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THE SOURCE

HIP-HOP MUSIC, CULTURE & POLITICS

TUPAC,
BIGGIE,
EAZY-E &
BIG PUN

WHY
THE GAME
WILL NEVER
FORGET
OUR FALLEN
SOLDIERS

THE
MAKING
OF THE
JAY-Z/NAS
TRUCE

WILL
PAYOLA
BE THE
DEATH OF
HIP-HOP
RADIO?

2005 YEAR
IN REVIEW:
WHO
GOT THE
PROPS?

PLUS:
THREE-6
MAFIA
KEEPS BUCKIN'
SALT-N-PEPA
LIL' FLIP
GETS LUCKY



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BALLAD OF A DEAD SOULJA

THUGGIN' TILL ETERNITY, THE REALEST
ONES ARE THE HARDEST TO LET GO

WORDS BY MICHAEL "ICE-BLUE" HARRIS

Since the passing of the iconic Tupac Amaru Shakur, Hip-Hop has been stagnant in a lot of ways. With today's constant barrage of cloned MCs claiming to have pushed a million keys and slayed a million bitches, what has happened to the consummate MC who also speaks the real on surviving the streets and uplifting our men and women? It's been a little over nine years since one of the greatest to ever touch the mic was assassinated on the Las Vegas Strip, but for some, it seems like yesterday. Jay-Z said it best when he stated that women continue to love Tupac's soul. The statement, although lighthearted, also rings true for Black males growing up in 'hoods worldwide. To them,

Pac is still revered, in an almost Christlike fashion.

Pac was more than a rapper; he was a spokesperson for young Black America. Raised under the tutelage of his mother Afeni Shakur, a former Black Panther during the radical '60s, Pac musically evoked revolutionary energy, fueled by racial oppression. With so much speculation and so many rumors still surfacing about "The Greatest," *THE SOURCE* connected with E.D.I. and Young Noble of Pac's Outlawz click; his Digital Underground brother Money B and one of the few riders still carrying Hip-Hop's revolutionary torch, dead prez's stic.man, to spit some facts and lay some myths to rest.

WHEN THUGS CRY

E.D.I.: The consciousness in the music industry is one thing that was lost when Pac died. Cats don't feel like it's necessary to talk about nothing no more except what we got, what we spending and who we screwing. I ain't knocking nobody for talking about what they want to talk about because Pac talked about those same things, but at the same time, it's a happy medium. All aspects of the game are not being talked about, just the glory. No one talks about the pain part of it, the 65 years that niggas is sitting on for the birds [some rappers] claim they selling. Nobody is talking [about] the consequences and repercussions of the game, whether you dealing with women, drugs or guns. Pac talked about [the whole] spectrum.

Money B: Pac brought a certain honesty to the game. Today, there are a lot of characters and everybody's a thug and maybe they are, but nobody's a super-invincible thug like that. Pac never tried to be invincible. He just would say how he felt and I don't see that coming from anybody. Nowadays, you so flossy, so sexy or so thug, nobody wants to show a crack in their armor.

stic.man: If Pac were alive now, that so-called Hip-Hop Summit Action Network shit would be grounded with the real people's interest. It wouldn't be bourgeoisie-controlled because Pac was talking about political power in the form of this Hip-Hop music, but he was coming from the Black Panthers. He was coming from the streets; he was coming from the gangbangers and those principles and was attempting to add life to it.

EVOLUTION... (MAN UP)

E.D.I.: I kind of look at Pac as a 25-year-old kid with a whole lot of responsibility on his shoulders. A lot of the top guys in rap right now are like 31, 32, 33, a little more stable and focused. Pac was still trying to learn himself. At 25, you still don't know who you are yet; you're still trying to figure it out. He was somebody in transition about to make this huge change in his life. Pac was about to step away from some of the stuff he was doing before and into a more positive place, more stable and focused. At 25, if you look at the shit he was going through—this man was having cases, getting attacked, shot at, attacked by police officers. It's a lot of shit that was happening to him that happens to young Black males every day in the 'hood, but

“I look at Pac
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—E.D.I., *The Outlawz*

you ain't on TV every day having the whole world watch you while you going through this shit.

Young Noble: We were in New York at MTV when he seen Nas. They squashed their beef and were planning to do some music together. Pac was really about to bring that shit back to New York. He was real happy to be home. The streets was loving him and he was about to start reaching out there, fucking with all these New York niggas, trying to give niggas a shot. That's what kind of mission he was on.

E.D.I.: I'm sure Pac and Big would have squashed their beef by now, and they probably could have ended up doing business together. Because as I said before, Pac was someone that was in transition and always learning and striving to be a better man and better person, so that was a phase right there. You go through it, let that shit go and move on. Time heals all wounds and I see them moving past all that 'cause they had a genuine liking for each other.

A UNIFIED FRONT

E.D.I.: It was never an East and West Coast beef as far as we were concerned. We all from the East Coast with the exception of Big Syke, so it wasn't like niggas was shitting on the East in the first place. Everybody was looking at it like Pac dissing Biggie and Bad Boy so he must be saying fuck the whole East Coast. Pac knew how dangerous that would be being the son of a Panther and [knowing] what the Panthers went through in the '60s with their own East Coast/West Coast beef within the party spearheaded by COINTELPRO. So Pac was like, “I can't let people think this is what's going on in Hip-Hop, so let me do this *One Nation* album.”

E.D.I.: On this last album [*Loyal to the Game*], wasn't no *One Nation* verses on that album. And as far as how Pac wanted *One Nation* to come out, it kind of got fucked up toward the end and led to *Makaveli*. Once we kind of finished that album, we sat back and listened to it and knew that album wasn't finished. Pac still wanted to work on that album so he was like, “I'ma put that album to the side for right now and I'ma do this *Makaveli* album.” Basically [*One Nation*] was gonna be a mixtape, but it wasn't ever finished. It was just a collection of songs we did with Boot Camp Clik, Gregg Nice and some up-and-coming East Coast cats and that was it. We still had to do other songs with Scarface. We still had to go out and get Bone Thugs, The Luniz, and reach other territories 'cause it wasn't just about East and West Coast. Pac was aware that the game was about to open up wide. He saw the South and Midwest coming up so he wanted to touch all these areas. So *One Nation* was only about 40 percent finished.

FRIEND OR FOE...STATE YOUR BIZ

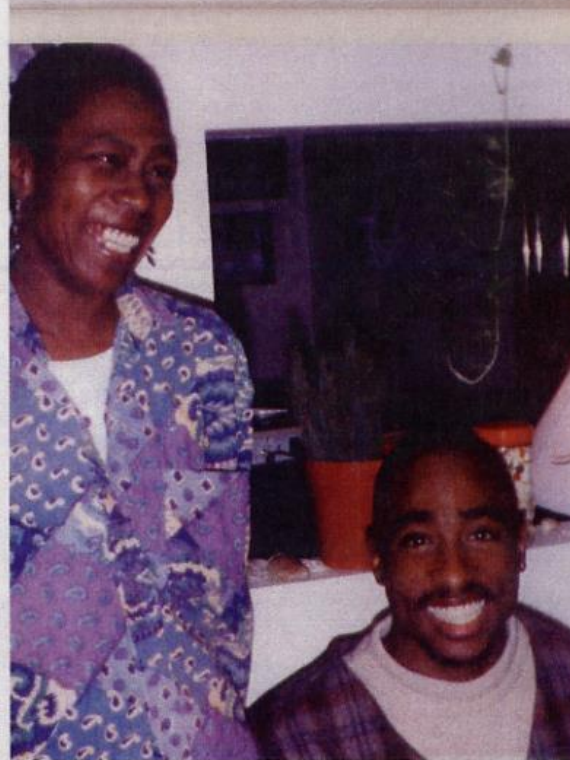
Noble: We worked so much, so a lot of songs that we were doing were never meant to intentionally come out. We'd do songs and if that wasn't the hot shit, they were scrapped. Pac ain't have no intentions on putting out all that extra shit and who knows if he would have did songs with Eminem or 50 Cent 'cause ain't no telling. He loved music and loved new artists so he probably would've did songs with a lot of dudes that be on his shit right now, but that's like trying to see into the future. But as long as the people that be hopping on Pac's shit do it with respect, I can't be mad. He was the greatest rapper of all time. Of course everybody wanted to do a song with that dude.

Money B: It trips me out how some cats got songs with Pac and didn't even know him. And it's some people out there that talk about him [that] I know he wouldn't even like if he was still around. I don't want to be associated with someone who's just using a Pac verse to do whatever. I got unreleased verses with Tupac but it would have to make sense and be relevant to whatever it is that we're doing and not just do it just to have a fucking Pac verse.

LIFE GOES ON... (MOLDING THE MINDS OF TOMORROW)

stic.man: What you see his mama doing down here in Atlanta with the kids at the Tupac Amaru Shakur Center For The Arts, they're learning how to write screenplays, how to perform, learning the science of MCing, learning the different aspects of expressing our culture but keeping his way: thugged out. It's independent, and they're being encouraged instead of alienated, so I think that's only a tip of the iceberg of what we were gonna see coming from that general right there. So that's what I think they robbed us of when they took Pac. They took the visionary and the person who embodied the spirit to really be able to bring the streets, the conscious scholars, the crackers and whoever else all to the same table and be inspired to do something to make a difference.

Noble: It's inspiring giving these youngsters some hope and telling them to never give up. We're trying to take them to the next level and give them the confidence to shoot for their dreams. Pac represented real life and that's basically the struggle. When you do music in the right way like that, it lasts forever. Life is life and that ain't gon' never change. Ten or 50 years from now, it's still gonna be the same shit: the joy, the pain, everything life entails. So that's what Pac's music really stood for: Never giving up, trying to better yourself, just life music and that's what we're carrying on.



Blending political realism with gangsta ethic, Tupac Shakur's "thug poetry" meditates on bleak surroundings and responds to the teachings of his forefathers, such as Chuck D, Assata Shakur, Minister Farrakhan, Huey P. Newton and Niccolò Machiavelli. Tupac sought resolution, but his lyrics attest to his desperation.
—DAVID MCFADDEN-ELLIOTT

WORDS OF WISDOM: IGNITING A REVOLUTION

CURSED FROM BIRTH?

"Grow up broke on the rape of insanity/How many pistols smoking coming from a broken family?"

—"The Streets R Deathrow,"
Strictly 4 My N.I.G.G.A.Z (1993)

N.I.G.G.A. MENTALITY

"I'm never ignorant, getting goals accomplished."
—"Violent,"

2Pacalypse Now (1991)

SOUL SISTAS

"Apologies to my true sisters, far from bitches/Help me raise my Black nation/Reparations are due."

—"White Man's World,"
The Don Killuminati: The 7-Day Theory (1996)

THE EFFECTS OF DRUGS AND VIOLENCE ON TODAY'S YOUTH:

"They cutting off welfare

...Shit just gon' get worse/They just gon' become souljas."

