now that people are buying it if I'mma do it, I don't want to do regular things now. If I'mma do something, I want it to be totally different." So that's why you see the more higher end stuff like leather jackets. Nobody really came out with one. When I was young I was wearing the Pelle's, the Pelle-Pelle's, the Avirexes. But I was mainly wearing them butter soft Pelle-Pelles. Nobody did a

**I don't know, a lot of people have been kind of on me asking me to do a project and stuff like that. What it is for me, is for a person like me you put all that work into the project right and I got my core fans that want to hear me do it. But you put all that work into the project and then you drop it and you don't get as much views and hits and likes as you would get if I did a battle rap. So it kind of makes me stray away from dropping like a project and maybe just dropping a single.**

**Don't let a thought be a thought, if you understand what I'm saying. If you think of something, write it down. When you write it down, visualize in your head what you need to do to make that happen and then go do it step by step, whether the first step could just be Googling how to do it. Go do that. Little stuff like that people don't do. They just let the thought be the thought and they always think it's about the right time.**

jacket of that quality like that. So I said, I want to do my own version of that Pelle-Pelle I used to wear. And that's what I did. I found this manufacturing company that Pelle used, went through them, did everything and did it the exact same way. So I want to do different clothing items instead of just a shirt and a sweatsuit or something like that. I want to get in the jeans eventually but I want to do stuff like that. If I do the clothes I want to do different things, more high and stuff.

**Validated:** That kind of leads me to my next question when you said you use the same manufacturing company as Pelle-Pelle. Is that being manufactured here in the states or are you taking trips overseas to look at materials and things of that nature?

**Goodz:** Well I could say this. This is some advice for anybody that wants to start a

clothing line. Anybody that's listening that wants to start a clothing line can DM me and I could put them in the right direction to where they got to go. A lot of people aren't serious though. Yes, when you are doing a clothing line, a startup you got to have a startup costs. It won't be that much. I could tell you the lowest amount it'll be and you can start up your clothing line. You can't do nothing in the States. You can't do nothing here because they're gonna charge you way too much money. For anybody that does anything, Nike gets their sneakers from China. Every sneaker they get from China. I definitely had to find a great manufacturing company outside of the States that does that.

**Validated:** Which is easier to manufacture the clothes or the cologne?

**Goodz:** I would say the cologne because I'm in there hand making it pretty much myself. I'm in there mixing and adding and putting stuff together and getting it to a smell. So it's easier because I'm more hands on. For the leathers and the clothes it's trial and error. So before people see a finished product I went through a few samples to get it to how I want it. I'm not flying out to do that. I'm just getting it drawn up how I want it, with the details, talking to them, telling them exactly how I want it, going through trial and error. Paying for the sample to come. If it's wrong I got to tell them fix this, fix this, fix this and pay for another sample to come until it's right. And then I say, okay. This is how I want it. I need a bulk order of whatever.

**Validated:** What are some more endeavors that we should be looking out for you coming up in the future?

**Goodz:** Oh man, I'm working on doing my own liquor.

**Validated:** Okay. And in what space, tequila or vodka space?

**Goodz:** No, I was thinking hard on it man but I think I'm gonna go cognac. They know me for drinking cognac and tequila kind of took over because Henny had a run for a long time. And that was kind of like tequila. So, I think coming out with a new dope cognac something new, something fresh, something they know me for it'll be super dope. I'm close. I'm this close to being right there and I really just started working on it. I've been looking at the stuff for years though trying to figure it out. And this year I really started putting my foot on the gas and really trying to figure it out. I'm close to getting it done. I can't wait. I also got a drinking game coming out called "Tap Out." It's a board game for adults 21 years old and older. It's a drinking game card game, you play the card, you lose, you drink. It's a dope game. I want to make my own liquor and drop that at the same time with that.

**Validated:** What would be your message to the younger generation that want to be entrepreneurs? What would be the first two steps that you would tell them that they need to do?

**Goodz:** Well the main thing I would say is what I just said. Don't let a thought be a thought, if you understand what I'm saying. If you think of something, write it down. When you write it down, visualize in your head what you need to do to make that happen and then go do it step by step, whether the first step could just be Googling how to do it. Go do that. Little stuff

like that people don't do. They just let the thought be the thought and they always think it's about the right time. "Well I'mma do it when this time or when this happens or when I get this money from here." It's never the right time. You might say I'mma do it this time, this time, this time. A whole year went by and you ain't do nothing yet. So, at least if you did all the moves and did everything you had to do and you don't have the money, now when the money comes it's quick because you did all the footwork for everything else. You know exactly what to do with the money. So that's probably the biggest thing I could say.

**Validated:** Okay. That's what's up. And then my final question. I've been hearing a lot of people doing interviews and they throw this question out there but I've been using this question for years because I'm always about the culture. The name of my show is The Essence. It's always Hip-Hop for me. What does Hip-Hop mean to you bro?

**Goodz:** Hip-Hop to me means everything. Everything you see me doing is because of Hip-Hop. All this stuff I'm doing, whether from the clothes to the cologne, is all a part of Hip-Hop. Battle rap is a funny place because in battle rap if you are cool and you look like you are getting some money that's not a good thing in battle rap and the stage I'm at. It'd be puzzling to me because I say I remember with Hip-Hop when your look meant everything. In Hip-Hop if you didn't look cool nobody respected you. There's a lot of nice rappers that was out. A lot of nice rappers that nobody knows about, they never got put on because they ain't have the look. They wasn't believable. They weren't sellable. So everything I'm doing falls under the Hip-Hop umbrella and I wouldn't be able to do it without Hip-Hop because I got a name, and got supporters and fans off of me rapping words. And that's where it first started. And that's from Hip-Hop. And that opened the door for me to do everything else I'm doing.

**Slick Talk God.** If you want to support, go to [nothingbutgoodz.com](http://nothingbutgoodz.com) Go check some of the stuff out man. If you want the most comfortable sneakers in the world definitely go check out those Slick Walks. The cologne, I gets busy. Trust me, I know it's good.

**Validated:** What is your most popular and your most favorite scent?

**Goodz:** My favorite scent is different from maybe what is the most popular is. The most popular is the first one I did which is called Slick Talk Leather that sells to this day. That and Chocolate Leather. Those are the first two I did. Slick Talk Leather first and Chocolate Leather. Those sell to this day. Those sell out. My favorite might be Gentlemans 30. It's because, you know the cereal Fruit Loops?

**Validated:** Yep.

**Goodz:** They got this scent in it like a note called Froot Loops. It smells just like cereal. And it just brings you back to my childhood. So that's my favorite. But the one that people are liking now a lot, is the two new ones I dropped which are Touch of Success and Cherry Cola. So those are two new ones I dropped, and those are the new ones that everybody's liking now man that's starting to pick up and people are starting to buy it. Slick Talk Leather and Chocolate Leather sell the most to this day. They've been selling since I dropped them.





## NEW MUSIC: LAST EXIT TO CROOKLYN

# BROOKLYN RAPPER EDDIE Kaine AND PRODUCER BIG GHOST LTD RETURN WITH THEIR 2ND COLLABORATION "LAST EXIT TO CROOKLYN"

### JOURNALIST DEME D

Brooklyn Mc Eddie Kaine returns with producer Big Ghost LTD for their second collaboration. Kaine is one of NYC's prominent newer artist putting his stamp in the indie scene. Following up his 2023 release "House of Kaine" produced by BP Infinite he continues to put out quality material and stays consistent. One thing Kaine makes clear is his seriousness & dedication to his craft.

Along with quality music Eddie has established himself amongst

his peers & some legends in the industry. Big Ghost an established producer also has worked with Conway, 38 Spesh, UFO Fev, Rome Streetz, and Che Noir. This puts Eddie in a list of good company. This is the follow up to their project "A Tree Grows In Brooklyn" released in 2021.

With "Last Exit to Crooklyn" Eddie continues to bring versatility, reality rap, storytelling, and motivation music. The artwork is also very intentional to illustrate the Crooklyn theme. Big Ghost also showing his range as the production feels custom to Eddie's style.

The album opens up with "The Wrong Era" where he illustrates his artistic taste mentioning many greats from different times. He paints a story with frequent collaborator Rim on "Crooktown" as they detail a set up plot. He features Drumwork Mc Jae Skeese on "Lanier vs. King" as they show their lyrical prowess. On "Cutthroat Drills" he addresses maneuvering amongst those with hidden intentions. Kaine is diverse with his music however he still represents for NYC and does so perfectly on motivational song "To The Pedal".

An overall great listen "Last Exit to Crooklyn" showcases a talented Mcs being authentic with his artistry. Eddie Kaine shows the narrative of the lack of quality Hip Hop to be false. Along with Big Ghost LTD they are carrying the Torch.



# FOR THE CULTURE BY THE CULTURE

**P. FRANK WILLIAMS**

INTERVIEW @KBTINDAL

**Oakland native creative talks Freaknik documentary, new media company “For The Culture By The Culture”, Busta Rhymes documentary and more.**

P. Frank Williams is a brother with over two decades in the industry as an executive producer and showrunner on some of the most popular documentaries and movies that encompass the black experience. He's the man behind the latest documentary on Hulu, *Freaknik: The Wildest Party Never Told*. The documentary hit the number one spot on Hulu the day of its release. He has produced several acclaimed projects centered around the black culture and music, which include TV-1's renowned documentary series *Unsung* and *Unsung Hollywood*. BET's award-winning series *American Gangster* as well the BET Awards and the BET Hip-Hop Awards. He was an executive producer on the crime show *Hip-Hop Homicides* along with 50 Cent and Mona Scott Young. He has done Hip-Hop films and documentaries such as *Wu: The Story Of The Wu-Tang Clan*, *Who Shot Biggie and Tupac* and Jeezy's *A Hustler's Ambition*. He is the former executive editor of *The Source* magazine and he's also the executive producer and showrunner for the Tina Knowles, Discovery Plus and Oprah Winfrey Network four-part series *Profiled: The Black Man*. He is now the founder and president of the multimedia company *For the Culture by the Culture* which is an urban content creation company based in Los Angeles with satellite offices in Atlanta and the Bay Area that creates opportunities for people of color behind the camera, and projects focused on Black Culture. In 2024 and beyond he will be unveiling projects with Tubi, TV1 and BET and more. He is an Emmy Award winner and an eight-time NAACP Image Award winner as well. Validated Magazine welcomes Mr. P. Frank Williams.



Validated: Absolutely. Let's get right into it man. You're Oakland born and raised right?

P. Frank Williams: Yes. And then the other half of my life, New York City and then Los Angeles. So I spent my formative years in Oakland and moved to New York as a 21 year old kid in the 90s and that's when I started.

Validated: Where are you from?

P. Frank Williams: Downtown Brooklyn Atlantic and Evans. And Harlem. I went to Columbia University. I know a bit... Uptown-Uptown. (Laughs)

Validated: When did you first fall in love with being behind the camera? And was there a first movie or documentary that you saw that made you say, "I want to do that, but I want to do it from the Black experience perspective?"

P. Frank Williams: Well I've always been a Storyteller since I was a kid. I initially started out wanting to be a broadcast journalist which ironically I got a little bit of experience and realized that I was into the written word. Even as a little kid I think if you see my bio I used to write love letters for the homies in the hood. So if you couldn't write a letter to Keisha, little Tasha and you're the street dude you can go get the dude with the glasses and the big afro pay him a little \$15-20 bucks and I spiced that up. So even like 10 years old I was doing it. I always knew that telling stories was my thing. So I started out as a writer, a journalist at the LA Times and at The Source where I did the big cover stories on Tupac and Biggie and Suge Knight all the iconic ones Eazy-E in the 90s and that shifted over to making television with the Source Awards, BET Awards, Grammys and different things. I always tell people, unfortunately Puff's in the headlines, but if Puff and Mase and Dre and Snoop were at an event I was sitting at the table next to them. So I've always been sort of Hip-Hop Annex. I'm the guy that brought you those stories and a lot of times you're not gonna get to meet Suge Knight or Dr. Dre or meet Tupac. And so somebody has to go interview them and tell their story so that's always been me since a little kid. I've been telling these stories. Once Hip-Hop came into my life I sort of dedicated myself to that in the mid 90s.

Validated: Okay. I think for all of us it all started with Hip-Hop and we branched off into other areas and stuff like that. So that's why I always say I want to make Hip-Hop proud because if it wasn't for Hip-Hop a lot of us wouldn't be doing a lot of the things that we are doing.

P. Frank Williams: Yeah I would have been in your living room taking your TV in '87, '88 if it wasn't for Hip-Hop. So Hip-Hop is taking me all around the world and giving me great opportunities to always be loyal and dedicated to the culture. It's good and bad. There's times when it's good in the Freaknik documentary. There were a lot of great things. There were some bad things so I'm here just to sort of turn a lens on the culture and make sure some people from inside the culture are telling our stories and not outsiders.

Validated: So like we said you produced and directed the number one show on Hulu right now the documentary Freaknik: The Wildest Party Never Told. How did the partnership with Swirl films and Mass Appeal come about to actually make this happen?

P. Frank Williams: Well as I mentioned obviously I've been in the game for a minute over almost three decades now. Some of the people at Swirl I've worked with before, Eric, Jay, those folks and they sort of had the Genesis of the Freaknik idea. And I came in with Mass Appeal who brought me on as a director, put together the sizzle reel, the deck, and helped write that. Go out and pitch it. So I was sort of in it from the beginning of taking it out and then being able to get it sold to Hulu. So that's what happened, we all partnered up. Hulu with Swirl and Mass Appeal and then I was brought on as a director to kind of oversee the visual part of it and the storytelling.

