

I Ain't a Lecturer: A Foreword

by J-Zone

"Everybody dies on this muthafuckin' album."

Words of wisdom from Spice 1, one of the masters of what the media dubbed "gangsta rap," also known as "hardcore rap," "street rap," and everybody's favorite, "reality rap." The coloring book you've just bought is dedicated entirely to the pioneers and current baton holders of the world's most misunderstood subgenera. You coulda bought a Hardy Boy's mystery or an Agatha Christie novel, dummy. Well, now that we're rollin' on 43-inch rims at your expense, you might as well get some history.

"When I wrote about parties, it didn't fit..."

Words of wisdom from the one Ice-T, a pioneer of the West Coast Gangsta rap scene. His smash hit "6 In Tha Morning" was one of the tracks that set the foundation for this style of rap. Instead of rockin' parties, these dudes were robbin' 'em. Instead of doin' the hustle, they rapped about hustlin'. Instead of callin' the police to secure the disco, these dudes were sayin' "Fuck Tha Police!" They ducked bullets while others danced to "Rapper's Delight." So rappin' about shit they'd never own over a disco break was a moot point when they dealt with triffin' shit on a daily basis. Brains were splattered on tape, hookers were blasted on record, the word "bitch" was used with the frequency of a Foxy Brown brand-name mention, the word "ho" was NEVER to be used to refer to a garden tool, and cussin' was like breathin'.

Some artists were just havin' fun with it and signifyin'. Just talkin' some shit in a Doilemite/Blowfly fashion. Some used extreme graphic rhymes and angst to speak out against what Middle America was too wrapped up watching *Cherry* to notice. To some, it was just expression of what they saw; but the less talented of this genre over-flooded the market and created a backlash, fucking it up for some of the more talented artists.

Some people, who were pop-rap artists, got a "gangsta" edge back in 1993, 'cause gangsta rap had officially taken over. Onyx on the east, Death Row in the west, Geto Boys and Poison Clan in the south. Masta Ace's brilliant 1993 *Slaughterhouse* LP and Black Sheep's 1991 *Wolf In Sheep's Clothing* both humorously poked fun at the genre that had become a mockery of itself. But there are a few tasteless people like myself that actually find bad, generic, poorly produced gangsta rap albums enjoyable in a twisted sort of way. True, these "bad apples" could also be considered an addition to the genocide that "the system" really wants.

Yes, I'm pretty sure the artists didn't mean for their records to seem funny. But sometimes, you gotta laugh at the cartoonish violence, excessive profanity, and poor sound quality on Master P's *Mawa's*

Bad Boy LP or nod furiously to the funky and controversial St. Ides Malt Liquor commercials of the early 90s. Even though you know St. Ides might one day put your dick in a sling and probably kill your sperm cells quicker than Nonoxyl-9, those commercials are a hot property today because of their heavy wit and high funk factor.

"...Now that we're rollin' on 43-inch rims at your expense, you might as well get some history."

It's too easy to just shake your head in disgust 'cause while some of the music was a lame knock-off of itself, at least some of it was hilarious and down-right funky.

Some "gangsta" rap albums are rap classics (i.e. most NWA-related, Rap-A-Lot, Compton's Most Wanted, X-Raided, Death Row, Ice-T, Mob Style, and Schoolly D records). Some are just funny and truly tasteless, and some are just run-of-the-mill, but at last we'll give light to each and every artist who made an impact on this subgenera. Some of the selections I agree with, some I don't, but fuck all this shit talkin' - I ain't a lecturer.

Word.



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