—"Soulja's Story,"
2Pacalypse Now (1991)

FALLEN SOLIDERS

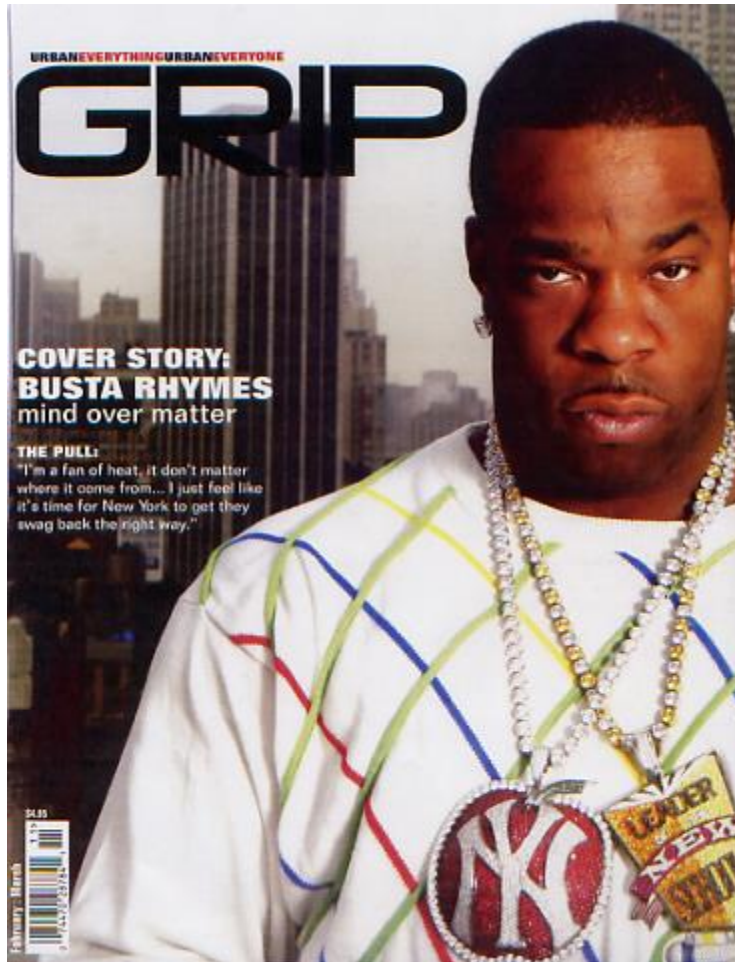
"Done lost too many niggaz to this gangbangin'/Homies died in my arms, with his brains hangin'."

—"Lord Knows,"
Me Against the World (1994)

INEQUALITY IN AMERICA:

"Lady Liberty is a hypocrite, she lied to me/Promised me freedom, education, equality/Never gave me nothing but slavery."

—"Panther Power,"
The Lost Tapes (1989/2000)



URBAN EVERYTHING URBAN EVERYONE

GRIP

COVER STORY:
BUSTA RHYMES
mind over matter

THE PULL:

"I'm a fan of heat. It don't matter
where it come from... I just feel like
it's time for New York to get they
swag back the right way."



"Don't call it a comeback. I've been here for years. Rocking' my peers and putting suckers in fear." These venomous lines may have once been spit by one James Todd Smith but they also aptly apply to another Mr. Smith. A Hip-Hop veteran in his own right who's born name is Trevor, the energetic Busta Rhymes has become to be loved by the masses and is the consummate example of rejuvenation. Sitting in the conference room perched high in the sky in the New York offices of his management company, Violator, two days before Christmas, it's hard to believe that it's been 15 years since he exploded on the scene alongside MCs Charlie Brown and Dinco D as the trailblazing Leaders Of The New School and 14 years since his scorching performance and scene stealing verse on A Tribe Called Quest's "Scenario" remix that catapulted him into a league all of his own. With his new single "Touch It" from his upcoming seventh solo release The Big Bang blaring out the speakers, it's clearly evident that he's focused more than ever and his previous marks on the game were merely footprints as opposed to the stomps he's about to now deliver. Tired of the monopoly in Hip-Hop, Busta is ready to change the game once again. "I'm a fan of heat, it don't matter where it come from. So every region has their time but I just feel like it's time for New York to get they swag back the right way and the way that niggas need to know how to do that is by bringing back that feel good energy Hip-Hop and bringing back records with depth. It's too many niggas talking the same shit, too many niggas following. We ain't got enough niggas in the game that pinnacle what it is to lead the f**king pack."



Studying in era when MCs like KRS-ONE, Chuck D, Slick Rick and De La Soul were all held in high regard yet stood in front of their own separate lanes, Busta feels disgusted by his Coast's new found indulgence with being followers. "We had so many examples of what it was to do your own shit. There weren't 20,000 niggas talking about popping their iron and sticking niggas up and how much bricks you moving.

And I ain't mad at that, I just get tired of it when too many niggas is saying the same shit. Nigga, all of ya'll ain't doing the same f**king thing! Stop f**king fronting! Talk about what you doing. Because niggas want to know about you homeboy, what's your story."

The Big Bang will also be a revamping of sorts for Busta as it's his first release since joining forces with Jimmy Iovine and Dr. Dre. Elektra to J Records was a growth and J Records to Aftermath/Interscope is probably his biggest growth at this point. And even though he's been around for a good while, his experience is something that every artist wishes they had. "Dudes constantly say, 'Yo, if I had the opportunity to get in the game with 14 or 15 years of the know how before I signed my first deal, I would be an unstoppable motherf**ker,' that's the way I feel right now," professes Busta.

"So the way I was getting dealt with in the beginning is impossible at this point." And that's what the chameleon-like Mr. Rhymes has to his advantage as opposed to new MCs or veteran rhyme sayers who just haven't done their homework. "I'm just able to apply shit outside of the creative that helps the creative in the perception of the whole movement just come across that much more powerfully. Because unfortunately, it ain't just about the record no more, them days is over with. It's about how you strategically move your chess piece in addition to the hot record, in addition to having a key support system."

That support system also weighed heavily when Busta decided to make his latest transition to Aftermath/Interscope, because as it may sound hard to believe, he's never been able to express himself creatively to his fullest potential. And seeing his new label mate Eminem being able to make a record like "Stan" about a crazed fan killing his wife stuck heavily in the MC's mind. "You know that's a record that ain't never gonna play in the club and you know that ain't no real Top 40 format song to crossover on a mainstream America level at radio. But the shit is so critically acclaimed that it commanded it's respect and ended up getting a Grammy acknowledgement," says Bus. "Who the f**k would make a song about you putting your wife in the trunk and throwing your car in the f**king ocean and perform at the Grammy's doing that shit with Elton John. That don't happen. So now that I'm able to sit back and see that the label that I'm on could deliver that kind of success for such critical acclaimed artists, I wanna make real artist records. I don't wanna make records for the label no more. I done did that shit too much. I make records for the label so it's easier for them to get my records spun on radio or easier for them to do they job. But I don't work for you, you supposed to work for me. Or we at least supposed to work together."

STAYING POWER

With so many of his peers never coming close to seeing a healthy career stint as his, Busta Rhymes knows he's the exception to the rule as he jumps ship to his third powerhouse. Fortunate enough not to have taken refuge on industry life support vessels like Koch as many of his esteemed colleagues have, Busta credits it all to his risk taking mentality. "Staying in tune with the way the game transitions is primary," he says. "I'm never ever putting out a record that feels like it ain't the most current shit, if not ahead or aside from what everybody else is doing without feeling dated. There's nothing about me that feels like it ain't new and it ain't fresh and it ain't never been that way."

That whole mentality of thinking dates back to his days as a member of L.O.N.S. when they were christened by Public Enemy after being put through strenuous tests to earn the moniker. "If you couldn't justify it, you couldn't have it so in our minds that leaders of the new school shit was such a thing that was beyond the music. It was like everything about niggas that we thought or we believed in, we just felt had to be the newest shit or the hottest shit and we tried to live by that," declares Busta. "So outside of music, the way niggas dressed, the way niggas moved around on the stage, the way niggas would talk in their interviews, just the whole charisma and package just had to be some new shit so I had a lot of practice at being the newest nigga all the time."

Busta also credits his total belief in being himself as the key that has kept him off of VH-1's "Where Are They Now" list and why he put himself in a place where his competition had to catch up to. "I always beat myself in the head with it to the point where it wasn't really no other way to approach the shit because it was the only thing that I knew how to do the best. And being the newest nigga or the next nigga or the different nigga or the hottest nigga all the time is really just doing you. Sometimes you can do you and it don't work though so there's a lot of things that come with it but I think just staying in tune with the way the game transitions was what really did it. Fortunately in my case when I roll the dice, the shit work out for a nigga, though."

A student of the 5% Nation of Gods and Earths, Busta believes that 7 is the God's number and his lucky number and roll as well. Promising to also give his fans a more personal side of him with his new leeway, he says his label's FlipMode's union with Aftermath and Interscope has formed a new super power. Further explaining why his new business venture will take him to new heights, he says, "Niggas aint never get Busta Rhymes' story. You always got the party records, the antics and the

punch lines and metaphors and the 'Raw Raw.' But I never felt like my situations that I was in label wise was able to nourish my more personal record - the shit that helps niggas understand why am I like this as the nigga that you've grown to love. And I ain't never give that story. I ain't never tell niggas about the dramas with baby mothers, I ain't never tell niggas about hustling and working with some West Indian niggas in spots in West Baltimore and D.C. I ain't never got into that because I ain't never felt it was needed. I might have sprinkled a little of that here and there in songs because that is my story but I ain't think that niggas ever really got a chance to fully digest shit like that because the labels that I was on wasn't able to nourish that."

TOTAL METAMORPHOSIS

Always known for his bugged out persona and his trademark dreadlocks, Busta further completed his transformation by showing that he is no Samson and that his power doesn't derive from his hair. A bonafide MC in every aspect, he felt like his talents were being overshadowed. "One of the reasons I cut the hair was 'cause it was just magnifying too much other shit that was taking away from things that I felt niggas needed to focus on. For years, how can you be the nigga who has flawlessly smashed everybody regardless of whose record you get on?"

The FlipMode General further feels that many of his colleagues don't realize he's one of the best to ever do it from so many different levels of the game from causing wreck on stage to decimating microphones. "Niggas can't fuck with me and sometimes I don't think niggas really understand that the way they should," says Bus. "Plus, I was competing with the persona and the persona was competing with the actual MC. And the persona was winning the battle all the time because with the videos and the animated performance and wild hair styles everywhere, niggas was definitely not keeping in mind that the God is an MC first and foremost."

And with that said, Busta doesn't view his latest endeavor as a comeback but just as a newness. Declaring that you're gonna get the same vibes and energies with a lot of new elements added on, he says, "I ain't trying to change. I'm just trying to make sure that niggas is clear on the fact that there ain't no real limit on nothing that we do unless you limit yourself. So as far as I'm concerned, a nigga can't limit me, only I can limit me. And I don't how far I'm willing to take it but I know that I got a whole lot of shit left to give niggas."