Validated: Jermaine Dupri, Luther Campbell, 21 Savage all played an integral part in making a documentary with you. Tell us why you chose to tackle a documentary about Freaknik like 40 years after its inception and about 30 years after the height of the popularity of Freaknik? And tell me about the process of making the documentary?

P. Frank Williams: Well Freaknik is an iconic cultural thing. I think there's

a lot of misnomers until this doc came out. It was sort of this iconic Black Woodstock. It was a situation where there was a lot of controversy about Freaknik and it was sort of like this Hush-Hush thing because nobody really wanted to talk about the crazy things that happened. And I think the 40th anniversary was a good way to do it. Originally we were trying to show somebody who was bringing Freaknik back in today's world which is the gentleman Carlos. We still included him but shifted it to more of a retrospective about the history of Freaknik.

There's a nostalgia about Freaknik among the Young Generation, the Drakes, The Latto's, 21 Savage who by the way had multiple birthday parties with a Freaknik theme. And so that was part of the thing. How do we bring this cultural thing which blew up in the late 80s mid 90s or so to a new generation? That was sort of our marching orders to see how we could bring this iconic festival back visually and tell the story of it and unravel the layers. Because there was a humongous fascination with Freaknik for multiple generations which I thought was amazing.

Validated: I didn't know that either when I watched the documentary. I had no idea that it had started way before. I was abreast of it in the 90s like everybody else was because it was the most popular thing to do. What was it like going back and interviewing some of the founders of it and what were some of the gems that they gave you about why they started the Freaknik and what their outcome for it was actually supposed to be?

P. Frank Williams: Well as I show in the film it was sort of an innocent thing. These kids couldn't afford to go back home, had their own little picnic, they ended up calling it Freaknik because The Freak was the dance at the time from Chic or whatever and then they came with a picnic and started it. It was hot dogs and hamburgers, kids from the DC Metro Club, DC Area put together this picnic and what started out as 20-30 people, then it became 500 then it became a 1000, 75,000, 25,000 and then ended up with almost 300,000 people by the late 90s. It was really just an organic thing that morphed into something much bigger. It's ironic in today's world where everything's a DM or a post or something like that, imagine something that spread via flyers and Word of Mouth. There's no social media. There's no texting. There's no branding. There's none of that. There's no big corporate sponsor, just young Black people trying to find a way for themselves in a world that didn't really make room for them.

Validated: Like I said it's safe to say that it was all about Hip-Hop in the beginning which saved a lot of our lives. What's your earliest memory of Hip-Hop?

P. Frank Williams: Well that's a really good question. I guess a lot of people would say Sugar Hill Gang but I would probably say yeah I think that's about right. I mean I think of the '79, '78 when I was about eight or nine years old and I remember just hearing these dudes rapping on the radio. I want to say it's around "The Message" right before that. In terms of the actual oral or audio version of Hip-Hop. But one of my earliest memories is like 82' with Beat Street when I used to take my cardboard to lunchtime and we would break dance against each other. I didn't mean to date myself but like around '82, '81 when we were break dancing I know that feeling of having your jacket, having your Adidas. Getting your laces right. Making sure you got an Up rock or a head spin. I'm with the foundation of this. I know when it was only on college radio two hours or three hours a week and you had to record that. I remember when I had to have the double cassette and I would record back and forth with the Double-D batteries. I'm from the second wave of Hip-Hop obviously the foundation like Herc and Bam and all those kinds of people was the 70s. I came right at the late '70s.

Validated: I like to say I'm generation 1.5 because I went through the same thing. In New York it was Mr. Magic and that was on the air two three o'clock in the morning. And you had to wait to make that recording for that one hour.

P. Frank Williams: Yeah that was it. Now it's the dominant culture in the world and it's all Hip-Hop radio, right?

Validated: On the business side of things outside of the creative side, tell me what it takes to bring a documentary like this to fruition and to get a company like Hulu on board with it?

P. Frank Williams: I mean obviously shout out to Mass Appeal and Swirl. We all collectively got together. Swirl who started the idea for the



Freaknik and kind of put some of the creatives together and then they approached Mass Appeal and then myself to help flesh it out. It's good to see these Black stories being embraced on these sort of white mainstream platforms like Hulu. Shout out to Hulu. I think they saw pretty much immediately how great it was and how rich it was. They pretty much accepted and made an offer pretty quickly within like a couple of pitches, which by the way never happens in television. You might pitch 50 people and still not get an offer. So shout out to the power of the Hulu creatives executives Beth and Kate and Hannah, all those people who really saw the future. I doubt if they thought it would be this big because even I did not think that it would get the amount of attention that it got. When we first announced it it went viral and without a sizzle without anything, without whatever. So that just shows the power of Black culture. And so from a business perspective I think Hulu was smart to know that some of these Black stories have great crossover appeal. For it to be number one on Hulu and still in the top five means that more than Black people are watching it that means that it's crossed over into other homes.

**Validated: What's been the biggest feedback that you've gotten about the documentary so far?**

P. Frank Williams: I think a lot of people are surprised at how layered it is and how it's much more entertainment instead of ratchet. I think most people thought I was just gonna show some booty shots and people turning up and people having sex and doing crazy stuff. There is some pretty wild stuff in the documentary but I come from the school of KRS as I mentioned. I'm a B-boy first. So I do Edutainment, meaning education and entertainment. And so for me it's been surprising that people didn't realize it was going to be deeper. I think it's also surprising people thought I was going to be more ratchet. You know I'm on Disney right? Disney, Hulu so I know it's Hulu but make sure you understand that it is still Disney and you can't go way out to left and right field. So that's what it is.

I think the last part that's been surprising is just sort of the multigenerational appeal of the film. Meaning I had a friend who said she's like 50 early 50s and then she watched with her mother in her 70s and her niece in her 20s. So three black women from three generations watched Freaknik. People tell me they watch with their kids. My 19-year-old twins watched it and my 60 year old aunt. It's one of those weird things which never ever happens with that many generations tuned into it. And I think there's a fascination from the young people and there's a nostalgia from the people who went through it which has really been amazing and sort of fascinating.

**Validated: At one point you were the former executive editor of The Source Magazine. Like you said you covered the deaths of Tupac and Biggie, interviewed Dre and Suge and so on and so forth. What was your favorite story that you did back then and how do you feel the climate in Hip-Hop has changed from the 90s to now with social media and everything else?**

P. Frank Williams: Well that's a really hard one to answer. I wrote the cover when Tupac died in '96. I co-wrote the cover when Big died in '97. When Eric died I know this is taking people back but even in '95 when Eazy-E died so I did all of those Scarface, Geto Boys different situations. I don't know if I'd say the word "favorite" but I would imagine the most iconic couple of ones I did was the Tupac Shakur, the gray cover when he died in '96 and it just was such an iconic cover.

One of my favorites I think is still the Suge Knight when he got out of jail and when Dre had left Death Row. I interviewed Sugar Bear, Big Shug in the Mule Creek State Prison. And then when he got out I also interviewed him in the Death Row offices in LA. And obviously people know Suge is a little controversial sort of a wild boy. I remember going to him when he got out of jail and he had a briefcase and he opened it up and he had these diamond handcuffs. He's like "I'm the only Street nigga with diamond handcuffs". Quote unquote. But then I'm like, "Suge you're a gangster but you're drinking diet coke because you got your sugar. So it was fascinating to hang out with him at that particular time and have those conversations with Dre when he left. I've just been fortunate to have some of the more iconic conversations for the culture.

One famous one that I did was with Wyclef Jean when he had two machetes, it says love and hate. This is the first time he talked about

his relationship with Lauren Hill when the Fugees broke up. I really did come from that time when there was no coverage of Hip-Hop really on TV and The Source really was kind of like the CNN of Hip-Hop at that particular time. The stories we wrote and the things we did in the '90s early 2000s lay the blueprint for what's happening now.

**Validated: I actually still have all of those issues. I have crates on top of crates of old Source issues XXL issues. What was the hardest piece that you ever had to write as a journalist?**

P. Frank Williams: That's a really great question I think there was as I mentioned the Suge Knight situation. And as you can see from today's situation Suge says a lot of volatile things. He said stuff about Minister Louis Farakhan, Magic Johnson and unfortunately about Puff and Big. And I thought some of them were a little bit too much prints. I challenged him about saying some of these things which I thought were sort of without merit and a little bit offensive. But I had to try to let him speak his peace. Just because I don't agree with his thing doesn't mean that it should not be printed. Those are some of the tough decisions that I made. I do think that and I said this publicly. I'm not saying anything new is that, we fed into the East Coast West Coast beef. Both articles that I wrote about Big and Suge and all of that, Dre and all of that in the 90s. I don't want to say we kept the feud going, but we gave publicity and rise to these people to let them speak sometimes venomous things. And I do regret that. I was a kid at the time and obviously we were trying to sell magazines. But I do think some of the stories that I wrote and things that we did at The Source contributed to the East West Coast beef.


**Validated: You also did The True Crime show Hip-Hop Homicides, which showcased the death of artists like Pop Smoke, XXX Tentacion, Chinx, King Von and others. I just want to know your perspective on it. Why do you feel that we are the only genre that deals with this toxic masculinity that leads to death? And what are some of the possible solutions in your mind to the Black-on-Black hatred or other issues that causes this type of behavior?**

P. Frank Williams: Well that's a tough one. It was a little bit sad for me after covering Pac and Big, the deaths of them and all of that Lost Boys in the 90s and the murders that happened. And then for me unfortunately 20 plus years later to be telling the same stories with King Von and XXX Tentacion and Pop Smoke in terms of nobody had really learned from it. I think too often in Black Culture especially in Hip-Hop, the streets and the music are connected, they're not separate. Rock and Roll and Country music, Pop music people can tell a story, do whatever diss somebody and nothing else will happen. In our culture the music in the streets are linked one on one. I think the rise of social media with people taunting saying "I'm smoking on my ops," all of this kind of shit has contributed to that negativity and the violence. I think there are people trying to flex with guns and do a lot of wild shit on the internet and then talking about "pull up on me." I think that it's become an unfortunate badge of honor to be a gangster. Gangsters don't usually live. They end up getting jail time or getting murdered. So, I've seen it. I just think it's unfortunate.

I think we need better conflict resolution skills. We need better gun laws. We need to be able to value black life a lot more between us as black people. I've obviously been in this game and some of these stories that you talked about, I was there to see Pop Smoke's mother cry and because she had to watch her son get murdered. I know the feeling of talking to even like MO3 whose murder was on camera and his mother having to watch that and his father just being totally broken down, he started just sobbing like a baby and talking about it. So you're not just murdering a rapper in your ego, you're killing somebody's father, killing somebody's son. I think too often we don't think about that. And as a person who has met and interviewed a lot of these people I wish we would think about that and not just be in the moment. I think our toxic masculinity sometimes is a horrible thing for Black people. I will say though this is an issue that's beyond Hip-Hop it's a systemic issue in the Black community Brown Community or whatever that has nothing to do with the music. I think it's a cultural situation that affects us on a bigger level other than just the music.

**Validated: You've won eight NAACP image awards. Is there one that's the most special to you or are they all just like your babies?**

P. Frank Williams: Well no I think six of those are for Unsung, one for Sunday Best. I can't remember what the other ones were for. But two of them are really important to me. I won an Emmy for the Olympics. But I



I think we need better conflict resolution skills. We need better gun laws. We need to be able to value black life a lot more between us as black people.

did Gil Scott-Heron which I think was a very powerful piece of television. We won that year for *Unsung* which I thought was an important story as well as the Sugar Hill Gang, those two stories that I did which ended up for those seasons winning NAACP Image Awards. And obviously Gil Scott-Heron is the sort of The Godfather of Hip-Hop and his story is the foundation. And Sugar Hill Gang is the most popular rap record in history and the record that set the tone for all of us to be able to have a career; You doing these journalist situations, me as a producer. So those in terms of image awards are the ones that I cherish them most because they're really important Hip-Hop stories.

**Validated:** You won an Emmy with NBC for the Olympics in Athens Greece. What part did you play on that team when you won that Emmy?

P. Frank Williams: I was on the writing staff in the 2004 Olympics in Athens Greece where I wrote some of the copy, the relays or track or different things. So, I wrote copy, the words that they say on the screen during the broadcast. So, I was very fortunate to have that life-changing experience and it was great.

**Validated:** You're the founder and president of a multimedia company For The Culture By the Culture. Tell us why you chose to launch the company and what's the driving force behind the company outside of just the creative aspect?

P. Frank Williams: I think for me as you can see from the press release, I've had a lot of experiences to work in like Black urban culture whether it be The Source or whatever but also white mainstream and I guess you can call it culture A&E, Hulu, LA Times. And I think that too often stories about people of color are not being told about people of color. So it's important for me that's why I call it "For the Culture by the Culture". Not just for the culture but people from the culture actually are telling the stories and we're doing it from an inside out perspective, meaning from inside the culture to the world. So I just want to empower young people of color whether it be Black, Latino, Asian, women and make sure they get an opportunity as a producer as a writer as a cameraman as an editor. There's no better feeling than me walking on an all Black set and a story and I'm doing a show with TV1 with Doug E. Fresh and a bunch of other people. Big Daddy Kane was there, Yo Yo, Anthony Hamilton who I was just shooting. And it was great a couple of them said, "Wow I can't believe you come showing up with an all black crew". There were a few white people but mostly brothers and sisters. I can tell you how much and how important that is. It's important for us to give ourselves opportunities and being a place where we can call those shots and give those opportunities because often we don't get them because other races unfortunately help themselves a lot more than they would help us. And so it's important for us to do the same.

**Validated:** What are some of the projects that are in the works that we can expect From For the Culture by the Culture that we can be on the lookout for?

P. Frank Williams: As I mentioned I do have a show on TV One hosted by Doug E. Fresh that's coming out later this year, a music collaboration show. I also have a Busta Rhymes documentary series which is going to be on Viacom and so that's good for my brother Bust and a bunch of different situations. A Tubi true crime series that I'm doing with Angela Yee and so just out here man slanging these TV shows trying to pay these bills at private school and keep it going.

**Validated:** I ask everybody this question because we all started with Hip-Hop. What does Hip-Hop mean to you?

P. Frank Williams: It's a good question. Hip-Hop is freedom. Hip-Hop is Black Joy. Hip-Hop is making something out of nothing. We created this whole global culture because nobody wanted us in the clubs. The punk rockers and us share that. The Disco era didn't make way for us. There were no programs for after school music. We started scratching, B-boying, taking power from a streetlamp to make it. So Hip-Hop is really making something out of nothing for young people of color and it's an expression of that whether it be B-boying, MCing, graffiti, or the DJ whatever it is. To me those pillars of Hip-Hop is why I keep doing it. I found liberation and a home in freedom in Hip-Hop and I think that is the global language of every culture. It's not a black thing anymore, it's a global thing. And so as long as Hip-Hop has been feeding me and helping me tell these stories I'm going to keep doing it. I'm going to keep doing it as I mentioned for the culture by the culture.

**Validated:** Where can everyone follow you on social media and for those creatives that want to reach out to you for an opportunity where can they reach you for that as well?

P. Frank Williams: Well I'm not medium Frank or small, a little baby or extra large. I'm just @PFrankWilliams on every platform. I don't have any aliases and nothing like that. I'm a street dude. I go straight from a real situation. So you can find me @PFrankWilliams on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook all of that. And that's if you want to reach out if you got any ideas for shows or different situations. Obviously I got legal representation. I don't take just unsolicited but of course I'm always reachable.

**Validated:** Alright sounds good.

P. Frank Williams: Man keep up the good work. A pleasure to speak with you. I'm honored and I appreciate you keeping the culture alive my brother.

**Validated:** Absolutely. Thank you and you keep keeping the culture alive as well.

P. Frank Williams: Peace and blessings.

asked about the project that got him notoriety. He expresses "The Calling Pt. 2" got him noticed in his hometown, "Season 2" established his buzz, "Unconscious State" was the first time he charted on billboard reaching #35 in the R&B/Hip Hop Charts, and "S.O.S" a reintroduction to the underground.

During his journey Jon credits his first managers Young Sav & Mateen Cleaves as they all worked diligently to create his buzz. Many artist learn quickly that the music industry is about more than music; as politics come into play often. When faced with the challenge of compromising his music, Jon stands firm with the things that connected his audience to him.

This brings us to 2024 with his latest album "III". The album displays concepts, social commentary, and motivational music. The lead song "Dreams" speaks on over coming hardships. "Worst Day Ever" & "Double Standard" are everyday topics that are relatable to the average listener. "Forever" & "Homecoming" take on serious topics while making it melodic and digestible. On "Paper Soldiers" Jon has the perfect feature for this topic Khujo Goodie from beloved group Goodie Mob. Throughout the album Connor also brings top tier lyricism.

When choosing production for this album his intent was a fluid and cohesive sound. For Connor feeling the music trumps which producer it is. Speaking on what helps his journey as an artist Jon states "My faith in God, walking in my purpose and just wanting to leave the world a little better than I found it."

Connor leaves the audience with words to live by stating: "To anyone reading this, don't give up. Stay focused. Never compromise your morals for a dollar. Jealousy is a waste of emotion. Stay consistent and true to yourself. Do everything with love, pure intentions and your life will be much more fulfilling."

ARTICLE DEME D | PHOTOGRAPHY LINDSEY AYOTTE

## MUSIC: THE REINTRODUCTION

### PUSHING THE CULTURE FORWARD AND ONE TO KEEP AN EYE ON

In recent years many advocates have voiced frustrations with Hip Hops mainstream music. Many feel it's become redundant, content driven, and talent has completely taken a back seat. However, artist like Flint, Michigan's Jon Connor are the complete opposite of what many have grown tired of.

You may be familiar with Connor from his 2014 XXL Freshman cover and signing with legendary producer Dr Dre. Although he's no longer signed to Aftermath Connor continues to put out quality work. Jon speaks of his Dad as his musical influence and growing up listening to him perform in different Bands. This would expose him to various genres of music such as Soul, Techno, and Alternative Rock.

His love for Hip Hop would start in 1997 with No Limit Records as one of the acts that made a heavy impression on him, he states "I loved how in those days "Rap Crews" were a thing". He also mentions Cash Money, Three 6 Mafia, Roc-A-Fella, and Ruff Ryders as some of his favorites.

Jon would start writing songs at age 10, but it would be in the early 2000's Connor would decide to take his craft more seriously. He'd start with getting his own recording set up, and a team to help build the brand. This would develop into All Varsity Music. Like many from his era his path starts with mixtapes.

He states "I feel like each project took me to a different level" when



# A PAGE IN

# THE TIME

INTERVIEW @KBTINDAL  
PHOTOGRAPHY @KERRIGAN\_PRODUCTION

*Page Kennedy*

**The Detroit, Michigan native talks “MacBeth in Compton”,  
“Straight Bars V” project, and 25 years of acting and rapping.**

Page Kennedy has been writing the pages of his life story for over 25 years in the creative space. He is a consummate MC and a Shakespearean trained actor. He represents Detroit to the fullest and he's a true artistic and creative soul that embodies every bar that he raps, and every character that he plays. He has been flipping through various pages of his life for years in two of the world's most competitive artistic sports. He started acting almost 25 years ago and he has amassed almost 100 acting credits including Weeds, The Shield, NYPD Blue, Barber Shop, Desperate Housewives, The Upshaws, Snowfall, The Meg and most recently Meg 2 the Trench just to name a few. His musical discography is 10 projects deep from 2017's Torn Pages, 2018's Same Page Different Story, 2021's Page, 2022's Front Pages, 2023's A Book of Pages, along with his Straight Bars mixtape series which now hosts five volumes. He's gone bar for bar with some of the best in the game like his fellow Detroit native Royce da 5'9", KXNG Crooked, Graff, The Game, Ransom, 3D Na'Tee, King Los, Elzhi, Fred The Godson, Jon Connor, ANoyd and Nick Grant. Page is on a mission to make you pay just as much attention to his music as you do to his acting, and even though he's 10 projects in, he's just getting started.





Validated: Was Hip-Hop the first love for you?

Page Kennedy: Michael Jackson was the first love for me. Michael Jackson and then honestly I feel like Michael Jackson and Hip-Hop probably came contemporary for me, like yeah I think they came around the same time, around like seven years old when I fell in love with both of them.

Validated: Okay. Yeah, I mean the same thing for me man. I was a big Jackson Five fan, a huge Michael Jackson fan. I may be a little bit older than you. And then after that Hip-Hop started to infiltrate my life. So yeah definitely kind of like the same thing for me. I'm a huge Michael Jackson fan.

Validated: I know your government name is Felton but where did the name Page come from?

Page Kennedy: It's funny cause Page is short for my nickname and my rap name in high school which was Rampage. So I used to go by Rampage in high school because I played football. When I was playing football I used to get into this mode. It was kind of like my Super Saiyan mode where I just black out and go crazy. It's kind of like what we would call today crashing out like when you get into that mind frame where you just gonna crash out and you just don't care and everything is just a crash out. So I would crash out. This is back when the movie "Candyman" was out and if you said Candyman a certain amount of times he will appear. That's how Rampage was. So I would have to say it three times Rampage-Rampage-Rampage I would go Super Saiyan mode and that's how I used to be in football.

I went through many iterations of my rap names. I started as Kid Ice and then I found out that that there was Fresh Kid Ice from 2 Live Crew. So I had to change it. So then I was a fan of MC Light so I changed it to Kid Light. And then I got a little bit older from that then I changed it to King Ice because I was a big fan of King T and King Sun and then Ice Cube and Ice T were super huge impacts for me during that time with West Coast Hip-Hop and so I combined those two and then I landed on King Ice. And so when I got to high school, and I had Rampage there was this dude named "Snipe" who was older than me and he was a street cat. Even though he was in high school he had already been to jail. He used to sell drugs, he used to do all this stuff. And I kind of used to look up to him because he was rapping differently than I was rapping. I still was kind of lowkey on like some kid shit. I wasn't really cussing. I was like 13. I was like a freshman in high school. I aint really cuss that much. The stuff that I was rapping about wasn't even like that but he was rapping about street shit. He had a song called "Running Child" and it was talking about being in Detroit and going from the East side to the West side and selling drugs and going to jail and shooting people all this shit that I would hear on the West Coast. But like not here in Detroit. So I would battle him and I would always get smoked. First of all he was probably like 16 and I was like 13 so like he was in a whole different part of his life than I was in the first place. So I would always lose to him because I was too soft. And so what I did was that Rampage character that I had for football when I got into the 10th grade I turned it into my rap name too. So then I had a dual personality. I had King Ice which was like my wholesome just bars kind of hip-hop raps. And then I had this other pseudo character that I created called Mr. Rampage. Actually it was just Rampage but then the Busta Rhymes dude from Filmmode Squad he was named Rampage. I was like damn I gotta change my shit again, so I changed it to King Ice. King Ice and Mr. Rampage and Mr. Rampage was just like my alter ego of the Super Saiyan. So I was just talking about shit that I saw and was around me. I wasn't living it but kind of like how Nas did when he was coming out and Kendrick talking about the stuff that is in the environment. So Mr. Rampage came out of that.

Now how Page came to pass is everyone in my school, teachers, principals everybody called me Rampage because I was on the football team and I'm Rampage to everybody and my mom. And the only person who didn't call me Rampage is my dad. My dad said he wasn't going to call me Rampage and my computer teacher. When I was in the 11th grade, I had a computer class. It's so funny because it's probably like 1993. They had big computers that couldn't even really do anything then. It was just like a step above a typewriter. And she told me "I'm not calling you Rampage. That sounds like a thug. I'll call you Page but I ain't calling you Rampage". And so she used to call me Page. Now when I graduated high school and I went to Grand Rapids Community College the first day I got there I was in my English class and the English teacher said, "Okay what do you guys want to be called?" And because I had just got there and I didn't want to be embarrassed in front of the whole class on my first day in college. I ain't want to say Rampage and have the teacher do what my computer teacher did, so I was like yeah just call me Page. And there it was born. That's a whole long story. I've never told that story in its entirety. You got the exclusive on that on The Essence.

Validated: That's an amazing story. That's what's up man. Definitely. I'm not gonna ask you to rap it but do you remember the first rap that you ever wrote and what was the context of it?

Page Kennedy: So my first rap was called "My Telephone". [Page raps the lyrics of a song that clearly sounds like it was inspired by LL Cool J's "Radio"]

Validated: That's what's up man. I hear elements of LL Cool J all up through that.

Page Kennedy: Hell yeah. Krush Groove was my favorite movie back then.

Validated: Definitely. When did you decide you wanted to be an MC not a rapper but an MC and then who was the catalyst to that? Like who did you study?

Page Kennedy: Well back then you were just rhyming and I've been rhyming like I told you since elementary school. I started rapping like around seven and I had that same rap for all of elementary school until I think maybe like the fifth grade. In the fifth grade I wrote my second rap. I was 10 years old in the 5th grade and that's when I wrote my second rap because all throughout those three years I would just do "My Telephone." It was so good I didn't have to do anything else but that. There was a commercial for this thing called My Buddy Dolls, and it was like "my buddy, my buddy". So I did a flip on that song and I was like a licentious little scamp at that time early on anyway. So I changed it to "My Dicky" and I would talk about my dick when I was 10 years old "My Dicky, My Dicky I take it everywhere I go. My Dicky, My Dicky, My Dicky and me." And so in elementary school like obviously all the little kids little boys they love that because they were watching the same commercial that I was and I just flipped my buddy to that. That was popular and so that was the second rap that I wrote when I was in the 10th grade.

There weren't many people to battle in elementary school because I was really the only rapper at that time in elementary school. But in middle school there were other rappers. I was 10. I went to middle school when I was 10. I started middle school at 10 because I had just moved. I had moved from my pops to my moms on another side of town and there were some other kids in that neighborhood that were rapping too. So we were rapping, freestyling, doing all of that shit. I was influenced heavily by Kurtis Blow then it went to Run-D.M.C. Then I was a huge fan of the Fat Boys because of Krush Groove. So that was like through middle school with Slick Rick, Kwamé and Kool Moe Dee, LL. Then that moved on to like high school

where I fell in love with NWA and Ice Cube became my favorite rapper for a long period of time. I was a fan of Ice Cube. So I fell in love with that West Coast gang culture even though NWA is not gang but it's just the West Coast 90s culture to me is my favorite time in history. It's my favorite zeitgeist.

Validated: I did a lot of listening to a lot of the projects that you have out. One that kept me entrenched was the first was Straight Bars 4 from 2021. You had "The Grand Finale" on there with KXNG Crooked, 3D Natee, The Game, Graft, Royce Da 5'9" and Locksmith. And you had "Made You Look" on Straight Bars from 2017 with Elzhi, Mickey Factz, King Los, Cassidy and KXNG Crooked.

You also had a song called "Hello" which was definitely a great way to intro a mixtape over Freeways "What We Do." You had a song called "Welcome to Detroit" over Cameron's "Welcome to New York City." and that was a vivid colorful descriptive portrayal about life growing up in the D. You left an example for kids to grow up looking at and to be inspired by. Who did you look up to as a kid when you were growing up?