INNER VISIONS

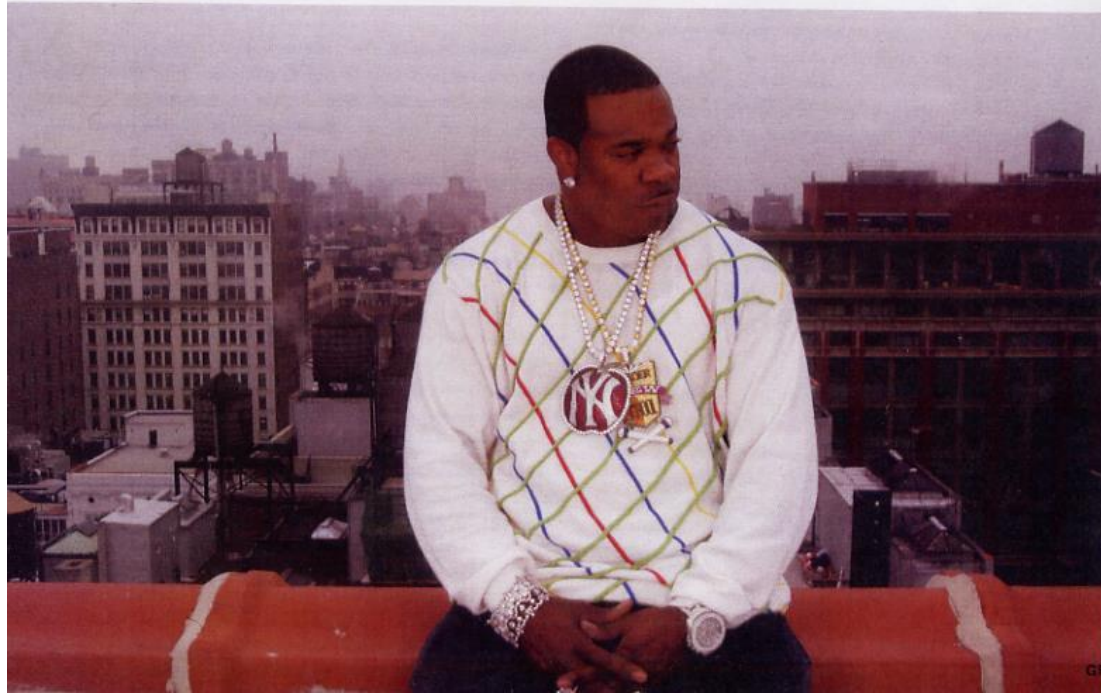


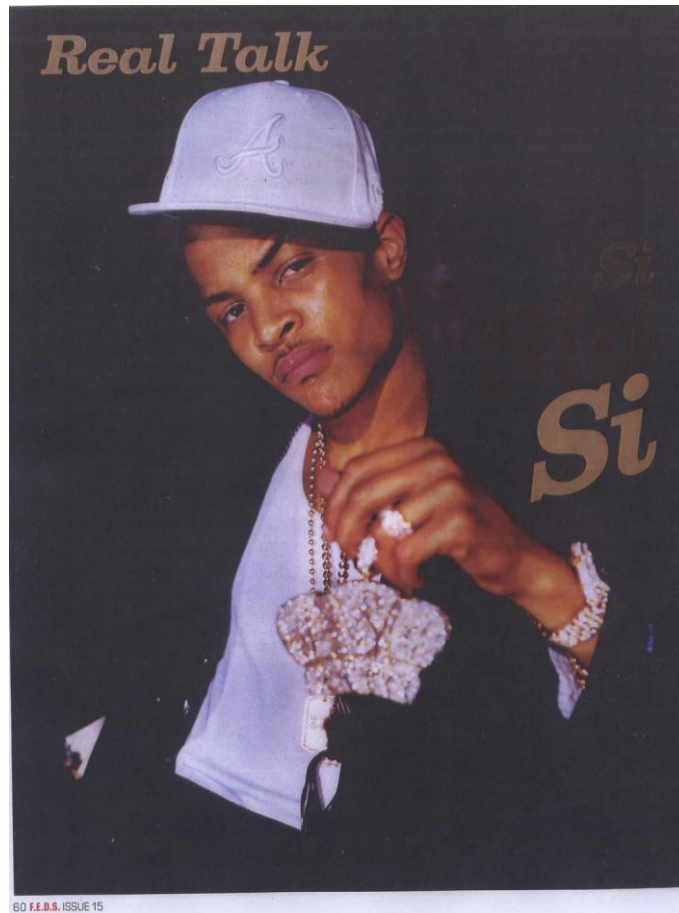
Further evading the pack as if teaming with the legendary West Coast producer wasn't enough, Busta enlisted the help of Detroit's finest himself to help deliver The Big Bang. "I got records with Stevie Wonder," he says in admiration of one of his idols. "Niggas don't got records with Stevie Wonder. Niggas aint never had a record with Stevie Wonder."

And doing the impossible is what we've come to expect from Busta, who's continuously amazed us as he's been able to get superstars like Janet Jackson and Ozzy Osbourne on his projects. "That's something that I always do but I try to do it on a greater level each time just to make sure that niggas see the growth and the respect level with me is growing amongst other likes of greatness in the game," professes Busta. "Niggas ain't just fucking with ya'll because ya'll ain't ready, ya'll ain't qualified for that significant caliber of artist to come and

want to bless you with their presence. I'm a different kind of a nigg compared to ya'll and a lot of ya'll niggas need to see it. A lot of ya' niggas need to take the time out to separate all of my animated shit the ya'll get caught up in to really understand the depth of a nigga that yo looking at. And that's part of the reason why I make it my business t do shit on that level so niggas can see that we not the same. We rhyme we all do the same shit, we rock jewelry, we drive Phantoms, and pus around and hang out in clubs, we might blaze an L together but we nc the same, my nigga."

You can hate him or love him but you gotta respect what he says. An with a work ethic that is 100% harder than most, his credibility speaks fc itself and highlights his resume. And that unquestionable respect give by the likes of Stevie again comes from him never straying from his leade of the new school mentality. So for any MC trying to step into the Hip Hop arena without an ounce of originality and is stuck on following trends you better get back in class because when Busta is on the scene, it's sti total anarchy and all weak rappers he will continue to destroy.





de-Hustler

Dubbing himself **the King of the South,**
the man who wears his fitted with a gangsta lean
T.I. dishes on Lil' Flip, coming up, his Grand Hustle
and the science behind his Urban Legend.

Listen up.

When T.I. proclaimed himself “King of the South,” he forced Southern MCs to step their lyrical game up. Fresh off a brief jail stint and back with his third — and most anticipated — album, *Urban Legend*, the ATL shotcaller dishes about his Grand Hustle Empire and his plan to rebuild the ’hood with houses and shopping complexes. With a construction and car-restoration company in his barrels as well, the Rubberband Man tells why you can’t knock his hustle.

F.E.D.S.: Let’s get right into it: Why do you call yourself the King of the South?

I felt like when I came out, there wasn’t really anybody repin’ this side of the South. I just put the weight on my shoulders. I was telling people my intentions. I wasn’t in any way trying to discredit the previous kings of the South, like Scarface, OutKast, 8Ball, M.G., UGK — I’m cool with all of these cats. Before I came out, I spoke to Big Boi and Andre 3000 and 8 Ball. I asked, “Do y’all take offense to me calling myself King of the South? Is it cool?” Those niggas were like, “Do your thing, man. Ain’t nobody trippin’ on that. If you were on some bullshit, then yeah, I would take offense to it. But I feel you’re representing the real. You’re representing the same thing we are representing. You got talent.” People really respected the grind and respected that a young nigga had the nuts to step out there and say some shit like that. I was backing that shit up without backing down. If anybody got shit to say about it then they can come holla at me any time.

When did you start having problems with Lil’ Flip?

Dig this. This is my comment about that situation: I decline comment. All I can say about that is I am from the streets for real, a problem between two men is to be handled between them. It ain’t for the public. It ain’t entertainment. You dig what I’m saying? It’s just as simple as a nigga running his fucking mouth too much about a nigga he don’t need to be speaking on. That’s all I got to say about that.

Take us back to the young T.I.

T.I.: When I was 6, I used to run around in my underwear singing “Bad” to my mother and my cousins. When I turned 8 or 9, my uncle bought me my first Too Short tape. I conned my grandmother into buying me a 2 Live Crew tape — she

didn’t know what she was getting! It was on from there. I started writing raps in school and kicking it for my uncles and them. They were in their early 20s at the time; I was like 7 or 8. When they saw me rapping, they were digging the music. I was like one of the guys. They’d be like, “Kick that shit you was kicking the other night.” It just stuck with me and I got better. As I got older, I was into N.W.A., Too Short, Scarface, 8Ball, M.G., Tupac definitely, and LL.

How did you go about getting your label Grand Hustle off the ground?

My first situation was with Arista and it didn’t go well because they didn’t believe in my genre of music; they didn’t believe in the potential that it had; they didn’t think somebody rapping about life in the ’hood and urban situations could ever have a chance to go multiplatinum. L.A. Reid had just taken the position of president at Arista, and he was trying to move units, so he was focused more on OutKast, Usher etc. We were forced to take matters into our own hands and spend our own money. It was nothing new to us. Before I got on as a rapper, I was a hustler. The same cats I was hustling with, I was rapping with. Those are the same cats who are around me today. We just started making a new plan to set up a new trap with a different kind of dope that’s legal.

Are you involved with any other ventures besides your label deal?

I still have my construction company with my uncle, New Finish Construction. That’s still going well. Heavy Chevy’s is still going well and we fittin’ to open a restaurant in Bank Head real soon.

Who is the Pimp Squad Clie?

Those are my partners, my label mates: Big Kuntry,

MacBoney, AK, C-Rod and myself. The other people who don't rap like \$Dollar D.P., Big Steel, Big C, KT, Cap (who is doing life right now), my niggas Jru and Bankhead, who are no longer with us — God bless their souls. You got Inda, you got Lil' Greg, Beez, you can damn near say the whole west side of the A-Town. Some niggas we see every day; some niggas we see every week, and some niggas we see three times a year, but we are all family.

While you were locked up, you shot a music video. How did that take place?

I got friends and family who have some seniority on that side of the system. They basically went through the proper procedures and made it happen. It just so happens that an escape took place at the prison where I was incarcerated. It wasn't like they were neglecting their duties to come and see about me because it wasn't anyone in the area where we were when the escape took place. There are a lot of misconceptions about that, but it was real structured and everybody did what they were supposed to do, just an unfortunate incident took place at the same time.

What made you name your new album *Urban Legend*?

There have been a lot of misconceptions about me. Like I am supposed to have done three years, and I am supposed to have gotten caught with so many burners and all this that and the other. It ain't nothing like that. I had a probation violation that I had to take care of. I was under investigation and got arrested for some other shit. I was under a Federal investigation due to things that I can't speak of right this second, but once they started looking, they saw that I wasn't even involved, and that I had nothing to do with the shit they were trying to link me with. I was exonerated of all those charges. Being that I got arrested, that just opened up a whole new can of worms with my probation situation. I had to clear it up so I went and turned myself in and handled my business.

Who are some of the artists you have featured on this album?

I have B.G. on something. Man I have about 70 songs right now. I don't want to say too many people's name because I don't know what songs may make the cut and which ones will have to wait until the next album. I have a lot of hot songs and it's going to be hard picking them. But the next album is going to be a double album. It's called, The King album.

How did you get your break in the rap game?

My manager and co-owner of Grand/Hustle, Jason Geter used to work at a studio and had a local group at the time called, Parental Advisory. They came up in the Outkast era.