Page Kennedy: Well obviously like we said before everything is always gonna start with Michael Jackson and that's even to this day. I live my life wanting to create indelible greatness and it comes from him. And then his teachings was poured into Kobe Bryant who is also my next hero with the Mamba Mentality. And he got it from Michael Jackson. Those two people were my heroes above everyone else. Kobe is like my favorite athlete of all time. Michael Jackson is my favorite human being born of all time. I looked up to them. When you think about the Hip-Hop space like I said Ice Cube meant so much to me. Obviously for the rapping stuff of course. I can say Ice Cube raps word for word. But also because him and Ice T were like the first rappers that went to be like real actors and I knew I wanted to do that too. They gave me the blueprint to say that it's possible for me to do this. Remember I'm still in Detroit when all of this is happening. I'm just having in my brain, in my mind, this is what I want to do. I know I want to be an actor. I know I want to be a rapper. I want to be like Ice Cube.

Validated: Now if you think about that same song, a lot of the things that you talked about in there are things that happen in the hood in general. How did you escape falling through some of those pitfalls? I know you don't drink. I know you don't smoke. That goes against the grain of a rapper period. Where did you get the mentality from to just say "I'm just not going to do that?" Was that also like the Mamba mentality? Was that also like a Michael Jackson thing or was that something else?

Page Kennedy: It was something else man. My mom was a functioning crackhead. My dad was a hedonist person as well. Me coming from the background that I came from, it was either two ways that you could go. Either you could embrace that background and become that, or you could be scared off by it and deterred from it and that's what I was. I've been through so much growing up as a kid. I saw so much death and destruction all around me and that made me scared. I was a scary kid. So I stayed away from all of that and then I hated seeing my mom when she was high. Because I would always know, like I said she wasn't like the crackheads that you see like in the movies. She was like a functioning addict. But I knew when she was high obviously. There was a certain smell that I hated. It was a certain way her eyes were when she looked at me and I hated it. And I remember her distinctly telling me "Do as I say not as I do". And I was so mad when she said that. I never want to tell my kids that. I never want to tell my kids that and so I'm gonna make a choice to not drink or not smoke for the rest of my life. And I'm never going to give them an opportunity to say, "Well you did it when you were



young". I'm just going to refrain from it and I'm going to tell them that it's possible to grow up immersed in it and choose not to do it if you want to. I see how deleterious it is when you abuse drugs and alcohol. Also I was playing football and I didn't want to contaminate my body.

So I made a pact with myself and I vowed to never do it and hope to create generations of Kennedy's that would be completely sober. And I thought that I would have a better state with them if I were to tell them that this is a choice that I made for us. I want to have this thing that I don't know if very many families have. And I've been successful so far. My two oldest kids don't drink, they don't smoke, they don't do drugs and they don't do any of that. I have two younger ones. I got a 11 and 12 year old. I've instilled the same thing in them and hopefully they take that admonishment and want to be a part of this thing that I'm creating and they want to do it for their kids too. So, then you have multiple generations of Kennedys that have been completely sober. I haven't seen families like that before and I wanted to create one.

**Validated: I commend you on doing that early and sticking to that and passing that down to your kids. That's super commendable, man. Absolutely.**

Page Kennedy: Appreciate that.

**Validated: You did a song called "No Offense", over Onyx's "Last Dayz" which is one of Onyx's hardest beats and on that song you said that you've been hot since you were on tour with Biggie. Explain that time in your career opening up for B.I.G. opening up for Ice Cube. I mean not a lot of people can't say they actually got to chop it up with Big much less shared the stage with Big even from our generation. So tell me what that was like and tell me what you learned from that time that you still carry with you today.**

Page Kennedy: So that was an amazing time for me. I was in college during that time. So Big never had an actual like full on tour so he would just do spot dates here and there. And so I would be his opening act during all of his stops in Michigan. So, for me that time was great because we had amazing people that were like on that run on that tour with them like Yuckmouth and the Luniz, I connected with them. It's funny, one of my best stories that I had is I actually battled Yuckmouth in Biggie's room. Everybody was there. A lot of the people from Bad Boy were there. Lil' Cease, Numskull they all were there. And it was just me and Yuckmouth going back and forth for like 45 minutes. They recorded. That was a dope time. I was young. I was impressionable and it was a fun time being around there and having him do practical jokes on me. We had a good time and Big thought that I was a dope MC and he shared that.

**Validated: Book of Pages released in 2023 it has several joints on it. Some of my favorites are "Practice," "Change," "God's Grace," "Why You Hating" featuring John Connor and "I Know" featuring King Los and KXNG Crooked and of course "I'm On One" featuring my guy ANoyd and Nick Grant. And you even got the legendary Ice T on "Phenomenon." But the track that I want to talk about is "Fly High". On there you said that "being a rapper is a hazardous occupation." You even talked about Black on Black crime. Now I have my theory of why I think being a rapper is a hazardous occupation but I want to know what your idea of that is and why you feel that way. And then on top of that I want to know what you do outside of music and outside of acting and music to push the narrative that we don't have to kill each other or that kids don't have to fall victims to the things that they see growing up in the hood.**

Page Kennedy: First of all thank you for that illustration of the songs that stood out to you. Those

songs stand out to me as well, so it's good to hear what songs stand out to people on the project. So that's dope for sure. I think that rap is a hazardous occupation because I have another occupation and I don't see that happen with them. I don't see athletes killing each other. I don't see doctors killing each other. I don't see any other occupation in the world where they murder each other at all, not less at the rate in which we do. It's scary because it's almost like if you choose this occupation then you choose it at your own peril.

Now I do think that a lot of it could be the energy that you present. I definitely believe that there's certain rappers that you don't imagine or you wouldn't imagine hearing them in any type of confrontation or beef like that. You don't think Common would be shot or Chance The Rapper or Childish Gambino. There are certain people who carry a certain energy that doesn't bring on that negative energy. But then you have other rappers who might come from a certain place and they want to keep that same energy. Or you may have rappers who just feel like the people want to hear about that. And so they bring that type of energy with them. The type of music that they make is that way. So they walk around with that type of energy and it welcome it. So for me because I'm not that way like I don't want that energy. I don't want to give off beef type energy or tough guy shit. I just see all of our young kings. Can you imagine what Big and Pac would have been today? Who knows? They could have been into politics. I imagine that Tupac would have been Will Smith. I feel like he's more talented (no offense). I feel like he's more talented and he was just a baby. He didn't even get an opportunity to see how talented he really was. So Tupac could have very easily been-- it is inconceivable of what he possibly could have been. Biggie only had two albums. Imagine albums of Big and what he would have turned into. So it just makes me despondent to think about how we just murder each other. Then we have the audacity to want to fight and shout out so loud about when other people take our lives but yet we take our lives at a higher rate than anything else.

That might be taboo to say but I wanted to speak on it.

**Validated: It's the truth though. It's the absolute truth and sometimes the truth is hard to hear. What do you do outside of acting and music to push that narrative that we don't have to go that way? When I say that, I mean like any kind of nonprofits or how do you give back to the community? How do you get that message to the kids without being preachy or pushy about it?**

Page Kennedy: I mean my message is just like the way that I walk through life. People know me to be a lover of human beings and a dad. I'm a dad first and I and I care about love and energy and building kings. So it's just me and how I walk through life is like the biggest harbinger that I can be for the community at this time.

**Validated: Your latest release Straight Bars V is fire man so anybody that says Page Kennedy can't fucking rap man go fuck yourself bro.**

Page Kennedy: They bugging son. They bugging son. (Laughs)

**Validated: For real son. No doubt. You got joints on there like "Come On Baby," "Over My Limit," of course you bodied the DJ Khaled joint, "God Did" on "Page Did," and "8 AM In Thailand" which is a super deep track. I want to know if you felt some karma that was directly related to the way that you may have dealt with women in the past or using the "truth serum" as you so call it in that song. What lessons have you learned from that?**

Page Kennedy: I mean, listen bro four kids, four baby mamas and they're all crazy. Obviously the crazy ones

**Biggie only had two albums. Imagine albums of Big and what he would have turned into.**

had to end up pregnant and some of them I used condoms with and they still ended up pregnant like that was my karma. That was my serendipitous karma because now I have four beautiful children that I love even though you have your issues or whatever with their moms. I was never like with their moms, like it's just something that like one-offs that happened. I don't even know their moms like that. It's not like I was in a relationship with them. You deal with them for as long as you have to deal with them until they get old enough where you don't have to deal with them at all and you only deal with your kids. I call them "My best mistakes I've ever made."

**Validated: There you go.**

Page Kennedy: Listen man that that was one of my huge proclivities is women. I didn't drink. I didn't smoke. I didn't do drugs. One of the things that I indulged in is that I love women. So yes stuff comes in dealing with that. When you are in that lifestyle and it comes with that. But I always try to minimize my potential damage. So me being honest with women I think does that because a lot of times men in mendacity to get what they want to achieve that is to their own detriment because a lot of times these girls won't even go crazy on you if you don't lie to them if you don't lure them, you don't gas them and make them think that it's something that is not when you already know that it's not, just to try and get achieve efficacy that you're reaching for. I don't do that. I'm very upfront and honest of what it is and if you are cool with that then we Gucci if not then all right.

**Validated: No doubt. I know we've talked about it already a couple of times. You're a huge fan of Michael Jackson. You even shouted him out on "8 AM In Thailand." Did you ever see him in concert before he passed away?**

Page Kennedy: Unfortunately I didn't. I never met Michael Jackson. I have a good relationship with his children and with his nieces and nephews now. It was amazing to know that during my vine days I was helpful and instrumental in helping one of his children through that time of losing him and with videos. So that was pretty dope. So to be able to feel like I'm able to touch him tangentially that meant everything to me. But honestly I'm kind of okay with the fact that I never met him because the fact that I never met him means he remains a mythical figure. He remains Godlike to me. Sometimes when you meet people that you feel like that way for they could never like actually reach whatever you have made for them in your head of what they are. Because in reality they're just human beings but I don't look at him as a human being. He's like something else to me. And I get to keep that with me forever now. He never had an opportunity to dissuade my view of him.



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What if I caught him on a bad day. What if I caught him during the time? What if he didn't know me? Now I would imagine that he maybe would have known me. I've been pretty ubiquitous in the world of film and television for almost 25 years. So, I imagine that it's possible that he could know me but like what if he didn't and then he just kind of-- because there's a different energy when you meet a celebrity and they know you or they are a fan than they just looking at you like a fan or a regular person like you'll get the regular normal thing. But if they see you and it's gonna be affable. They're gonna smile. You're gonna feel like all right this feels like something that is familiar. I would have been sad if he would have gave me the resting bitch face. So I'm glad.

**Validated: "Soul Food Music." You talk about leaving a legacy, generational wealth to your kids and your grand-kids. What are some of the words and lessons that you pass on to them about how to keep that legacy strong after you're gone?**

Page Kennedy: Well I do a lot of things by example. I show my children by example. I feel like that is the strongest tool that you have to indoctrinate anyone is to let them see it from you. Let them see how it's done more so than just words. Words can be just anything. They could be cast aside but actions are something that have a huge impact. So that's what I do. They see how I operate. They see how I am as a dad. They see my patience. They see my forbearance. They see my passion and they see how hard I fight.

So like just the other day man, this was a great moment for me because I've been rapping for so long. I've been rapping longer than the people that are on the internet that are commenting have been alive. I never had an opportunity to get that big break. Even though I had legends on my projects, like I still never got like the vast amount of the work to really know like if you know you know, but possible that you don't know. So just as of late when these freestyles have been starting to be disseminated-- and what's crazy is the "Victory is Mine." I dropped that in 2017. And no one cared. There's a video for it. The video probably got 4000 views or something. I knew that this destroyed everything. You don't touch that beat bro unless you're going do what I did on that beat. Otherwise you leave it alone. I knew that was one of my favorite songs of mine of all time and no one ever checks for it. Nobody ever asked me about it. Nobody seen it. No one heard it. And I'm just like "Damn man." And then I do that and now all of a sudden "Oh my god." Listen bro better late than never right.

There's this big YouTuber guy named No Life Shaq who did a reaction video to that and I watched it with my girl and with both my sons. We all watched it together. And I just felt so elated because I was watching someone react to me the way that I react to me. The way that I feel like people should react when they listen to me. I was watching that so it made me not feel like I'm crazy for feeling the way that I feel as an actor. Because clearly other people can feel like that too if they hear me. And to watch my oldest son see someone else think I'm cool, because he's 25 and he doesn't think I'm cool. I'm like competition to him. He knows he's next. He is the prince. So his mindset is like I need to be great to continue this legacy. I don't make the type of music that he likes. Even in my acting sometimes it's not like his favorite thing. He's a whole different generation than me. I feel like there's a different relationship between me and him, then how I would imagine Bronnie and LeBron relationship is or even Will Smith and Jaden. Even though I don't really know what their relationship is. Maybe they like "Nigga I don't care" too but I doubt it.

I want to impress my son. My 12 year old son just loves me and he adores me. I'm his hero. So he was smiling from ear to ear the whole time like me. When my son sees another young person like him giving me

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love like that, that made me feel so good. To watch my girl, she's so happy because she sees how happy I am because I feel relieved for so long. Bro I feel like I'm the best actor rapper in the world. I feel like diversity, probably not physically or popularity wise. But as far as diversity of skill, as far as everything that I do within both art forms I feel like nobody does that better than me. Nobody can do drama, comedy, Shakespeare, do Straight Bars type songs, vibe songs, socially conscious songs, storytelling. Like all of the things that I am far as the whole diversity of who I am I feel like I'm the best.

It feels like Blasphemous to me to say that because then people just want to start saying these names, these names that you look at as greats and legends that are so rich and who've done so much and accomplished so much in the world. But I'm talking about right now, in this moment, when it comes to doing them both at the same time in the way that I do it, I feel like nobody is better than me. To see that that is finally starting to be disseminated means everything to me.

**Validated:** Absolutely. I completely agree. You can put people on a pedestal based on what they've done for the culture and that's cool. I'm not knocking that at all, what I mean but somebody that's doing both in both genres that's very hard to do. It's very-very hard to do and to do it at a high level and where you're doing it is even harder. So the fact that people are finally coming around to like that 2017 freestyle, what's old to you is new to somebody else. So the fact that it's finally coming full circle for you that's a great thing. And the fact that you got to experience that with your family is priceless. Absolutely.

Page Kennedy: Yes indeed.

**Validated:** Can you tell me a little bit about what the journey was like from the time that you decided to study theater at Western Michigan University and what happened afterward when you decided to go further and attend The Graduate Theater program at the University of Delaware? Tell me about those experiences a little bit.

Page Kennedy: Well my dad was a very big part of my life. I don't think that he did things in an appropriate way of raising me but it worked. And to me results matter the most. So it's not necessarily how this cake was made but if this cake is made and you're tasting this delicious cake then we are good. But he definitely put some ingredients in there that shouldn't have been in there. But I wanted to commemorate him by getting my education and then I wanted to be great. I told you Michael Jackson made me want to be great, not good, not serviceable, not rank and file but great. I knew that the great actors came from the theater. And I knew that I loved Shakespeare and classical theater. And I wanted to be as prepared as possible when I came to LA because I knew that that was the final destination. So I tried to continue my education and just get better so that I was equipped when I got here. And circumstances just aligned where I decided to leave school early and come to California. And the acting just happened immediately. I snuck into an audition and got the part and that's what started my journey off as an actor. And that was paying the bills because at this time unless you had a record deal you couldn't get heard.

Bro I got albums since I was in Middle School, High School, College. There's people in the world that got tapes from me from when I sound like a chipmunk probably. But if you didn't have a record deal then the only thing you could do is pass them out to your friends and your family and whatever until the internet came and it allowed you to be able to spread your projects around the world through that. So that basically was the process of me going from Western Michigan University. I went to Grand Rapids

Community College. Then I went to Western Michigan University and then I went to University of Delaware for graduate school because I wanted to be better. I wanted to be great when I got to Los Angeles.

**Validated:** We talked about early memories and stuff like that but I want to know what is your earliest memory of Hip-Hop? What was the first thing that you saw that made you say, "Oh I want to be a part of this culture?"

Page Kennedy: I don't know if I definitely have an exact first moment but I do have a first period that I can remember just on my own. And it's just my brother who was 10 years older than me letting me hear either "Rapper's Delight" or I'm pretty sure that that probably was it. But Kurtis Blow was the first rapper I remember acknowledging his person, his name, who he was. Kurtis Blow was the first one. So that is what I remember first is hearing and seeing Kurtis Blow seeing my brother become a part of the hip-hop culture far as like he used to wear Lee jeans. And then if he had little lint on them I used to see him like picking a lint off of his jeans. So it's like so crisp with crease in them. I remember like the shoes he would wear. I remember him like wearing tracksuits like Adidas tracksuits and stuff. And so I just remember that part of the time. And I remember the graffiti and the dance and us putting card boards out on the ground and break dancing. And I remember Electric Boogaloo, a movie that I was so enamored by because I wanted to be like Turbo so bad because his girlfriend was so cute and she didn't even speak English. And he could walk on the ceiling. As a kid that's like a superhero to me. And he was brown skinned so I'm like dang I want to be that.

**Validated:** Who is the one artist or producer that actually makes you want to step your pen game up even more when you're in the studio with them?

Page Kennedy: Well not in the studio with them. But I realized that I have a certain BPM that I love so much. This one producer who did all of some of my favorite beats to rap on, on Straight Bars wise and it's Just Blaze. I realized that I use so many Just Blaze beats and I blazed all of them every single time. He's like a producer that I would love to have an opportunity to work with because with the Straight Bars stuff I feel like I probably use more beats from him than anybody else.

**Validated:** Who do you want to work with acting wise that you haven't worked with yet?

Page Kennedy: Denzel Washington.

**Validated:** Of course.

Page Kennedy: Of course right. I want to work with Denzel Washington. I would love to work with Viola Davis and Meryl Streep.

**Validated:** Okay. That's what's up man. Great people as far as that acting sphere is concerned. Absolutely.

Page Kennedy: I'm going to put you on the spot here but just because I want to know and I implore you to be candid in this answer because it's all good. I just would like to know. What is your initial response when you hear me obviate about me being the best rapper/actor right now? What does your brain initially think when you hear that? And not just because you are talking to me right now but it is like "Ah he bugging" and then some names come to things at head and then you have reasons of why you feel that way. The reason I'm asking this is because I'm trying to see if I'm tripping. And if I am, I would like to speak to somebody who is able to express himself in a cogent fashion to make me understand why. When you hear the initial thing and people initially they just immediately say, "What Pac, Will Smith?" They

just start rattling off but then when I go into being specific with them and I go into explaining like my skill set versus them, and the whole thing then they have to like reconsider that. I'm curious to see for your own personal opinion what do you think when I say that?

**Validated:** First of all I think you have every right to say it. Second of all, I believe it. And the reason I say that is because I can pull up Pac and say if Pac was still here I think Pac would have probably won an Oscar by now. I think Pac would have had Grammy winning albums etc. Will Smith is great. I was never really a fan of Will Smith as a rapper. I've always been entrenched in more bars, things that are more hardcore that's just my era, that's how I grew up and that's what I am attracted to. I can even put Ludacris in that conversation and say Ludacris is a great actor but Ludacris is also a great MC as well. Your dialect and your word play is different from all of those other dudes. Like the words that you use some people gotta look them shifts up in the dictionary and be like "Yo what the fuck is he talking about? But the way that you incorporate it lyrically into songs nobody else is doing that. I watched an interview with you with Big Boy and I forget what the fucking word was. (Obsequious was the word) But you said some shit and I was like even know what the fuck that shit is.

Page Kennedy: I probably said in this interview that you was like I don't know what the fuck that is.

**Validated:** No, you said a couple. When I go back and edit this I'm gonna be like "Okay, let me double down on that and look that one up." But that's the beauty of it though. That's the beauty of it right? That's the beauty of you as an individual and as an MC right? I feel like you are one of the best that's doing both at this point at this time right here right now in 2024. You're one of the best that is doing rapping and acting. I want to see you gain more accolades for both. 25 years in the game, I want to see you get in a movie that's Oscar nominated. I want to see you reach that plateau. I want to see you take that Shakespearean taught acting that you have in you and move it to an even higher level on the big screen. And then as far as the music is concerned I want to see you put out a project that resonates with people. That resonates with more than just your immediate core fan base of people that love lyricism. I want to see you be able to put something out that does that. And that gets you bigger accolades for being an MC, not a rapper but an MC.

Page Kennedy: In this climate of me being a man of a certain age, I don't necessarily make music that my 25 year old would like. That is the demographic of people that are pushing the big thing forward.

How do I resonate with the masses when I come from the Golden Era and I give off the energy of that type of rapping? Even though my Straight Bars series sounds nothing like my albums. My albums are completely different where I do have melodic songs and songs that are just aesthetically pleasing to the ear. I'm still not necessarily catering to that other audience. So I'm curious how one even does that?

**Validated:** I don't think you have to cater to the audience. Of course I think you just keep doing what you're doing. Killer Mike is a perfect example of that. Killer Mike did not cater to today's sound of music and he walked away and swept the fucking Grammys. The people just happened to be listening at the right time and he dropped the project at the right time and he got a lot of popular people that got behind it and was like "Yo this is that shit. The Academy happened to listen.

I think Jay said it perfectly when he said, "They don't always get it right too" because they don't but there are times when they do. I think that's a testament to just being an artist staying in your wheelhouse and



doing what feels right to you on the music. The worst thing you could ever do is try to make music that goes to a certain genre or a certain age. That's the worst thing you could ever fucking do. That'll get you more foul comments than anything else. Keep doing exactly what you're doing and at some point I feel like it'll resonate with people other than just us.

Page Kennedy: That was a two-part question. The second part of that is: If you had to for your own personal opinion not like whatever the accolades have been but for your own personal opinion. If you put me compared to whoever you think the best actor is in the world, whoever that is for you and then you put me next to the best rapper in the world, whoever you think that is which do you think I'm closer to meaning which one do you think I'm better at for you personally?

Validated: That's a tough fucking question.

Page Kennedy: I know that's why I asked you. I helped you by saying if you take whoever the top actor is for you and you put me next to them am I closer to them or am I closer to whoever you think the top best rapper is? I feel like that can help you see which one you look at me better as.

Validated: I think you're closer to the top actor that I would choose, which would be Denzel.

Page Kennedy: That's your favorite actor?

Validated: Yes. That's my favorite actor. He's my favorite. Jeffrey Wright is another one of my favorites.

Page Kennedy: Oh.

Validated: Yes. There's a few others but Denzel is the cream of the crop. As far as MCs are concerned Jay-Z is my favorite but Rakim is my all-time favorite.

Page Kennedy: Oh wow.

Validated: And prior to Rakim it would be Grandmaster Caz from the Cold Crush Brothers. So those three guys are like my Elite MC's. But I would put you closer to Denzel than I would to Jay-Z.

Page Kennedy: Got it. Okay. That makes sense. Well thank you for answering those tough questions.

Validated: Absolutely.

Page Kennedy: I just like to hear perspectives and see how what I do is being disseminated to the world and the public and so I appreciate that.

Validated: Absolutely.

Page Kennedy: Go ahead, ask your last question.

Validated: Two more questions. What does acting mean to you?

Page Kennedy: Acting to me is an expression of emotions that you don't necessarily get to live through in your real life. So, I'm able to emote and live through characters' stories, feelings that I might not necessarily have in my real life. Now I think that is so important because I'm such a balanced human being. I don't get too high. I don't get too low. I try to stay balanced and tranquil. Sometimes it's fun to express myself as a villain. Sometimes it's fun to express myself in different facets and ways that might not be completely natural to me. I enjoy doing that. I feel like it makes me a more rounded person.

Validated: Actually. Two more questions because that answer just spawned another question. What has been the hardest role for you to prepare for and what has been the hardest song for you to write?

Page Kennedy: The song- there's two songs shit-- there's actually three songs that were the hardest songs for me to write? One song was called "Letter" which I'm pretty sure you never even heard of before but it's a song that I did with Elzhi. There's a video for it on YouTube it's called "Letter," and it was me writing a letter to my two kids that I had. The ones that are older now. But they were like little when I was writing this letter. It was me being in college a young kid not wanting to have kids trying to figure out my way not knowing how to be a dad, not wanting to have been a dad and just trying to figure the shit all out like in real time when I have all these hopes and dreams of what I wanted to do in my life. And now this is somewhat being derailed by this hurdle that came there, how I'm trying to work through it. And then writing them this letter being completely honest of how it happened, how it occurred, where they came from, how they appeared. And then me and my emotions and feelings behind it. And then that second verse.

That second verse that I had I remember specifically writing that verse I was driving from Detroit in a blizzard snowstorm to Grand Rapids which is like I always went from Detroit to Grand Rapids to Kalamazoo because I went to Grand Rapids Community College and I went to Western Michigan University. So I was constantly doing that triangle all the time. And I remember being in snowstorm leaving even from my son Tim. And he probably was like two or three or something and he was just so scared of me. When I would come there he would just run behind his mom's leg and hide from me. And that really like broke my heart. I remember writing that rap while I'm driving because I didn't write. I used to just make the rap in my head and say it out loud, that's how I would learn it. I remember I was just balling, crying. And then I realized like I was also crying because even though it was hard for me to do, it was so effortless for me to create because I had just experienced him doing this to me. And I just felt so grateful that God was just letting the words just pour out in the imagery of what was actually happening. It was just flowing out of me. And you know me, I don't just say stuff like one way. My stuff is like layered. Like how I paint my pictures is like Shakespeare. They need to be layered into intricate writing. I'm such a huge fan of Shakespeare. I'm painting this picture but it's still barred up. I remember making that and then getting to my daughter's part and like remembering how she was with me and treating me and how she didn't want to be around me or bothered by me because she was just a baby. Here this strange man is coming. So that song was hard. The "Page Did" song was like actually writing hard for me. Man I'm not going to lie it took me like two months to write that rap.

Validated: You bodied that shit though.

Page Kennedy: Listen to me. I almost gave up on that rap so many times because I just didn't think it was good enough. I was like I was struggling. Because I knew how important that song is and what Jay-Z did to it and I tried to tell my story and I just felt like I don't like it. I don't like it's not good enough. I don't like my word play, it's like I was struggling. It took me two months to make that damn song bro. And then when I did it I still was like damn it's not good. It's not good. It wasn't until it was fully done with everything applied to it that I was like "Oh shit. Oh shit." It took me that long and then obviously the last hardest song which is actually probably one of my favorite songs that I've done, it's in my top five for sure is "Giving Up." "Giving Up" is the last song on the Book of Pages album and it's me talking about the whole like releasing of the album. And "Giving Up" wasn't a part of the album. I allowed like my Pagers to be able to buy the album from me personally before I put it out on streaming platforms and like nobody was buying it.

The despondency of having a listening party and I was the only party listening was very difficult for me.