“
All I have to say about [Lil' Flip] is that I am from the streets for real, and a problem between two men is to be handled between them two men. It ain't for the public.
”

K.P. (Kawan Prater), senior Vice President at Columbia right now was at that time, VP of A&R at LaFace. I brought me to the studio and they heard me rapping. K.P. wanted to sign me to LaFace. He invited me to The Source Awards and that was my first time in L.A. I was fresh out the trap so that sold me. It was a done deal. But before I dove head 1st I had to learn that before I go invest all my time and other people's time I have to perfect my craft. I had to make sure my talent level was of great quality before I could go trying to market myself as a professional artist. That's just like a dude being good at basketball and being decent at the high school level, before he can be considered as a professional he has to prove himself on every level. A lot of people invest their hard earned money and a lot of their time into this and they don't get any return on it for the simple fact that they didn't take the time to perfect their craft first.

Anything else you want to add?

I would like to shout my partner Cap serving life in Autry State Prison. Pimp Squad album coming soon, I'm still working on the Leaders of the New South project and tour. I'm just keeping it tight. I appreciate everybody supporting my music and writing me, while I was doing my time. Thanks for the love.



FREE AT LAST

**AFTER BREAKING AWAY FROM
SHADY PUBLISHING DEALS
AND COPING WITH THE LOSS OF
MIXTAPE HERO DJ SCREW,
HOUSTON'S FREESTYLE KING
LIL' FLIP IS DOIN' IT HIS WAY.**

Houston's Lil' Flip first made a name for himself as the Freestyle King, catching wreck on the late DJ Screw's mixtapes and securing an underground following throughout the South. Now, with two platinum plaques on his wall, Flip kicks game as he discusses his separation from Sucka Free Records and his former CEO Humpty Hump. With the launch of his independent label Clover G, which is distributed by Sony, and his jewelry and alcohol ventures in the works, the Leprechaun seems to be contradicting himself as he proves the game ain't over.

F.E.D.S.: How's life treating you?

Lil' Flip: I can't complain, dog, I'm still living. I'm making money. My family is straight and my niggas are straight. It ain't like I'm out making money and my family and niggas are walking around with no money. I created jobs for all my people. I helped people go get their license so that they could drive my tour bus. I got people that handle my stage show. Instead of paying people I don't know, I keep it all in the family.

What were you into as a youth?

I was always into sports and shit. I played basketball, football, and baseball. When you get a certain age in high school, your parents say it's time for you to go and make your own money. I did what I had to do. Whether it was hustle, do this rap shit, whatever popped off first, that's what I was gonna do. The rap popped off first, so instead of trying to hustle all my life, I went with the rap.

What made you want to become a rapper?

In my high school English class I found out that music is a form of poetry. I wrote a rap song and won. I wasn't into poems and shit so after that I just started fucking with rap. I listened to everybody's music and tried to develop a style of my own.

Who are some of the rappers that influenced you in creating your style?

I'm from the South. I grew up on UGK, 8Ball & MJG, Too Short, and people like that.

If you weren't killing them in the music biz, what would you be into?

I like to draw. I draw my own album covers. All the jewelry I wear, all my clothes, I draw that shit. I'd probably be designing clothes or directing videos. I'm directing my own videos now too.

How do you feel about the state of hip-hop right now?

I think it's cool. The bootlegging kills a lot of artist. It's good to see that people aren't scared to endorse rappers the way they once were. You see Ludacris, Game, and Kanye doing Boost Mobile commercials. Everybody is getting a chance to get the same deals that rock artists are endorsed in and that's a huge plus.

Do you think money has had a positive or negative effect on hip-hop?

It's always been about money at the end of the day. Some people just make whatever kind of music just to get their little budget, but then you have other artists who really care about what they're dropping and what they're speaking on.

What do you love most about the music industry?

I love being in the studio smoking at night, just chillin', one deep, by myself. I record and then go perform and see 10,000 people screaming all the words to a song that I made. It makes me appreciate that shit. You got little kids running around singing all of

our lyrics. That's why when I do my mixtapes, I do them straight. I go into the studio and rerecord my lyrics. Most niggas just bleep their shit out. But in order to edit, I rerecord. I want parents to feel comfortable with my music.

What was that critical step that helped you break in the business?

Basically doing the mixtapes for DJ Screw. The first song I did was done with my homeboy from Houston, C-Note. They played that song on the radio so much that it created a buzz for me.

What does "Clover G" stand for?

The neighborhood we stay in is called Clover G, and the G stands for God.

You came into the biz under Humpty Hump. What caused the separation?

Nine times out of 10 if you come into the business as a kid and you don't have your family involved, people will try to mess you over. I was told that I owned half of the company. When we looked at the contracts, I found out I wasn't an owner. They had two different contracts. They did all kind of shady shit. Imagine doing a show for \$8,000 and they send you a deposit three months in advance. I wouldn't get any money off that deposit. Fuck that, I may have gotten \$1,200 off of a \$6,000 show. The only way artists eat is off the show money, because your publishing don't come for three months and your royalties don't come for a whole year. So if you take an artist's show money, that's like spitting in their face. That's the only way we get cake besides features. Now I have my dad managing me. You can see the before-and-after effect now. Before, I wasn't on 106 & Park, I wasn't on TRL. Now that I have my Dad managing me, my name has blown up 10 times bigger because all of the ideas that I was telling people back then are being put into effect now.

“If you take an artist's show money, that's like spitting in their face”

Houston is hard on that syrup—what is it?
It's basically a codeine that people mix in their soda or their drink. It's a downer. It keeps you laidback. That's why people fuck with it, because it relaxes them.

With DJ Screw's death, people's perception of syrup hasn't changed?

It has changed mine. I don't drink the shit like that no more. I got a lot of shit that I have to do so I don't fuck with the shit on an everyday basis any more. But yeah, that opened up a lot of people's eyes. Everybody done cut back.

How did you and the Dip Set become cool?

I met Jim Jones at the MTV VMAs. Three months prior to that, Cam did a verse on Bone Crusher's "Neva Scared (Remix)" and he gave me a shout-out. Cam said, "I'm not from Houston, but you can call me Lil' Flip." After that, we went straight to the lab and did five songs. Cam did a verse for my album. I did a verse for Jim Jones' "Certified Gangsta (Remix)." I did a verse on Cam's "Get 'Em Girls (Remix)." Actually, I got seven records with Cam that are just sitting around. We just clicked. Every time they come to Houston, I hold them down. Actually, Jim Jones just bought a club in Houston. They hold me down every time I come to New York as well.

What's up with your independent DVD?

I'm getting ready to drop a DVD called You Gotta Feel Me. The DVD is made up of videos and concert footage from when I went to Amsterdam. I'm going to do the Down-South version of Streets Is Watchin'.

Who would you like to work with in the near future?

The only people I didn't get to do a track with—but I'm about to do a track with them—are Jadakiss and LL Cool J.

What about your new album? Are you involved with any other projects besides your label deal?

My new album is called I Need Mine. And the girl, who is singing on my song "Sunshine," Lea, is getting ready to drop her album. I'm on her single. It's called, "Girl Keep Talking." My homeboy C-Note, who first put me on, is dropping his album. My boy Real Independent is dropping his album, and Big Shasta, my cousin who sings on my hook, is dropping his album. I'm just trying to do it real big, man.

“DJ SCREW'S DEATH CHANGED MY PERCEPTION OF SYRUP. I DON'T DRINK THE SHIT LIKE THAT NO MORE. IT OPENED UP A LOT OF PEOPLE'S EYES. EVERYBODY DONE CUT BACK.”



Do you want to give a shout-out to any of your buddies incarcerated or on the streets?

Shout-out to Smith, Dee my homeboy S.A.G., Pimp-C, who's locked up. That's about it.

Anything else you want to put out there and let the streets know?

A lot of people want to put you on that homeboy shit. That homeboy shit ain't going to pay your bills. I'm just letting everybody know that I need mine. Whatever supposed to be in Lil'

Flip's bank account, I deserve. To all the fans, I appreciate the love. The streets know I am going to keep dropping these mixtapes, man. Tell the media to stop spreading rumors about me when they don't know the truth. They love to spread rumors, like I was supposed to have gotten robbed in DC. You know what I mean? I got all my shit. That's about it.

R.I.P. DJ Screw.



WORDS BY MICHAEL "ICE-BLUE" HARRIS ILLUSTRATION BY JAY GUILLERMO

BREAK ING THE CYCLE

IN A RECORD INDUSTRY WHERE
INDEPENDENTS ARE SLOWLY
BEING SWALLOWED UP BY SUPER
POWER RECORD COMPANIES,
ASYLUM IS HELPING TO RETURN
HIP-HOP TO THE STREETS

"All these labels be trying to lure us in like spiders, into the web. So sometimes people gotta come out and speak up and let people understand that you gotta read the label. If you don't read the label you might get poisoned." These insightful words were uttered by the Wu-Tang's RZA on fellow clansman GZA's classic album *Liquid Swords*. Preceding the GZA's clever corporate condemnation, "Labels," RZA's statement seems all too prophetic a little over a decade later.

Nowadays, the majority of the labels that GZA so eloquently name-checked have folded or have been gobbled up by the oligopoly of conglomerates runnin' this rap shit. Yet even in an age in which boardroom brass are attempting to call shots like street generals, it appears that the independent spirit that birthed Hip-Hop may still have some purveyors. But while more and more MCs are sharpening their business skills and going for self by locking down their own individual regions, most still lack the small push that'll transform them from local heroes into bona fide superstars.

Helping that process along is Asylum Records, an upstart of sorts underneath the Warner Music Group (WMG), which is revolutionizing the way independents broker deals with majors and rivaling the sales and revenue of the big boys.

Originally founded in the 1970s by music industry veteran David Geffen, Asylum boasted big rock names like Bob Dylan and The Eagles. But after countless label acquisitions,

the label laid dormant and in WMG's possession.

Jump-started by former Def Jam and Violator executive Todd Moscovitz, Asylum was reincarnated in September 2004 when Lyor Cohen, newly appointed chairman and CEO of WMG, gave his onetime intern, Moscovitz, the ball.

Today's Asylum was refounded on the label's initial independent mentality and has already brokered partnerships with several regional rap powerhouses like Rap-A-Lot, Trill Entertainment and Swisha House.

With a business plan that includes rarities in today's corporate rap world, such an emphasis artist development, brand building and cost-effective music videos, Asylum doesn't consider an album that sells 200,000 units a flop. "The whole company was premised on super-serving the entrepreneurs who up until now really weren't [being] served. We're only looking for movements; we really don't sign independent artists," says Moscovitz. "We look for companies that have their cities on lock and we only try to get into business with people that we can add value to. Our partners put up the bulk of the financing, they keep the bulk of the money, and we do our distribution and marketing."

At first glance, this setup seems similar to those of other distribution outlets, such as Southwest, Select-O-Hits and Koch Records, but Moscovitz points out that there are major differences. "I think that us paying the \$6 to \$6.50 a record

BACKGROUND MENTAL WARD: JOHN MARSHALL MANTEL/CORBIS BUN & JOHN RICARDI/RETNA LTD.; PAUL WALL: SARA DE BOER/RETNA LTD.; CAPTION: SETH KUSHNER/RETNA LTD.; MIKE JONES: PROVIDED BY ASYLUM RECORDS

is where the comparison to them stops. One of the biggest assets that we have is that we're actually distributed by WMG, not ADA [Alternative Distribution Alliance], the independent distribution arm for most. We go through the same distribution as Atlantic and Warner Bros.," he explains.