And I talked to Elzhi, and I was giving him my passion of like how frustrated I was in my life because I spent \$100,000 on this album of my acting money and I put this shit out and nobody cares. And then this punk ass strike came and it came right before my fucking movie. I'm thinking that this movie is about to turn me into a movie star. I'm like all right, I'm in a franchise. I get to kick ass in this movie and everybody says that I'm testing the highest in this movie and it's about to change my life and everything's about to be up and how many actors actually get to be in a summer blockbuster franchise movie. And I got all this shit going and then right before my fucking movie comes out the strike happens. And I can't promote my shit. I got a song in the movie and they wanted to fly me to China to perform it at the national Chinese Theater and I've never performed at a big ass amphitheater like that. They were gonna have dancers. They were gonna have like a big huge thing. I was on a whole China tour just flying around the world promoting my movie and all of that. And I've been waiting for that all damn year and then right before the movie comes out we go strike and I can't say shit. And it just destroyed me bro, it just destroyed me. I was so angry. I was apoplectic with rage and the only thing that I could do is like immerse myself into the actual art form of what we were doing and get my ass out on those picket lines and walk for the cause even though I was so mad that we went on strike right before my fucking movie. So I wrote a song about it and I poured all of that passion into that "Giving Up" song. And it's performed well. That's an attribute that I have that other rappers don't have. I'm an actor and so I know how to make something be gradual and I know how to make it crescendo slowly to make you feel some kind of way. So those are the three hardest ones.

Validated: Last question man Hip-Hop turned 50 years old last year. We've been part of this culture pretty much since day one, outside of maybe a few years. In the spirit of Hip-Hop turning 50 man what does Hip-Hop mean to you?

Page Kennedy: Man Hip-Hop means to me my life, my lifestyle, my makeup. Everything that I walk through in life is from the way I dress, from the way that I talk, from the way that I feel. I feel like I am Hip-Hop. I feel like that's who I am. That's who I am in my core and I love it and I appreciate it. I'm right now currently working on a project where I conjugate Hip-Hop culture with Shakespeare in order to try and bring Shakespeare to a new younger broader audience that was either intimidated by it or didn't care about it because its stories are still relevant. I am going to use his words in a story that young people actually know about or care about. I'll use it through the conduit of Shakespeare's text. And hopefully that's something that I could be known for bringing back to a broader audience. So it's Shakespeare and the first thing is Macbeth In Compton.

Validated: Macbeth In Compton okay. That sounds like something. All right. I'm looking forward to it. Absolutely.

Page Kennedy: Imagine Snowfall meeting Shakespeare's Macbeth and that's what it is.

Validated: Page man thank you so much for taking the time out man to join me man. It's truly been a pleasure to kind of pick your brain and just just hear your truth. I commend you on the things that you're doing, keep doing exactly what you're doing. Don't change shit for nobody. Just keep doing exactly what you're doing man. As far as being an MC they will listen they will listen you just keep banging them in the fucking head and they gonna listen bro.

Page Kennedy: That's what's up man. Hey, I appreciate you. It's been a very fun interview. I really enjoyed it.

The name "Debanaire" written in a stylized, red, cursive script.

ARTICLE @DEMEDAMAN

**MUSIC: ALCHEMY****NEW ALBUM "ALCHEMY" FT  
TERMANOLOGY AND OUN P**

Over the years many listeners have felt that lyricism has declined in Hip Hop. However Brooklyn MC Debanaire is an artist that is carrying the Torch. Growing up in Fort Greene he chose the name Debanaire to describe his confidence, charm, and sophistication.

His journey begins as a fan of music and Hip Hop. He'd grow a passion for it that led to him freestyling his own lyrics. The positive reaction from friends and family would inspire him to pursue it seriously. Artist like The Lox and Jay Z set the mark for the self proclaimed Bar-Barian.

His first Project "The Wicked Pen" is a well thought out mixture of concepts, lyrics and captivating hooks.

While it's important to him to show he is an elite MC he also prides himself on his song making, and ability to be relatable. He isn't putting his craft in a box or playing it safe.

Debanaire understands that relationships in the industry, being reliable, and networking contribute to his progress. These attributes along with music have always been important but even more so in today's industry. He has also made sure to travel outside of NYC performing in California, Texas, and Massachusetts.

Combining his talent, drive and persistence he was able to connect with label "Pure Artist Music". He'll be releasing his new album "Alchemy" dropping in March, that will feature rap veterans Termanology and Oun P. He's definitely a MC pushing the culture forward and one to keep an eye on.



## **NEW MUSIC:** TRUMPETS

### **DJ MUGGS AND MOOCH FROM DA CLOTH UNVEIL ELECTRIFYING MUSIC VIDEO FOR “TRUMPETS” FROM UPCOMING JOINT ALBUM**

**JOURNALIST JOHN SABBIA**

In the realm of hip-hop, collaborations between legendary producers and talented lyricists often result in a harmonious fusion of beats and rhymes that captivate audiences worldwide. The latest collaborative effort comes from DJ Muggs of The Soul Assassins and Mooch, representing Rochester, New York, and the Da Cloth music collective. Their new single, “Trumpets,” not only showcases their individual prowess but also gives fans a taste of what’s to come on their highly anticipated joint album set to release on

March 29th, presented by Soul Assassin Records.

“Trumpets” serves as the lead single from the upcoming album ‘Rock Star’, offering listeners a glimpse into the dynamic chemistry between DJ Muggs and Mooch. The track is a masterful blend of Muggs’ signature production style and Mooch’s gritty, introspective lyricism. The beats are laced with haunting melodies, creating an atmospheric backdrop that complements Mooch’s sharp and evocative verses.

Accompanying the single is an electrifying music video that visually amplifies the intensity of “Trumpets.” Directed by a visionary team, the video captures the essence of the track through its cinematic visuals and dynamic editing. From the dimly lit streets of Rochester to the pulsating lights of the recording studio, the video provides a visual journey that mirrors the raw energy and authenticity embedded in the music.

The narrative of the video weaves seamlessly with the lyrics, offering viewers a glimpse into Mooch’s world and the struggles depicted in his rhymes. The incorporation of DJ Muggs in the video adds an extra layer of depth, showcasing the collaborative spirit and unity that defines their creative process.





Superior's signature blend of soulful melodies and hard-hitting drums, creates an immersive sonic experience that keeps listeners hooked from start to finish.

Accompanying the single is a visually stunning music video that serves as a love letter to Buffalo. Directed by a visionary team, the "SkyScrapers" music video captures the energy and vibrancy of the city. From sweeping shots of iconic landmarks to intimate glimpses of everyday life, the video seamlessly weaves together the narrative of the song with the spirit of Buffalo.

Jae Skeese's on-screen charisma adds another layer to the visual storytelling, as he navigates through the city streets with confidence and authenticity. The video not only showcases the talent of the rapper but also provides a glimpse into the collaborative synergy between Jae Skeese and Superior.

"SkyScrapers" is more than just a music video and single; it's a statement from Buffalo's dynamic duo, Jae Skeese and Superior. As they continue to soar to new heights individually, their collaboration on this track exemplifies the power of synergy between a skilled rapper and a visionary producer. With "SkyScrapers," these Buffalo talents have not only delivered a captivating musical experience but have also placed their city on the map as a burgeoning hub for innovative hip-hop.

## **NEW MUSIC:** SKYSCRAPERS

### BUFFALO RAPPER JAE SKEESE AND SUPER PRODUCER SUPERIOR UNVEIL "SKYSCRAPERS" MUSIC VIDEO AND SINGLE

**JOURNALIST JOHN SABBIA**

"SkyScrapers" is more than just a song; it's an auditory journey that takes listeners through the streets of Buffalo, encapsulating the essence of the city's resilience and ambition. The track's title itself suggests reaching new heights and breaking barriers, a theme that permeates the lyrics and beats.

Jae Skeese's razor-sharp lyricism and distinctive flow perfectly complement Superior's production style. The beat, marked by

# NERD TURNT RAPPER

## JULES

INTERVIEW BARSQUIAT

**Lakeland, Florida's self proclaimed "Nerd Turnt Rapper" Jules talks charting on iTunes Top 50 Hip Hop Albums as an independent artist, praise from Sway, and recent EP "Ghost Stories 2".**

Ever since 2 Live Crew and others, Hip Hip and Miami have always had an interesting relationship. Because of Miami's lavish lifestyle, beautiful women, and scenery, we've become accustomed to the music being the backdrop to that lifestyle. Fast forward, Trick Daddy changed that perspective with hit song, "Ima Thug". This gave the city of Miami a look into the other side and exposed the world to Miami's dualities like seeing a car stripped down to the brake pads next to a palm tree. Then, Rick Ross emerged blending both worlds by musically embodying the rise to the top ideology. It would appear that musically, Miami covered all the perspectives, but there's one more musical angle that has not been fully expressed, the human experience. The person that has no aspirations of becoming Tony Montana. This is the perfect time for an artist like Jules. His perspective isn't confined to the lavish lifestyle, but the human experience who has witnessed it all with a birds eye view.





**I've never been the guy to try and show off anything material to people. That's just not really in my character. I've always carried a more low-key personality so I don't get too much into making a big spectacle of myself. My mom also instilled humility into me and my siblings when we were kids. So for me, showing talent is all I really know. Besides, material things come and go. That's forever changing. But showcasing true talent is foundational and can stand the test of time.**



**VALIDATED:** Being from Lakeland, Florida, what's your earliest memory of Hip Hop culture?

**JULES:** I can remember being a little kid and spending hours in front of the TV watching Video Soul with Donnie Simpson on BET. I used to be so drawn in to the music and visuals. Seeing videos like Straight Outta Compton or Dead Presidents II for the first time and being in a trance from the aggression of N.W.A. or Jay-Z's wordplay was so influential. I knew then that Hip Hop culture was something special.

**VALIDATED:** You played basketball on the collegiate level, but at what point did you decide to pursue music over hooping?

**JULES:** Well, to be honest, I was a little burnt out with basketball. I had a rocky senior year, with our school underachieving in many ways and me personally not playing at my best. I just needed to part ways with the game. After playing a little bit of semi-pro ball, I just decided to revert back to my first love which was music. I had been working on music during my years in college so I already had a foot in the door. It was just time for me to really go for it.

**VALIDATED:** You consider yourself "the nerd turnt rapper", please elaborate.

**JULES:** I'm definitely a true nerd at heart. I've always been. Growing up, I was never the cool kid or the most popular. I was really into reading comic books and film, to the point where I was trying to draw my own comic books and writing my own movie scripts. These are things that I'm still into today. But as I got older and started playing ball, I got welcomed to a new crowd. And when I started doing music, that opened another crowd. But at my core, I'm still the same kid that enjoys comic books.

**VALIDATED:** What was it that drew you to rapping initially, and how did that lead to you later producing as well?

**JULES:** I've always been somewhat of a creative person for most of my life. Like I was mentioning before, I was trying to create my own movies and comic book series when I was like 10 or 11 years old. So I had that mindset at a very young age. But what really got me into music was my dad. He had an enormous passion for music. As a kid, I would ride in the car with him and he would always be playing Earth, Wind & Fire or Curtis Mayfield when he would take me to comic shops. He would break the music down to me, explaining the meaning of the songs and why the artists were so special. His passion for music poured into me and I just wanted to learn as much as I could. When I got into middle school, my older brother, who was in high school, became friends with some people who were making their own music. So when they would come to our house, they would talk about it all the time and they were my gateway into creating my own music. And because I didn't have money to buy beats, I decided in college that I would make my own beats. I really became a producer out of necessity.

**VALIDATED:** Sway showed love in your Instagram comments on a video of you spitting over Busta Rhymes record, "Put Your Hands Where My Eyes Can See". The significance of that to me is that a real Hip Hop head is going to show appreciation for your lyrical ability REGARDLESS of where you're from demographically. But what does his show of support mean to you as an up and coming artist?

**JULES:** Man, that was major! Sway is a living legend and someone that I've watched for years. He has always been one of the leading figures of this culture, so for him to show love to me was truly a blessing. It gave me the reassurance that I'm on the right track. It let me know that I was doing something right.

**VALIDATED:** Your 2022 album, "NIWIS" charted in the top 50 of the iTunes Hip Hop albums as an independent release. What did you learn from the success of the project?

**JULES:** I learned so much from that project, but I think the biggest takeaway was the little things add up. I put some much time and effort into making sure the minor details were not overlooked. I spent so much time on the mixing and mastering, every sound choice in the production and every bar, to even the storytelling in the album and in the marketing. I wanted to present a project that looked and sounded like the artist really paid attention to everything. And I think all of that resulted in it charting on iTunes.

**VALIDATED:** Your most recent EP "Ghost Stories 2", what can you tell us about the project?

**JULES:** Ghost Stories 2 is the next chapter in a horror series I created in 2022 to pay homage to my favorite genre in film. I'm a big, big horror fan so I thought it would be cool to use some classic horror theme songs from classic horror films and flip them into dope records. With Ghost Stories 2, I wanted to take it to another level and really push myself to write some of my best music. I think we were able to accomplish that with some of the records we have on there.

**VALIDATED:** What seems to be the fan's favorite record off the project?

**JULES:** Jesse O. That seems to be the one.

**VALIDATED:** One of the meanings for the word "Geronimo" is to jump from great heights. What's the significance in naming your record "Geronimo"?

**JULES:** Just like you said, that word is so synonymous with someone taking a big jump and that's what that song signifies to me. It's a statement record where I'm proclaiming my place in this rap game and taking that leap to go for it. I wanted to bring a level of confidence to it that can inspire others to be confident in whatever they are going after too. I wanted it to be sort of an anthem for those taking a major leap in life. That's the energy I tried to bring to the record.