With a company that has hundreds of employees backing them, smaller labels working with Asylum benefit enormously, not just through the national reach that WMG has, but also by continuing to get paid at the rates typical for the independent world, where large chunks of money stay in the hands of those actually responsible for crafting the music.

Furthermore, Asylum works alongside WMG's staff, which is already knowledgeable about urban music. For years, Warner Bros., Elektra and Atlantic have been successful in releasing artists like Jaheim, Juvenile, Fat Joe, Sean Paul and Missy Elliott. Now they are giving artists like Mike Jones, Webbie and D4L just the push they need.

THE ALLIANCE

J. Prince, CEO of Rap-A-Lot Records, was the first exec to see the benefits of patterning with Asylum after he severed distribution ties with Virgin. "First I got a good deal, and then I had access to experienced people," Prince says. "Me and Lyor Cohen had been wanting to do something together for a long time. For me to have access to Def Jam's whole infrastructure, which moved [to WMG with Cohen], and people who know how to market and promote our music, it was real attractive."

In addition, Prince was adamant about staying in control of his company and owning his masters, which many indies must give up when going into business with the big dogs. "I still have my own muscle with my own Rap-A-Lot army," says Prince, who released several projects that made noise last year with the help of WMG, including albums from The Geto Boys, Pimp C and Bun-B. "Now I also got access to another army as I need it."

And while J. Prince may have initially put his hometown of Houston on the map well over a decade ago, his entrepreneurial spirit, enhanced by his work with Asylum, had an impact on Texas's latest Hip-Hop explosion. "I'm partners with Asylum in signing Swisha House," Prince says. "Swisha House is a company that was inspired by me and I had been watching them for a long time. When I got the opportunity to put my money where my mouth was I jumped on it and was able to diversify my portfolio."

Swisha House may show just how powerful unions with Asylum can be. G-Dash, Swisha's CEO, admits that although they were already grinding on their own, the platinum sales of Paul Wall and Mike Jones have a lot to do with Asylum. "They helped us with radio and video support. 'Still Tippin'' was a song from an album that we had been supporting for almost two years," he says. "We basically had a small fire, but Asylum came and put gasoline on the whole situation."

With years of Def Jam experience under his belt, Moscovitz is well versed in the most cost-effective ways of making an artist pop nationally. "I think we created a totally new economic model that nobody else in the record business has, and it really works for the new music business," he says. "Since most of our partners put up their own money and haven't given someone a huge

advance, it changes the way you do business. Any entrepreneur knows that the way that you win is by making a good investment and then turning your money as quickly as you can by getting your investment back out. That means you don't spend \$2 million on an album and \$8 million in marketing."

Asylum also won't hesitate to try three or four times before they connect with the right single. In addition, when a label doesn't invest as much money in a project, it will assert less control over it artistically. "We're able to build the artist as a brand. The entrepreneur gets their profit and it's cool if the artist goes platinum on their second or third album because no one has lost," says Moscovitz. "I think that changes the whole way that you approach rolling out an artist."



Turk, co-CEO of the Baton Rouge, La.-based Trill Entertainment, which exploded nationally this summer with Webbie's "Give Me That," feels Asylum allows his company to keep its gutter edge. "A lot of people were saying that Lyor Cohen's whole staff had something to prove by leaving Def Jam and coming to Warner, and I figured that we had something to prove, too," says Turk, who is currently readying Webbie's sophomore release and Lil' Boosie's national debut. "We had been putting out street albums and we passed on other labels because we weren't watering down our sound and risking losing our initial fan base. Asylum didn't want us to."

EXPANSION TEAMS

While many East Coast MCs are just trying to get signed individually, Asylum's mission is to recruit and enhance businessmen. "Dip Set was the only label that we could find in a major city like New York that really represented the independent lifestyle," says Moscovitz of Cam'ron, Jim Jones and crew. "It's a great brand. They own their market, they have a movement—all those characteristics, that's all the stuff Down South displays."

With Killa Cam due to drop his next bird on the label this year and Jones doing double duty as an A&R executive at Warner Music Group, the Diplomats movement is already gaining steam. "And it was because they put out a lot of records independently before that they didn't feel the need to say, 'Oh, as soon as we get hot, we're gonna sign to a major,'" says Moscovitz. "They like retaining control; they liked being great entrepreneurs. So that's why we got into business with them."

Asylum has also gone into business with DJ Smurf's ColliPark label, Three 6 Mafia's Hypnotize Mindz, T.I.'s Grand Hustle and former No Limit Records in-house producer KLC's Overdose Entertainment are also part of the team.

Content to play their position, Asylum has a clear focus on the future. "We're not competing with Koch, Navarre and Select-O-Hits; we're competing with Def Jam, Universal and Interscope, labels like that," says Moscovitz. "And if anyone says that we're not smacking them up right now, I challenge them. I have a lot of respect for the Def Jams and the Universals, but we're on the field right now and I feel like we're putting points on the board." With that said, it certainly seems that Asylum plans to give the matrix-devised record label conglomerates a run for their money and eventually take their spot.

TRAYVON • B.o.B • NICKI MINAJ • ODD FUTURE

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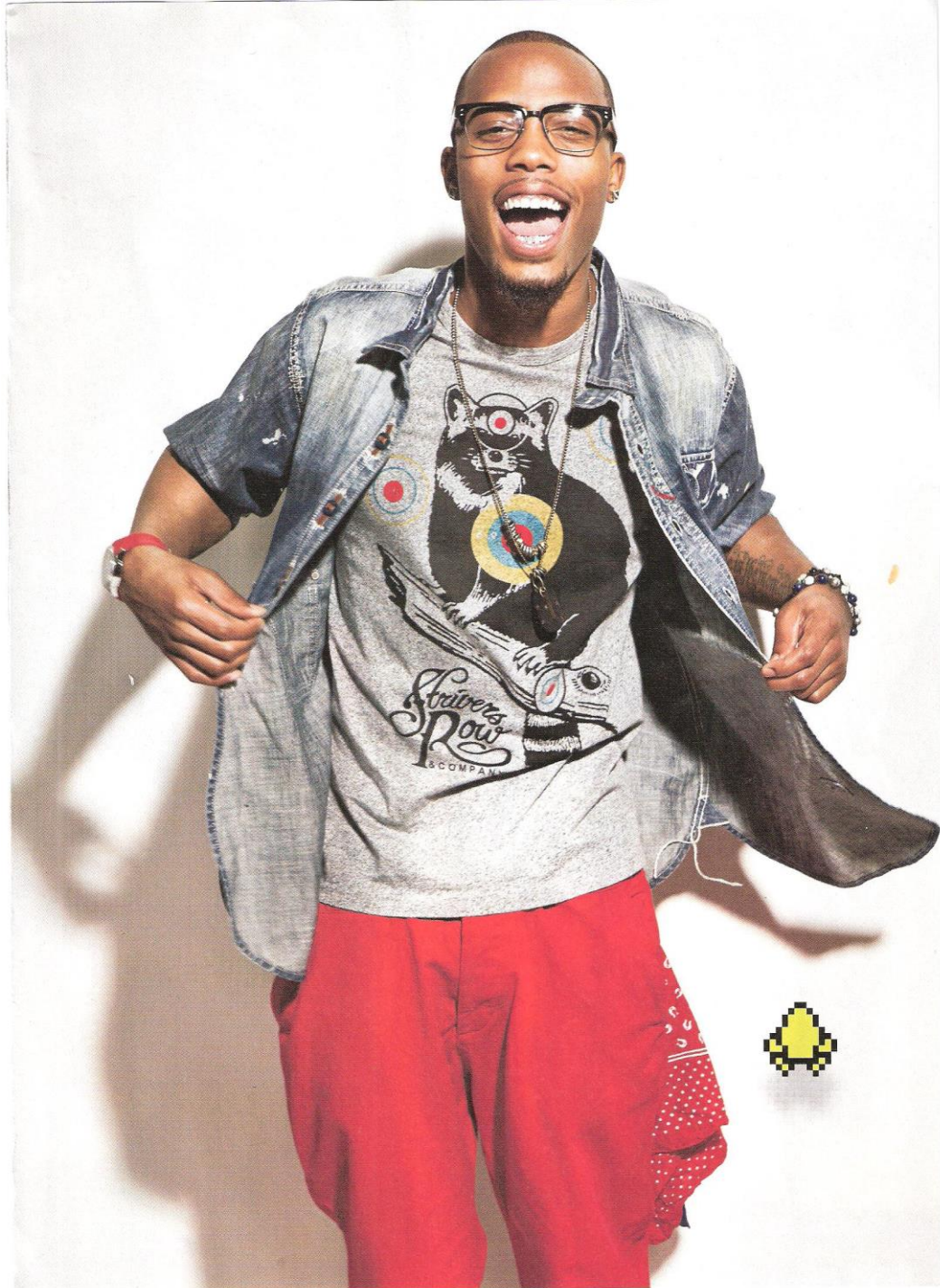
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OUTTA THIS WORLD

B.O.B DOESN'T BELIEVE HIP-HOP HAS
BOUNDARIES. HIS LOVE FOR THE
CULTURE WON'T LET HIM.
AFTER INSPIRING THE TRAP TO DREAM
GLOBALLY, THE DECATUR MC'S NEXT
LIFE-EXPLORING JOURNEY GOES OUT OF
THIS STRATOSPHERE.

STORY BY MICHAEL "ICE-BLUE" HARRIS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY JEFF WOLK

he way B.o.B is going in at a rehearsal hall in Atlanta's Crossover Studios is nothing shy of the energy felt at the Madison Square Garden show he did with 60,000-plus fans screaming his name. He's rocking the stage with his band, the DJ is cutting up the 1's and 2's, dancers are going ham.

B.o.B is never quite where he's expected to be. The space he's in is better. He's preparing to tour this summer with the release of his sophomore album, *Strange Clouds*, and it's not just a hype stage show that's promising.

Several years back his parent label, Atlantic Records, was snatching up ringtone rappers and one-hit wonders by the bushel. But the man born Bobby Ray Simmons was getting noticed for his artistry—the ability to produce, play instruments, and be lyrical.

"That's one of the reasons it took Bob so long to come out," says TJ Champan (of TJ's DJ's fame), observing

B.o.B from the sidelines. "We kept bucking the system because of the music they wanted us to make, the things they wanted us to do that we felt like was gonna make Bob look like everybody else."

TJ, along with B Rich (an A&R at Grand Hustle), co-manages Bobby Ray, and while he downplays the initial hurdles and credits having a strong team—which also includes producer Jim Jonson (Rebel Rock Music) and T.I.—Bobby knows it is his commitment to the craft that has shaped his career, up hills and all.

"It's really about having a good team, and it's parallel to sports when you just have a good player but they don't have a team or good offensive line," B.o.B says. "But, at the same time, you as the artist are the captain of the ship. You can't place the responsibility for the outcome of your career on anyone else but yourself."





"YOU AS THE ARTIST ARE THE CAPTAIN OF THE SHIP. YOU CAN'T PLACE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OUTCOME OF YOUR CAREER ON ANYONE ELSE BUT YOURSELF."