**VALIDATED:** In this day and age where perception is everything, how do you balance drawing listeners to your talent rather than material symbols of success?

**JULES:** I've never been the guy to try and show off anything material to people. That's just not really in my character. I've always carried a more low-key personality so I don't get too much into making a big spectacle of myself. My mom also instilled humility into me and my siblings when we were kids. So for me, showing talent is all I really know. Besides, material things come and go. That's forever changing. But showcasing true talent is foundational and can stand the test of time.

**VALIDATED:** What inspired you to write, "Damaged Goods"?

**JULES:** That record came from a time in my life where I was doing a lot of reflecting on who I am as a man and what made me that way. The first verse was from a conversation I had with a friend of mine. We were talking through why a lot of people who grow up in the environments that we grew up in struggle with the true meaning of love. And how that can manifest in our behaviors and how we handle relationships with women. And then the second verse was a situation that I experienced as a kid that my family never talked about. We just pretended as if it never happened. Ultimately, I was questioning if these things have permanently damaged me and if there was a way back from them. It was heavy on my heart and I felt if I were to put that record out, someone would relate to

it. I'm really glad I did.

**VALIDATED:** In the song, "Intentions", you said, "Pardon my absence, but my dreams I can't be tardy for..." That's a dope line to your mother. You have a good way of writing what's real to you, but also relatable to others. How did you develop that skill?

**JULES:** I appreciate that. I think it just comes with trying to be a man of honesty. I've tried my best throughout my life to be as open and honest as I possibly can. And with that comes open dialogue and conversations. Usually through those conversations, you get to hear the heart and thoughts of others and how they feel. It sticks with you. So when it comes time to write and connect with people, you sort of understand what's true to you and others.

**VALIDATED:** For an up and coming rapper, the road to stardom can be an unpredictable journey, how has your pursuit been so far? What have been some of the major highs and lows? Is there anything you would've done differently?

**JULES:** It can definitely be a rocky road for sure. Some of the highs were charting on iTunes, getting love from people like Hit-Boy, Cormega and Sway, and just the feedback from people who wrote to me and let me know that my music helped them in some way. Those moments I am extremely grateful for. I think some of the tougher moments are things like trying to cut through the social media algorithm. It's a challenge that most artists experience today and we are all trying to understand and master it. The only thing I would do differently in my career would be putting more focus on releasing daily content earlier. Before, I was fighting the idea of posting so consistently on social media. That's something I've corrected within the last 3 years. I should've been a little earlier on that train.

**VALIDATED:** "God provides the high-notes for the average-joe- to-see (Jodeci)" is a phenomenal line and proof you take pride in making your listeners respect your intellect and writing abilities. How do you feel about today's level of intellect and lyricism in Hip Hop?

**JULES:** I feel like it's still there. There are so many artists that are out that have incredible pens. You got J. Cole, Kendrick, Joyner Lucas, Tobe Nwigwe and so many others. I think that some people feel like lyricists are missing in the game, but they are still here. Hip Hop has always had a mixture of lyrical and fun artists. I think the only difference now is that due to the internet, there's an abundance of artists now, which makes it a little harder to hear all the voices. But the intellect and lyrics are still present. It always will be.

**VALIDATED:** What is your definition of Hip Hop?

**JULES:** Hip Hop is a culture or a way of life. It takes our struggles, our triumphs and our relentlessness and turns it into something beautiful. It creates the lens that we see the world through.

**VALIDATED:** What can the fans look forward to from you this year?

**JULES:** This year I plan on doing a few shows. I've been looking into setting up a small tour to touch a few cities in Florida. Hopefully I can get that going. And I'm working on the next album. I have the next concept for the project and I'm just trying to pin down the sound I want to go for.

**VALIDATED:** Where can the fans find you on social media, streaming platforms, etc?

**JULES:** You can find me on all socials at @longlivejules and Jules on every streaming platform.



INTERVIEW KB TINDAL | PHOTOGRAPHY @BLACKBELTJONEZ114

## **MUSIC: INTEGRITY & BARS** *Pretty Buds*

BUFFALO, NEW YORK RAPPER TALKS NEW PROJECT  
“THEN AND NOW” AND BEING CHOSEN BY RZA FOR  
THE CYPHER CONTINUES ON SWAY IN THE MORNING



This Buffalo, New York MC has been making her rounds on plenty of platforms lately. She's been featured on Drewski's You Heard segment on New York's Hot 97 and the Rap Is Out of Control show on Shade 45. Most recently she was chosen by the God himself The RZA as one of 12 MC's out of 10,000 entries to be a part of his Wu-Tang Clan The Saga Continues Cypher which aired on the legendary Sway in the Morning Show. She is no stranger to spitting alongside some of the hardest MC's. And she's always promoting positivity by bigging up the women of the world as identified by the acronym of her name Beautiful United Ladies Living Independently. Tune in with the Validated Magazine Alumni, Pretty Bulli.

**Validated:** We're gonna jump right into this Sway in the Morning piece because I know you fanned out a little bit as expected because that's the platform. Heather B was definitely in your corner, heavy. What was that experience like for you and what did it mean for you to finally touch that legendary Sway in the Morning Show platform as an MC?

**Pretty Bulli:** Honestly like you said, I was already fanning out, that was the thing. It was heartwarming to be embraced by them, to be in the same room as them. They were so cool and down to earth. So just like that experience has been unmatched thus far. I will never forget that day, never. I can't explain how I felt even from the Blackout moment where I had people I wanted to shout out and talk about my project. None of that came out. So there was a lot that was going through my head. I was just so excited the whole time and it was beautiful. I can't describe it any other way than that.

**Validated:** Yeah that's got to be a once-in-a-lifetime thing for artists. Especially for pure MC's to go up there and get that love that's got to be incredible. I'm glad that happened for you for real.

**Pretty Bulli:** Thank you.

**Validated:** I know Ninth Wonder, Sway and Tech and RZA collectively chose these 12 MCs and on that day only 11 showed up. I'd like to know who the other MC was that didn't show up on that day.

**Pretty Bulli:** It was actually around the time they had all the fires that were going on. I believe he was from Canada, so he couldn't make it. So it was actually something big that stopped him. We were saying the same thing like "Hey we missing one?" So I never got to meet them. I think it was a male though. It was only two women. I never got to meet him either but he did have a reason.

**Validated:** Okay. That's definitely a valid reason. Now this was to be a part of the Wu-Tang Clan Saga. The Saga Cypher continues. What was the actual process like on your part to be chosen as one of the final 12? Were there some levels to this shit or was it just submit your tracks and hope for the call?

**Pretty Bulli:** Well okay actually shout out to L-Biz. He actually sent me the beat. Well it wasn't even a beat. It was a song with all the members on it. Every member that I mentioned in my verse they were already on the track and it was only like a 16 bar space opening in the beginning. So he sent it to me and he was like "Yeah, you need to do a verse to this." Not can you. Not you should. But, "You need to do this." So when I wrote it I was actually writing it and I tend to overthink things a lot when I'm writing. I'm not gonna hold you. So when I got to like my last four bars, I'm like I gotta find a way to mention every legend that's on this track. So I incorporated all of the names in it and it took me a while. I'm not gonna hold you. It don't take me long to write but to find a way to put Capadonna's name in there was a little rough. It took me a second. I

think I slept on that for probably like a week just to see how I would end it. So that writing process was different for me.

**Validated:** Okay. You had to do that one justice. You had to bring your A-game.

**Pretty Bulli:** Absolutely. So that one was a little different for me. So like, as they are choosing, we got an email first saying that I was going to be a part of the top 12. So we didn't even know that we were going to be spitting or doing any of that. We all thought it was a part of that verse that we submitted for that Wu-Tang track because we thought it was a contest that somebody was winning. We didn't find out until we actually got there for Sway in the Morning. Sway was like, "No this is not a contest. Y'all all winners we just want to give you the opportunity to spit." I'm like "Yes this is dope." This is where the cheesing starts coming in. The whole experience was crazy, it was crazy.

**Validated:** That is so dope definitely. From that experience should we be looking for some work with you and RZA behind the boards?

**Pretty Bulli:** I would love that and I'mma speak that into existence that's what I'mma say. I would absolutely love that. Anybody that was in that room or in the vicinity of, I would absolutely love that. Okay.

**Validated:** We definitely need that. I ain't even gonna hold you. Was it by design that the video that came on YouTube with everybody spitting that you were last? Did it happen that way or was the video edited to make it look that way?

**Pretty Bulli:** I actually went last but that is not how it was supposed to go. When Sway told us that we were all winners and he wanted us to all have our time to shine on the platform, that is when he gave us numbers. He called our name and told us when we were gonna go. I was not last. I wasn't. So when we got in that room and like we were having, like you know you have the interludes for the commercials or whatever have you? He was just calling MC's up so we were just going with it. So at the end he was like "Well yeah I want Bulli to go last so she can stand next to RZA, no pressure." My eyes got all big. I said, "Okay why and this is where the eight bars came. I lost all of it." I'm like okay you got to focus. So that was a dope experience.

**Validated:** That's crazy that's. You definitely deserved to go last. I'm not gonna lie, you bodied that shit. I know your stock had to rise after that appearance. I know yesterday's price can't be today's price you know I'm saying after something like that. So what has that experience brought to you business-wise?

**Pretty Bulli:** Business-wise it's been crazy. It really has, because I can't say noticed, because I believe I was noticed already but now I'm being acknowledged by people in rooms that are of a higher stature. Yes, business is nice.

**Validated:** Yes, that's how it's supposed to be.

**Pretty Bulli:** Yes sir. So thank you Sway. Thank you RZA.

**Validated:** Your track "B.A.S.I.C." Broads Always Secretly In Competition, the title pretty much says what it's all about. I'm sure there's something that sparked your mood to write that. So without necessarily throwing anybody under the bus, can you tell me what was the final straw for you to actually sit down and say, I need to write a track like this?

**Pretty Bulli:** All the cattiness in the industry is ridiculous. So many women are going at each other's necks and it's like why. Like for what? One second you see them together in pictures like they are friends, next thing you know they are airing out everybody's dirty laundry. It's like you've been in competition with her from the beginning. Just to see it's just like, and nobody likes to draw attention to the negativity part of it or how it is rooted so to speak. But they want to shine the light on the beef. It's like no this was never a friendship. They've always been beefing secretly. This is why my circle is non-existent. It's like a triangle okay.

**Validated:** Right. I can feel you on that shit. Definitely. And it sucks that it's that way because today more than ever women are getting more looks. It used to be that there could only be one at the top, maybe a few seconds. But now there's an influx of women that actually fucking rap. So it really shouldn't be like that.

**Pretty Bulli:** It really shouldn't and it's disheartening. It really is. So just to be so close to things like that I felt like I had to say something because there's so many women out here like myself that we do support other artists. We encourage other artists to do things but that's never shown. That's outshined by all the cattiness because they like the way that looks. It sells.

**Validated:** I heard you say on the show that bars never left. I think the person that was interviewing you said something to the effect of, it's almost non-existent or it's like a lost type of art. But that's not the case. It's always been there. In your process, like who's the people that you still listen to that still give you motivation? Even if it's somebody from hella way back in the day like who do you still listen to that makes you want to keep that pen sharp?

**Pretty Bulli:** Jada. Even today I'm at work driving and my instrumentals popped up. Jada instrumentals come on immediately. I start thinking of all types of stuff. I don't know what it is. It's something about Jadakiss, he puts some fuel on me.

**Validated:** Definitely. The track "She's A Problem" is definitely a problem. I wish it was longer because you spazzing out on that joint. It sounded like you just needed to get something off your chest real quick. Was that the case for that one?

**Pretty Bulli:** Well. I knew I was already done with the project. Then And Now it was complete. And I felt like it needed a little more but I didn't want to give too much. So it was short on purpose. At first the beat was so hard I couldn't really put it together, like sometimes you can hear just bars, sometimes you hear a song. This was just bars for me. I didn't hear a song. So when I was talking to Kid Called Quest, shout out to him, I was talking to him I'm like "Yeah well I started it off and I got a 16," just to let him know what I had. And he was like "Yo I think you should keep it like that. Let's use it as an intro." I said, "Oh you might be onto something. So, I actually stopped the writing process. I was ready to keep going. He was like, "No, we're just gonna give 'em a little bit." So shout out to him for that.

**Validated:** You got the new album getting ready to come Then And Now ready to drop March 29th. I know it was produced entirely by Kid Call Quest. How did it all come to fruition? The title, what you're going to choose as the first single, if there's any features on it. Because I know you're not big on a lot of features. And why did you choose just one producer?

**Pretty Bulli:** Well this actually didn't start as a project. We knew back in 2021 when I actually met Quest. I was introduced to him by my manager Dang. He took me to the studio and I think I picked like seven beats from him. I picked seven. And the first one was "Simplicity." So that was the first track I did with him. I did the same thing I did with Castle Money Beats with Duffel Bag Bulli. I just kind of was releasing singles. So in a way we were getting a feel for each other. We got "Simplicity,"

"B.A.S.I.C." and "Homage." "She's a Problem" is also there but that's just the sneak preview. So the project itself came as far as naming it goes; it came afterward, after it was already done. I was listening to the tracks that I had. Because usually when you have a project and you name it first now you're in a box when it comes to writing. You have to stick to this script. But as I was listening to the work that we already had, it was explaining my process because sometimes I was feeling like I was reminiscing, and talking about things in my past. Sometimes I'm feeling good because I just left Sway. It was my emotional buildup from when I started to me right now. So the title came after the project was almost complete. I think we might have had "She's a Problem," and the last track left to do but it was pretty much complete already.