As captain, B.o.B decided on music early. He played the trumpet in the sixth grade, and by 14, sold his first beat to former Slip-N-Slide artist Citti. A few years later, B Rich snuck an underaged B.o.B into T.I.'s Club Crucial for an open-mic night. TJ was there. "I didn't go to see any talent, I just went to hang out," he recalls. "And Bob performed and it just grabbed my attention, and before I knew it, I was just singing along with the song and waving my hand and everything in the air, so I had to go see who dude was."

In less than a year, B.o.B was signed to Atlantic/Rebel Rock and released his first single, "Haterz Everywhere," which reached No. 5 on Billboard's Bubbling Under R&B/Hip-Hop Chart. By the time his first album was released in April 2010, via Grand Hustle, he had enough of a base to debut at the top spot with 84,000 copies sold.

"I saw his ability to make music that transcends beyond the everyday rap stuff that so many of these guys make," says TJ, who is legendary for breaking records. Still, even he had trouble packaging Bob's sound.

"My support team from all these DJs and the ability to get these records played, you know, they liked Bob, but some of it wasn't stuff that they really played, so we had to go and find alternate avenues to make everything happen."

ME AND THESE BEATS MAKE A MARRIAGE

Taking a break from rehearsal, Bobby Ray nods his head and smiles as he plays a few tracks from *Strange Clouds*. The Musician and the MC have come to a truce.

"When I was in the 'Haterz' days, everyone was calling me a rapper and an MC, and I was screaming, 'I'm more than that. I'm an artist, a musician, I'm all of that,'" he says, acknowledging his battle within. "And then after *The Adventures of Bobby Ray* came out, everybody was like, 'Man, he's a pop star, he's a musician, an artist.'"

"Haterz" featured Interscope rapper Rich Boy, while the lead singles from his *Adventures* featured pop singers Bruno Mars ("Nothin' On You") and Hayley Williams ("Airplanes"). "Then I was like, 'What y'all talking about? Man, I'm an MC, I can rap, I got bars.' The grass is always greener on the other side, so I've come to appreciate both."

It's no secret that B.o.B's pop beat selection made people forget how nice of an MC he is. Odd Future's Tyler, The Creator even went vocal with his disbelief on a song called "Yonkers." Bobby Ray had to remind folks with his mixtapes, addressing Tyler specifically on a song called "No Future."

"It really boiled down to understanding my fan base," says B.o.B. "I didn't think my eclectic music was as in the hood as much as it was and n***as was playing 'No Genre' and different things like that. At the end of the day, you gotta realize it's just music and it's just gotta be jamming because everyone listens to everything. I used to go to rock concerts and I see the fans in the crowd and I'm like,

'Man, they need to come to my show and they'll really fuck with this shit.' After *The Adventures of Bobby Ray* dropped, then I'd be like, 'Dang, I want the hood in here, too. I want all these n***as in here.' I feel with this album [*Strange Clouds*], I've bridged that gap with the two different sides."

This album he showcases more of his skills behind the boards and more effortlessly merges his lyrical dexterity in a fusion of rock, Hip-Hop, soul, and a rumored track with country-pop princess Taylor Swift (of Kanye's "Tma let you finish" fame).

"My first album was like an introduction, a handshake, and this album is more like a conversation. It's more in-depth. Now that I have your attention, let's talk. *Strange Clouds* bridges the gap between my lyrical mixtapes and my album sound."

PANDORA'S BOX

With the lackluster body of work being released by artists today, it's no wonder Pandora playlists are in abundance. Music lovers are desperately seeking the "no skips" experience, substance they can play from beginning to end. B.o.B proclaims that's what he's delivering.

"With the way music is changing, Hip-Hop artists are rediscovering what it means to make an album. It's kind of like you can do more with just rap. You don't necessarily have to always have a guest singer or like one pop beat and eight Hip-Hop tracks. That's not really what it means to make a good album. I feel like a Hip-Hop album can exist that will be as big as a *Thriller*. I believe that's possible. Hip-Hop hasn't seen its full potential yet."

Consider B.o.B a leader of Hip-Hop's new frontier. To take fans through a journey that defies the five-year test of time, like going from Marcy to a "Beach Chair," means an artist has to be willing to genre-bend. When B.o.B opened for Jay-Z and Eminem in 2010, it was his graduate course in longevity.

For him, seeing fans of the two giants rap songs verbatim that are 10-years-old like they did their new material showed Bobby Ray that his audience has to grow with him. It let him know that Hip-Hop is not something that's just about being young. It's always going to be young at heart, but it's something that's eternal and timeless.

"My fans range mostly from middle school to college and they gone grow with me. I'm really trying to master myself in the process, and it became more about that."

Settling into his role as a game-changer, B.o.B declares that no matter what genre you try to place him in, he's a child of Hip-Hop and his mission is to prove there are no limitations on his culture.

"The first album took fans out the trap and showed them worldly experiences and what else is out there. Eventually, my music is probably not going to sound like it's from Earth, and you won't be able to tell what planet it came from. But just remember that though the music is intergalactic, the drawl is Southern." ☐



August 14-20, 2008

Education

redirect
redefine
refocus

THE ATLANTA VOICE

11

Organization of Black Airline Pilots lets kids take flight

BY MICHAEL HARRIS
Contributing Writer

The Organization of Black Airline Pilots (OBAP) recently held their commencement ceremony for its Atlanta Flight Line ACE Camps at Delta Airlines Training Center Auditorium. With Delta serving as the primary sponsor, the two-week program that ran from July 7-18, provided youth with a first-hand experience into the world of aviation. Cadets learned about aviation history, aerodynamics, meteorology, navigation, flight training and much more.

Andrew Fellers, First Officer with Delta Airlines, 2008 Flight Line Ace Camp Director and member of OBAP said, "We have two different camps. Ace Camp is designed to open up eyes to kids who have no idea of the broad aspect that aviation encompasses. Most kids think that when you're talking about aviation, you're speaking of pilots or flight attendants so our job in

Ace Camp is to show them that you could be a pilot or a flight attendant, but a mechanic, dispatcher or air traffic controller as well. Therefore we take them to various venues and have people from different fields of aviation speak with them."

Out of 2,000 applicants seventy were chosen and were engaged in pilot simulators and flight attendant training, flight lessons in a Cessna aircraft, as well as, field trips to various aviation facilities. This year's cadets went to the Federal Aviation Administration Radar Control Center in Peachtree City and the NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. They also visited weather stations and a Technical Operation Center at Delta to observe mechanics and how they dismantle airplanes and put them back together. The program's goal is to inspire future engineers, doctors, lawyers, and airline pilots as well as cadets for the Naval and Air Force Academies.

Speaking of the advanced program, Fellers stated, "Flight Line is



a targeted program and we aim for kids who really want to be pilots. To be selected for Flight Line Camp, students must have graduated from an ACE Camp the previous year and only ten were selected. The interviewing process was intense and followed the same procedures as a real airline interview complete with technical questions. Seven students completed their solo flights during this Ace Camp period and we gave them 15 hours of flight time to get them a jumpstart on their pilot's license."

Several awards and presentations were also given to various students and instructors for their dedication to the program. Seventeen-year-old Marietta High School Senior

Anya Kearns received the "Charlie Tut" award for being the outstanding cadet in the advanced program.

"We learned about all different aspects of aviation from clouds to actually flying the plane," said Kearns. "We had to take a solo written test before we could go up in the sky and I actually flew without an

instructor in the plane."

You have to be 16 years old to solo an airplane and 17 to obtain your private pilot's license, which Kearns is currently working toward. With aspirations to be a pilot for Delta, she plans on attending either Delaware State or Middle Georgia College after graduation. "At first I was nervous but as soon as I took off I was like how am I going to get down. It's an unexplainable experience and my first landing was absolutely wonderful."

OBAP is a non-profit organization founded in 1976 by Ben Thomas, an African-American pilot, to increase the number of Black pilots and women employed by major U.S. airlines. Delta has supported the OBAP Atlanta chapter since its inception in 1999 and has been providing free flight training camp for Ace camp students since 2001.

For information about the program and if you're interested in your child aspiring to new heights, log on to www.acecamps.org.



RECORD REPORT

LPS, SINGLES, COMPILATIONS, INDEPENDENT RELEASES

LIL WAYNE *Tha Carter II*

CASH MONEY/UNIVERSAL
PRODUCTION: THE HEATMILKZ, COOL & DRE, TMIX,
BATMAN, THE RUNNERS, 03 NASTY, LVM, DOE BOYS,
YONNY, BIG D, ROBIN THURCE, DEEZLE



WORDS BY MICHAEL "ICE-BLUE" HARRIS

IT MAY SEEM HARD TO believe, but the baby of the Cash Money Millionaires is now five solo albums deep in the Hip-Hop arena. And as the sole member still standing with Cash Money CEOs Baby and Slim, it's quite evident that he's comfortable with his uniform and the squad he lives and dies by. Showing his growth as a premier rhyme deliverer, Weezy Baby has mastered his craft as far as the flow element of the game is concerned, riding tracks as smooth as a curve on *Tha Carter II*. Serious heat is delivered on cuts like the reggae-infused "Mo Fire" and "Fly In," where he addresses the departures of his comrades with lines like, "Cash Money is an army, Navy Seal me here/Lot of niggas ran from it, but I still be here.../Sun shines on the king and sets on the prince/I met the Birdman and I been shining ever since." His mic skills are further displayed on "Feel Me" and "Get Over."

But despite his superior flow, Lil Wayne does drop the ball more

RECORD REPORT

than once on *Tha Carter II*. In fact, it's quite evident that Mannie Fresh and The Hot Boys are absent from his creative process, as most of his songs now lack any subject matter and the overall effort sounds a lot like a freestyle album. That formula may have worked for his *Gangsta Grillz* mixtape with DJ Drama that dropped last year, but now is the time to man up, because tracks like the "Best Rapper Alive" display his lack of lyrical depth. There's nothing wrong with outlining your songs or putting them down on paper before you step into the booth just because your idol Jay-Z has never had to use this technique. And even with so many issues affecting the country recently, especially in his home state of Louisiana, which was ripped apart by Hurricane Katrina and George Bush and the federal government's lack of support for his people, the Birdman Jr. still uses 90 percent of his album to boast of his lavish wealth and the drug game. Wayne's tattooed tears also seem to have taken on a life of their own, as his body counts add up to football numbers on *Tha Carter II*.

Despite those setbacks, Wayne does shine brilliantly on tracks like "Hustler Musik" and the Robin Thicke-assisted "Shooter." On the latter, he spits flames: "So many doubt 'cause I come from the South/But when I open up my mouth, all bullets come out.../And to the radio stations, I'm tired of being patient/Stop being rapper racists, region haters, spectators, dictators/Behind door dick takers/It's outrageous, you don't know how sick you make us."

On "Receipt," he shows some growth

and opens up a little about love. He also flexes his macking skills when he and his protégé Curren\$y spit their "grown-man" game to the ladies over Cameo's classic R&B ballad "Sparkle."

Production-wise, Wayne proves he can hold his own without Fresh, as The Heatmakerz, Yonny and The Crime Family supply their own fire, although the beat for "I'm A D Boy" is reminiscent of the Mannie-produced "I Need A Hot Girl."

Lil Wayne may profess to be the voice of the 'hood, but it's clear that he hasn't been in the trenches of it in a while. He's still a top-notch MC, but more verses about helping his people come up and bringing the 'hood back would have been greatly appreciated.