**Validated:** Okay. And why choose just Kid Call Quest for the production. Why not mix it up? Was it just so perfect that you just said, "Fuck it that's the way we gonna do it?" Like why do that?

**Pretty Bulli:** When we met each other in 2021 that was the goal to actually do a project. So when we were doing the singles and getting to know one another, I don't think we were really close enough yet to formulate a project. Like sometimes you can say you want to do a project with a producer but you don't really connect like that and it never really happens. You see this happened in 2021 with us meeting, it's 2024. This baby is just now being born. So I like to be in tune with people. You learn me and I learn you. That way the work that we produce is organic. This is real. You're not just throwing me a beat and I'm talking to it. That bond had to be built between us. So we could have absolutely put different producers on it but thus far, it hasn't even really been on purpose. Like when I lock in with a producer we just kind of spit out a project. It's not even on purpose. I didn't think about it like that until just now.

**Validated:** I heard you briefly say in another interview that you had three projects already made and done.

**Pretty Bulli:** Well now it's four yeah.

**Validated:** Now it's four. Okay. So, we're getting Then and Now on March 29th. Are we getting another project before the year is over?

**Pretty Bulli:** The goal is to drop every quarter. Now how many times I drop per quarter I'm not sure yet but I'm locked and loaded. I'm ready.

**Validated:** Okay. Got you. What's your process like in the studio? Like is it some candles and some greenery in the air? Are you sipping on something? What's the energy like for you when you're in the studio?

**Pretty Bulli:** All business. Well I can't really speak for other artists but from what I know of other artists I don't record like everybody. Because like I explained to you before like in the last interview, I'm a single mommy, I got my own business going working full-time. So it's like when I do go to the studio, nine times out of ten, I already have a project written and I'm going to spit it out. So I'm going to book this good five hour session. I'm leaving with a rough mix of my project. I'm not going in there to smoke. I can't waste time. So me going in there, we ready already.

**Validated:** I saw an ad for "Bulli Bites Infused Eats and Treats" and more. Is that something that you still produce? And if so, tell us a little bit about that.

**Pretty Bulli:** That is the business I speak of. Yes sir. Yeah so basically I do a lot of soul food cooking and sweets, cookies and cakes and pies and things like that. So anything that I can make regular with Bulli Bites it is also infused depending on how you want it. I cater parties, girls' nights. And so if they want it to be extra special we can have it that way. If you just want it regular, we'll do it that way.

**Validated:** I might have to tap in with you on that. I got a big sweet tooth.

**Pretty Bulli:** Do you? You better talk to me. I got you.

**Validated:** Your Bars 4 Breakfast segments are crazy. I'm always tapped in when you post one of those. Is that actually something you do in the morning when you get in the car to keep the craft sharp and start your day? Or do you record them previously and then depending on how you're feeling that morning you pick one

that you want to drop?

**Pretty Bulli:** When Bars 4 Breakfast started it was absolutely just like the first one you said. Right before I go to work I might get 10 minutes, let me set this up. As I'm growing as a business I had to change it because now I'm going to need a visual for this. I don't want to go over an industry beat. So now I have chosen a beat to do this Bars 4 Breakfast for, which means initially I need to record it. So now I can put this on streaming platforms. So, now it's changing. These are things that I didn't know before. So the process now for Bars 4 Breakfast is a lot different than what it used to be because I see the bigger picture. So now it is pre-recorded. Now I am doing a video but guess what now I can put it up on DistroKid. I couldn't do that before.

**Validated:** Absolutely. With this game being more saturated today than it's ever been in the history of Hip-Hop, what does Pretty Bulli do to maintain your independence as an artist but yet still stand out at the same time?

**Pretty Bulli:** Keeping my integrity. Oh my God. I feel like so many artists, they sell out for the dollar when they get that money dangled in front of them. And if they're not comfortable or true to who they are or even know themselves yet, they're easily shifted. Like when you come into this game or been in this game already or you're around our era, you know who you are already. So you're not easily influenced when somebody gets to dangling some dollars in front of you. It's like "No" because you are looking at me for a reason. So if you're looking at me to dangle some dollars in front of me that means you see money in me." If you're not comfortable with yourself you don't know that yet. Being true to myself oh man, it's been a game changer it really has.

**Validated:** I think when you talked about your demographic of the people that listen to your music, the gender, how the women attract more of the reality stuff and how the dudes attract to Bulli like that's it in a nutshell. I love both. I love hearing people tell their true stories. I love concept projects you know and things of that nature. But when you start talking that shit, that's what I want to hear. I want to hear you talk that shit. I can identify with that. Which do you kind of like, vibe off of the most? I know you like both. Which do you like, get hungry for when you go in the studio. Do you kind of break it up and say I need to give them some Bulli and then I also need to give them some true stuff or do you lean one way or more towards the other?

**Pretty Bulli:** It really depends on my mood. And the beat that I hear. Sometimes the beat is telling me you get a stink face immediately, it's like, oh yeah this is all bars. You can hear it, you can feel it. Sometimes it's like oh it makes you think of something you went through or something of that nature or maybe came in and I had a rough day, and all I could think about is something like that. But when you actually write music that is real for you it's going based off how you feel. You're relating to other people based on how you vent on this music. So depending on what bag I'm in that depends on what that pen gonna do. Never really know.

**Validated:** Does the process of making music that is unapologetically yourself ever get frustrating for you when you're trying to reach the next level as an artist? Or are you at a point in your career now where you just let that shit roll off your sleeve and just keep writing just to keep making progress?

**Pretty Bulli:** Just being as transparent as possible. I am honestly just getting to that point. For this project Then And Now, there's a song titled "Break," and it's just me talking about things that I went through that didn't break me. This song, to listen to it now, it still makes me cringe a little bit. This is how I know I tapped into something vulnerable that I usually don't. So, I'm just now getting to this point where I'm okay with being vulnerable in music. It was usually so structured like it's still being me, but I was only telling what I wanted to tell. Now I'm telling you how I actually feel. This is new because my shoulders go up when I hear this song because it's like I'm not used to telling people that much about me. I'm actually just arriving, just getting here, but it's not a bad feeling.

**Validated:** It's got to feel good to be in that space though. That's the evolution of you not only as a person but as an artist as well.

**Pretty Bulli:** Yes it does. It feels like growth. It really does. Like when

Hip-Hop is still life to me, it is everything. It's a way of life. A way that we express ourselves. It's a community. It's a family. Hip-Hop is an upbringing for us. This is our history in the makings. Hip-Hop is the shit for lack of better words.

you can feel your own growth that's when you start to get a glow. It's like okay I like it here.

**Validated:** Which do you like more if you had to pick one: the studio or the stage?

**Pretty Bulli:** The stage all day. That's a different monster. That's a whole different monster, like I black out on stage. I really do because it's like the adrenaline from being in the studio is scripted. I don't necessarily mean by being written or things of that nature. But it's controlled. You have to stay still because you have to control your voice and the outcome of this record. But being on stage and connecting with people, you don't have to perform the song like it was done in the studio. It's just, yeah it hits different. I'd take the stage any day.

**Validated:** No doubt. When was the last time you wrote a poem.

**Pretty Bulli:** Oh shout out to PA. Dre, I actually have a concept project coming with him this year. And a poem is how we ended it. I wanted to tap back into it because I hadn't done it in a while. So this is me revisiting that and it felt good. It did. Yeah, it's like a free flow of writing. You're not following a beat. It's just writing. That was nice. I want to tap back into that. That was a good feeling.

**Validated:** Hip Hop turned 50 since the last time we spoke. And I always asked this question because it changes as we evolve in some ways. And then in some ways it always stays the same as well because of the essence of things and the root of how we got involved in this art form. So, tell me, what does Hip-Hop mean to you?

**Pretty Bulli:** Hip-Hop is still life to me, it is everything. It's a way of life. A way that we express ourselves. It's a community. It's a family. Hip-Hop is an upbringing for us. This is our history in the makings. Hip-Hop is the shit for lack of better words.

**Validated:** Would you say that the Sway in the Morning Show has now become your most memorable moment as an artist?

**Pretty Bulli:** For myself, yes. Now there's been people that have been watching my career and they feel otherwise but for me absolutely. That has been unmatched thus far. That's all.

**Validated:** Bulli anything else you want to let the people know?

**Pretty Bulli:** Then and Now produced by Kid Called Quest is dropping March 29th. That baby is coming and more to follow.

**Validated:** You know we're gonna be tapped in on that on this side absolutely. It's always a pleasure talking to you, Queen. Thank you once again for gracing us.

**Pretty Bulli:** Thank you.





**NEW MUSIC:** **NORTHSIDE**  
**CANADIAN HIP HOP ARTISTS**  
**DANIEL SON AND RAZ FRESCO**  
**DROP HIGHLY ANTICIPATED**  
**COLLABORATIVE ALBUM**  
**“NORTHSIDE”**

**JOURNALIST JOHN SABBIA**

May 17th marked the highly anticipated release of "Northside," the latest collaborative album by Canadian hip-hop artists Daniel Son and Raz Fresco. This 10-track project is now available on all major streaming platforms, offering fans a potent blend of raw lyricism and gritty beats that showcase the duo's unique synergy.

The album opens with "Ice Water," setting a cool, confident tone that flows seamlessly into the title track "Northside." Each song builds on the last, creating a cohesive

Narrative filled with sharp storytelling and introspective themes.

**Standout Tracks**

One of the standout tracks, "Forks on The Road," features the soulful vocals of Faiza, adding a melodic layer to the hard-hitting beats. This track, with its rich production and compelling lyrics, is already generating buzz as a potential hit.

"Rusty," featuring Gritfall, brings a dynamic energy with its haunting instrumental and aggressive delivery, making it another highlight. Tracks like "Lawyer Fees" and "Watch Ya Mouth" delve into the gritty realities of life, offering unflinching insights into the struggles and triumphs of the artists.

**Artistic Collaboration**

Daniel Son and Raz Fresco have a history of collaboration, and "Northside" stands as a testament to their creative chemistry. Their ability to bounce off each other's energy is evident throughout the album, with each track showcasing their individual strengths while also highlighting their seamless collaboration.

**Production and Style**

The production on "Northside" is a blend of classic hip-hop influences and modern sounds, creating a timeless feel. The beats are heavy, the samples are meticulously chosen, and the overall sound is both polished and raw, providing the perfect backdrop for the duo's intricate wordplay.

"Northside" is more than just an album; it's a journey through the minds and experiences of Daniel Son and Raz Fresco. With its combination of hard-hitting tracks and introspective moments, the album is sure to resonate with hip-hop fans and cement the duo's place in the rap landscape. Whether you're a longtime fan or new to their music, "Northside" offers something for everyone and is a must-listen release of the year.



## NEW MUSIC: MOTION PICTURE

# NEW YORK RAPPER RENO RX DROPS CINEMATIC MUSIC VIDEO FOR "MOTION PICTURE" FEATURING UFO FEV

### JOURNALIST JOHN SABBIA

New York City's vibrant hip-hop scene has been ignited once again with the release of Reno Rx's latest single "Motion Picture," accompanied by a visually stunning music video. What makes this release even more exciting is the collaboration with fellow New York rapper Ufo Fev and the appearance of J.D. Williams, known for his role in the acclaimed series, *The Wire*.

Reno Rx, an emerging force in the rap game, has been steadily making waves with his distinctive style and dynamic lyricism. His latest single "Motion Picture" not only showcases his lyrical prowess but also highlights his ability to craft compelling visuals that resonate with his audience.

The music video for "Motion Picture" is a cinematic masterpiece, seamlessly blending storytelling with raw energy. Set against the gritty backdrop of New York City, the video

captures the essence of urban life while portraying a narrative that unfolds like a gripping film. J.D. Williams, renowned for his role as Bodie in *The Wire*, adds depth and authenticity to the visuals, bringing a touch of realism that complements the track's themes.

Ufo Fev's contribution to the track further enhances its appeal, with his distinct flow and charismatic presence amplifying the overall vibe of the song. The synergy between Reno Rx and Ufo Fev is evident throughout, creating a seamless collaboration that elevates "Motion Picture" to new heights.

The thematic elements explored in "Motion Picture" delve into the life in the city, touching on themes of ambition, struggle, and triumph. Reno Rx's lyrics paint vivid pictures, offering listeners a glimpse into his world and his journey as an artist.

With "Motion Picture," Reno Rx cements his status as an artist to watch in the competitive realm of hip-hop. His ability to craft immersive experiences through music and visuals sets him apart, while collaborations with esteemed talents like Ufo Fev and J.D. Williams underscore his commitment to pushing creative boundaries.

As the music video for "Motion Picture" continues to garner attention and accolades, Reno Rx remains focused on his craft, poised to make an even bigger impact on the music scene. For fans of authentic, storytelling-driven hip-hop, "Motion Picture" is a must-watch and must listen, offering a glimpse into the evolving landscape of New York City's rap culture.

In an era dominated by cookie-cutter releases, Reno Rx's "Motion Picture" stands out as a testament to the power of artistic vision and collaboration. Keep an eye out for what's next from this talented rapper as he continues to push boundaries and redefine the genre.

The video for MOTION PICTURE featuring @ufofev and co-starring @jdwilliamsvirtually from the critically acclaimed series THE WIRE is available now exclusively on @paperchaserdotcom in bio. This is the lead single from my forthcoming album COLDEN STREET which drops 04/30 with features from @real\_royalflush @etomusicroc @ufofev @obhbeyah & more

MOTION PICTURE produced by @silensir\_seth

Mixed and mastered by @mister\_stylez for stilo pro studio

Video directed by @unclenick\_wts





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