CHAMILLIONAIRE *The Sound of Revenge*

UNIVERSAL RECORDS
PRODUCTION: SCOTT STORCH, MANNIE FRESH, THE
BEAT BULLIES, COOL & DRE, OTHERS



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SINGLES FILE

<p>"AIN'T NO TELLIN" GRAPH F. SWIZZ BEATZ BLACK HAND/DMG/IDJ PROD.: SWIZZ BEATZ</p>	<p>"COOKIE MONEY" MASTER P F. BLACK THE NEW NO LIMIT PROD.: MYKE DIESEL</p>	<p>"REAL SOON" SNOOP DOGG F. KURUPT, DAZ, NATE DOGG DOGGY STYLE RECORDS/ KOCH PROD.: BATTLE CAT</p>	<p>"HUSTLER MUSIK" LIL WAYNE CASH MONEY/UNIVERSAL PROD.: TMIX & BATMAN</p>
<p>"NEVER SNITCH" SCARFACE RAP-A-LOT PROD.: ARTIST</p>	<p>"GANGSTA PARTY" YO GOTTI F. BUN-B & BBALL TVT RECORDS PROD.: CARLOS "SIX JULY" BROADY</p>	<p>"BOSSY" KELIS F. TOO SHORT JIVE PROD.: SHONDRAE</p>	<p>"SNAP YA FINGERS" LIL JON F. E-40 & SEAN PAUL BME PROD.: DON P</p>
<p>"STATE OF GRACE" RAEKWON WU MUSIC GROUP PROD.: RZA</p>	<p>"TOUCH IT" BUSTA RHYMES AFTERMATH PROD.: SWIZZ BEATS</p>	<p>"WHAT THA BIZ (IF I)" YOUNGBLOODZ F. MANNIE FRESH JIVE PROD.: MANNIE FRESH</p>	<p>"NASTY GIRL" THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G. F. NELLY, DIDDY, JAGGED EDGE & AVERY STORM BAD BOY ENTERTAINMENT PROD.: JAZZE PHA</p>



RECORD REPORT

LPS, SINGLES, COMPILATIONS, INDEPENDENT RELEASES

LIL' KIM *Naked Truth*

QUEEN BEE/ATLANTIC
PRODUCTION: SCOTT STORCH, T.I., HOTRUNNER,
MISTA RAJA, RED SPYDA, GQ BEATS, MIKE WILLIAMS,
JEEKY, J.R., FREDWICK, OTHERS



WORDS BY MICHAEL "ICE-BLUE" HARRIS

It's hard to believe that it's been ten years since Kimberly Jones exploded on the scene as the young protégé of the late Notorious B.I.G., leading a crew of Brooklynites called the Junior M.A.F.I.A. With three platinum LPs under her belt, one would think that her road of superstardom was filled with pathways of gold, diamonds, Prada and Gucci. But in Lil' Kim's world, what doesn't kill you will only make you stronger. After bouncing back like true royalty following the loss of Biggie, Kim found herself entangled in yet another Hip-Hop beef with fellow BK representer Foxy Brown (which eventually erupted into a shootout between the J.M. and the entourage of Capone N Noreaga outside of New York's Hot 97 offices). And unlike the original

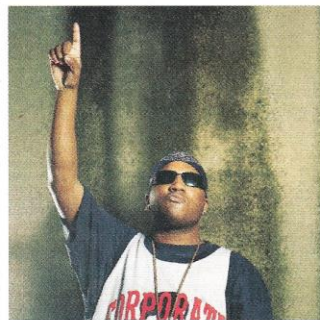


“Queen” Stephanie St. Clair, the Harlem number-runner gangstress who had Bumpy Johnson holding her down, Kim stood alone as her J.M. brethern took the stand against her. But with a life altering crisis on her shoulders, Ms. Jones takes a hard look at her life and what has made her the woman she is today, unveiling her career opus and her soul on *The Naked Truth*.

Over an assortment of stinging backdrops from homerun hitters like Scott Storch and Fredwreck, it quickly becomes apparent that Kim has a lot to get her off chest as the sentiment displayed throughout *Naked Truth* is unabashedly angry, aggressive, and confident. Spitting every verse as if it was her last, Kim excels on tracks like “The Game’s in Trouble,” which finds Kim showcasing her singing chops in her reworking of The Jackson’s disco inferno “This Place Hotel,” while her B-Girl swagger is personified on “Spellbound.” On the latter, Kim gives her turncoats a lyrical thrashing with lines like, “Cause them Mafia niggas is P-U-S-S-Y/They took the stand on the DA side.”

In an era where New York Hip-Hop has been dormant and fueled by followers trying to mimic the successes of other regions, it took a petite Black woman to make Brooklyn standup and give New York its voice back. Hate it or love, her counterparts need to go back to the lab if they ain’t coming close to touching this ‘cause the girl is on fire with heat like, “I’m coming atcha like two planes in Midtown” on the B.I.G. and Puff assisted “All Good.” The assault of versatility in flows and cadence continues on the Scott Storch dance hall riddim “Brooklyn” where she

flips an exquisite ragamuffin style and the smoke-filled, sexually charged “Chronic,” featuring Snoop, where she lets the fellas know how good her punanny is. Finally abandoning the Fendi and Dolce Gabanna one liners, and expressing the real struggles of a young black woman making it out of the ghetto, *The Naked Truth* is a fitting title for the superior album that longtime Lil’ Kim fans always knew she had in her.



YOUNG JEEZY Let’s Get It: Thug Motivation 101

CORPORATE THUGS ENTERTAINMENT/DEF JAM
PRODUCTION: SHAWTY REDD, DRUMMER BOY, MIDNIGHT BLACK, MANNIE FRESH, DON CANNON, SANCHEZ, MR. COLLIPARK, LIL’ C, JAZZE PHA, FRANK NITTI, OTHERS



There’s a new musical movement brewing in the Dirty, and while it may move many to a quick A-Town Stomp, it’s more about the grind in the streets, a.k.a. “the trap,” than it is about the club. Dedicated to

S SINGLES FILE			
“PRESIDENTIAL” YOUNGBLOODZ LAFACE/ZOMBA PROD.: LIL JON	“GEORGIA” FIELD MOB F. LUOACRIS OTP/GEFFEN PROD.: VOODOO	“FULL TIME” YO GOTTI TVT PROD.: SWIZZO	“NIGGAS DOWN SOUTH” KILLER MIKE PURPLE RIBBON/SONY PROD.: THE BEAT BULLIES
“IT’S ON” BONE CRUSHER F. TRICK DADDY & KILLER MIKE SO SO DEF/ZOMBA PROD.: THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS	“BAD CHICK (REMIX)” WEBBIE F. TRINA TRILL ENT./ASYLUM PROD.: J. ALLEN	“THE COME UP” AZ AWOL/KOCH PROD.: DJ PREMIER	“LOVIN’ IT” LITTLE BROTHER ABB/ATLANTIC PROD.: 9TH WONDER
“GEORGIA PEACH” RASHEEDA JIVE/ZOMBA PROD.: JASPER	“TURN IT UP” CHAMILLIONAIRE F. LIL’ FLIP CHAMILLITARY/ UNIVERSAL PROD.: SCOTT STORCH	“SUMMER WIT MIAMI” JIM JONES F. TREY SONGZ DIPLOMAT/KOCH PROD.: KNOXVILLE	“PIMP TIGHT” CZAR NOK LOCDOWN/CAPITOL PROD.: BLACKOUT

Youth Entrepreneurs of Atlanta ignite the future

BY MICHAEL
"ICE-BLUE" HARRIS
Contributing Writer

Youth Entrepreneurs of Atlanta (YE-Atl) held their Dare to Dream Professional Development Seminar recently at the Georgia-Pacific Center Auditorium.

Designed to spark the entrepreneurship spirit within high school students, the event included a keynote address followed by a Q&A session with City Capital Corporation founder and CEO, Ephren W. Taylor, II. Only 25-years-old, Taylor had two companies publicly traded on the stock market before he turned 23 and is the youngest African-American CEO of a publicly traded company. He started his first business venture at 12 when he began making video games and by 17, he'd built a multi-million dollar technology company, *Gol'erretGo.com*.

Delivering a strait forward approach in his lessons to the students, Taylor stressed the importance of deferred gratification and revealed that the average person fails seven times before they get their initial success. "It's better to go down-trying than never trying at all," said Taylor.

"Success is one of those paths that is not easy, but nobody sees all the battles that were fought to get there and achieve it. They only see the end results."

Taylor also said that the importance of him coming to speak with the kids in YE-Atl was so they could

dividuals to say I got mine so it's up to you to get yours."

Funded by Georgia Pacific, YE-Atl is an entrepreneur program targeted towards inner-city high school sophomores and juniors that's currently being taught at Grady, Mays, Douglass, Washington and Southside High Schools, respectively.



see another African-American male role model that came from where they came from who wasn't an entertainer or played sports. "Success is not all about the money and you can't even call yourself successful unless you help other people become successful," he explained. "I never wanted to be one of those in-

dividuals to say I got mine so it's up to you to get yours."

With a classroom curriculum developed by The National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship, students are taught everything from creating their own business plans to marketing and promotions.

JaKathryn Ross, executive director of YE-Atl, says, "We try to do a lot of experimental learning so throughout the year we have different guest speakers come in to talk to them about their businesses and how they got started. They talk about where they failed and the things

they learned along the way. We're trying to reach students and give them information that they may not otherwise have outlets to receive. Everybody is not going to go out and start their own business but the knowledge that they gain here will also help them be a better employee somewhere and then ultimately become an employer."

Students also have to complete a business plan to pass the course and submit those plans in a citywide competition for a top prize of \$1,000. The winner goes on to represent YE-Atl at the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship where they could win \$10,000.

YE-Atl also sponsors "Market Day" in the schools where the children get to put what they've learned to the test. Prior to the sell-a-thon, students have to research their product and are then loaned \$25 to purchase products at wholesale at Costco and then sell it to their student body. The students also have to advertise and utilize all of the different concepts that they've learned and apply them to make their sales.

Ross said, "The incentive is that they get to keep all of the profits but they just have to repay the \$25 loan.

A lot of students also learned about price wars and supply and demand because a lot of them invested in candy. It helps them learn how to apply the concepts they're learning in class to real business settings."

The event also included workshops that dealt with market analysis, marketing techniques and financial literacy that were taught by several business professionals in the area. Marieh Scales, a sophomore at Douglass High who hopes to one day own an in-home tutorial service, said, "The most important thing I've learned from being in the program is financing my dream. The class teaches us about putting money in the bank instead of spending everything you make. You have to make goals and work towards them and once you do that, set some more. Sometimes you have to hold off on J's (Michael Jordan sneakers) and PSP games."

YE-Atl also works with other business to offer scholarships and to help graduates start their businesses. For more information or if your company would like to become involved with the entrepreneurial program, log on to www.yeatl.org.

RECORD REPORT

LPS, SINGLES, COMPILATIONS, INDEPENDENT RELEASES, UNSIGNED HYPE



LIL' FLIP *U Gotta Feel Me*

CLOVER G/SONY COLUMBIA

PRODUCERS: PLAY-N-SKILLZ, HEATMAKERZ, DJ
PAUL & JUICY J, DAVID BANNER, RED SPYDA,
OOMP CAMP, ARTIST



BY MICHAEL "ICE-BLUE" HARRIS

COMMITTED TO BALL TILL HE falls, Lil' Flip has parlayed ghetto-celebrity garnered from his memorable Screw-tape appearances into a successful independent career on Sucker Free Records, only to upgrade his status as a franchise player with an imprint at Sony (Clover G) and a brand of alcohol called Lucky Wine, which will soon invade shelves. So while all eyes are on him, Houston's own "underground legend" and freestyle king

returns with a double dose of syrup for fans to lean to on his second major release, *U Gotta Feel Me*. The double CD finds the leprechaun leading a new wave of Texas MCs while dipping throughout the South for several family reunions—and even back East to kick game with a few new connects along the way.

Wrecking shop with the triumphant Super Bowl anthem “Game Over,” Flip declares that “Hip-Hop needs a makeover” and proceeds to show why he’s one of the premier game spitters in the South. Taking his act on the road, Flip re-connects with fellow southern pimp David Banner on “Ain’t No N****” where he explains his penchant for picking up broads after the club for the well-celebrated “one niters.” He then swings out West and shares the set with Butch Cassidy on “U Neva Know,” further putting his mack down.

The 2004 ghetto boy continues to broaden his musical range with the reggae-fused “The Ghetto” produced by Cam’Ron’s in-house production squad The Heatmakerz. With this cut he divulges how he came up out of the ‘hood by soaking game from the OGs in his life and learning to get his grind on independently. Those sentiments also carry over to the introspective “Where I’m From” with newcomers Graff and Gravy where Flip’s motivational real-talk and willingness to share the game shine through.

Then there’s the definitive “What’s My Name,” where an always cleverly cocky Flip boasts about getting elevators in the crib after going platinum off of one single. But he still leaves the homies a little substance as he spits: “I used to be the class clown/ And my teachers always said, ‘Flip! Sit yo’

ass down!/ Or you can leave the class now’/ So I left and got paid/ But don’t get it twisted ‘cause I made straight A’s.”

But when he’s not bragging, the self-proclaimed “\$22 million man” still finds time to pay his respects to his late mentor DJ Screw, serving up “Drugz,” a slowed-down, rock influenced head-banger which could cross genres and get a few rave parties *crunk*. Flip also spreads the love on “Rags to Riches,” showcasing the talent of his squad, the Clover G’s next emerging artist Will-Lean as they trade verses reminiscent of EPMD on a pure-fire club jump-off.

Diversity proves to be a major asset in Lil’ Flip’s arsenal. Whether its ripping alongside Diplomat Jim Jones on the confrontational “Y’all Don’t Want It,” or bringing out the choppers and delivering a barrage of lyrics with ATL static bringers Killer Mike, Pastor Troy and Baby D on “We Aint Playin’,” the 2004 ghetto boy continues to blend his laid back verses smoothly on tracks with artists from any coast. Sadly though, the numerous collaborations and guest appearances throughout the double disc serve as somewhat of a double-edged sword. Although the lyrical sparring is of top-notch caliber, listeners are left wanting to hear *just* Flip over more of the tracks.

Overall, *U Gotta Feel Me* delivers serious bump almost all the way through. However, like most double albums, the collection becomes slightly repetitive with Flip seeming to cover previously charted territory (stunting and pistol play) on the uninspiring “Check (Let’s Ride)” and “Dem Boyz (Screwed).” Nevertheless, Lil’ Flip continues to ball and shine brighter than platinum pieces with canary diamonds.

fat **tape** THE LATEST EXCLUSIVES

“GHETTO”
LIL’ FLIP
CLOVER G/ COLUMBIA

“I C, I C”
J-KWON W/ ST.
LUNATICS
SO SO DEF/ ARISTA

“GET NO BETTAH”
CASSIDY
W/MASHONDA
FULL SURFACE

“STAR WARS”
NAS
ILL WILL/ COLUMBIA

“DON’T KNOW ME”
MIKE WEST W/ DAZ
DILLINGER
HANGTIME
ENTERTAINMENT

**“RELATIONSHIP
WITH MY GUN
(GO AGAINST ME)”**
BENZINO W/ THE
UNTOUCHABLES
ZNO RECORDS

“REAL LIFE”
E-40 W/ TALIB KWELI
JIVE

“I WILL NOT LOSE”
METHOD MAN W/
REDMAN
DEF JAM

**“YOU DON’T
BELIEVE ME”**
D.O.E. (JOHN DOE) W/
N.O.R.E.
BEAT CLUB/
FAMILY CREW

“RIDE”
E-A-SKI
INFRARED MUSIC

“POISONOUS”
DILATED PEOPLES W/
DEVIN DA DUDE
PRIORITY/ CAPITOL

“ONE SHOT”
Q-UNIQUE
UNCLE HOWIE
RECORDS

“WARZONE”
PETE ROCK W/ DP’Z
BBE/ RAPSTER

Tony Rock ignites his laugh factory on TV One

BY MICHAEL
"ICE-BLUE" HARRIS
Contributing Writer

Comedian Tony Rock has partnered with TV One to launch his own one-hour comedy series, *The Funny Spot*. Airing Saturdays at 10 p.m., the show was shot in Los Angeles at the Comedy Union and will spotlight 5 of 40 different comedians each week. Serving as executive producer and opening every show with his own routine, Tony says, "I just wanted to create another showcase for young Black comics because all they pretty much had were *Def Comedy Jam* and *BET's Comic View* but they come around once a year. We also have *Who's Got Jokes?* but that's a comedy competition."

Bringing originality to the world of laughs, *The Funny Spot* also delves a little deeper into the lives of comedians as Tony conducts hilarious interviews with them before each of their sets. At the end of the show, the comics also take questions from the audience and are required to dress up for their performances.

Showcasing comedy in a different way, Tony says, "I come from

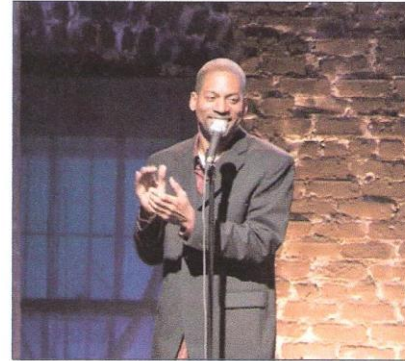
the notion that you should never tell a comic what to do on stage and how to dress but its entertainment and Black entertainers are always complaining that we don't get certain roles. We get pigeonholed and it's just certain stereotypes of what people see of us on TV. I decided that I'm going to change it. I'm going to make sure that everybody looks presentable and when you watch the show, you're going to go, 'Wow! That guys funny and man he really looks good with that suit on.' This show is showcasing Black comedy, but it's also showcasing Black people. It's damn near a fashion show with comics."

A comic force in his own right, Tony Rock played "Dirk Black" for four years on the hit UPN comedy series, *All Of Us*, alongside Duane Martin and LisaRaye McCoy-Missick. Speaking of returning to the stage after his show ended, he reveals, "I never stopped doing stand up and I never will. We would shoot the show and I'd leave the set that day and go right to the comedy club. When the show was over for the summer, I'd tour for the entire summer. So that never stops."

The younger brother of comic giant Chris Rock, Tony has managed to carve his own lane. Agreeing that his likeness is accurately portrayed by the younger, athletic and cooler character, "Drew," on *Everybody Hates Chris*, "Tony says, 'I made sure that we took separate paths. I didn't sign with the same management or the same agency. If Chris was touring on the east coast, I was touring on the west coast. I never talk about him on stage. People know that's my brother but I'm just comfortable in my own skin. I know what I do, I know what he does and I just don't let it bother me.'"

Taking the comparisons all in stride, Tony uses the curiosity of his brother's fans to his advantage. "I know people come to shows and are like, 'Hey, that's Chris's brother.' But when the show's over, they're like, 'Hey, now I'm a Tony Rock fan.' So I never really let it bother me, plus I've got seven brothers so my whole life it was always 'Little Chris,' 'Little Andre' or 'Little Charles,' so it's no big deal."

Aside from *The Funny Spot*, Tony will hit the big screen this summer with the release of *Three Can*



'Play That Game. Shot in Atlanta last summer, it's a continuation of its predecessor *Two Can Play That Game* and has Vivica A. Fox returning as the lead. Also rounding out the cast for the second installment is Jason George, Terri J. Vaughn, Melissa Ford, Jasmine Lewis and Atlanta's own Rashan Ali from Hot 107.9's

morning show, The A-Team.

Tony also plans on taking *The Funny Spot* on the road this summer and interchange the comedians on various tour dates. Chris already brought the pain. Now, it's time for Tony to 'rock' so make sure you check for him when he hits a comedy club near you.

'How She Move' hits screens



Starring newcomer Rutina Wesley, Keyshia Cole and comedian DeRay Davis

How She Move is an energetic, gritty and ultimately inspiring coming of age tale about a gifted young woman who defies all the rules as she step dances her heart out to achieve her dreams. Featuring a fresh cast of new discoveries, this Sundance Film Festival hit marks the feature film debut of Rutina Wesley, with street-style step sequences by top choreographer Hi Hat and special appearances by R&B singer-songwriter Keyshia Cole and comedian DeRay Davis.

Bursting with raw talent and intelligence, Raya Green (Wesley), the daughter of Jamaican immigrants, has always been the family's one great hope. She won the rare chance to break out of their drug and crime-infested neighborhood when she was

accepted into the exclusive Seaton Academy. But when her sister dies of an overdose, the family is shattered and Raya is forced to return to the place she tried so hard to escape. It's not easy to go back — especially when one-time friends, including the tough minded Michelle (Tré Armstrong), see Raya as a stuck-up traitor who left the community behind. Feeling trapped and looking for a way out, Raya learns about a step compe-



loyalty, her determination, her family's ambitions and her heart.

How She Move is not just about money or a big opportunity, it's about Raya finding the one thing she's been missing in her life: a sense of self.

'How She Move' is now showing nationwide in theaters.

Mega stars set to perform at Dallas Austin Foundation's 3rd annual gala

On Saturday, March 1, 2008, the Dallas Austin Foundation's 3rd annual "Don't Stop The Music" gala will be set to deliver a memorable, star-studded evening to raise funds for the initiative. Special performances scheduled for the gala include Gladys Knight, George Clinton, Fantasia, Cedric The Entertainer and comedian Orlando Jones, who will serve as the host. More information including ticket purchases can be obtained online at www.dallasaustinfoundation.org or by calling (687) 686-5676.

Founded in 2003 by Grammy Award-winning songwriter and producer Dallas Austin, the Dallas Austin Foundation, Inc. (DAF) is transforming the lives of young people by enriching their educational experiences through the use of music and film. DAF has developed a curriculum-based program that puts music back into public schools by establishing small recording studios in local schools to teach students song writing and music production.

The Dallas Austin Foundation

has already established studios at several Metro Atlanta public schools including: Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School, Brown Middle School, Southside Comprehensive High School, Washington High School, North Atlanta High School, Cedar Grove High School



and Martin Luther King Jr. High School.

DAF also provides scholarships and financial assistance to help further develop and maintain the musical arts and entertainment departments in school and bring awareness to students of the vast opportunities that exist within the entertainment industry. The Dallas Austin Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization.

For more information or to contribute, call 404-609-9431.

