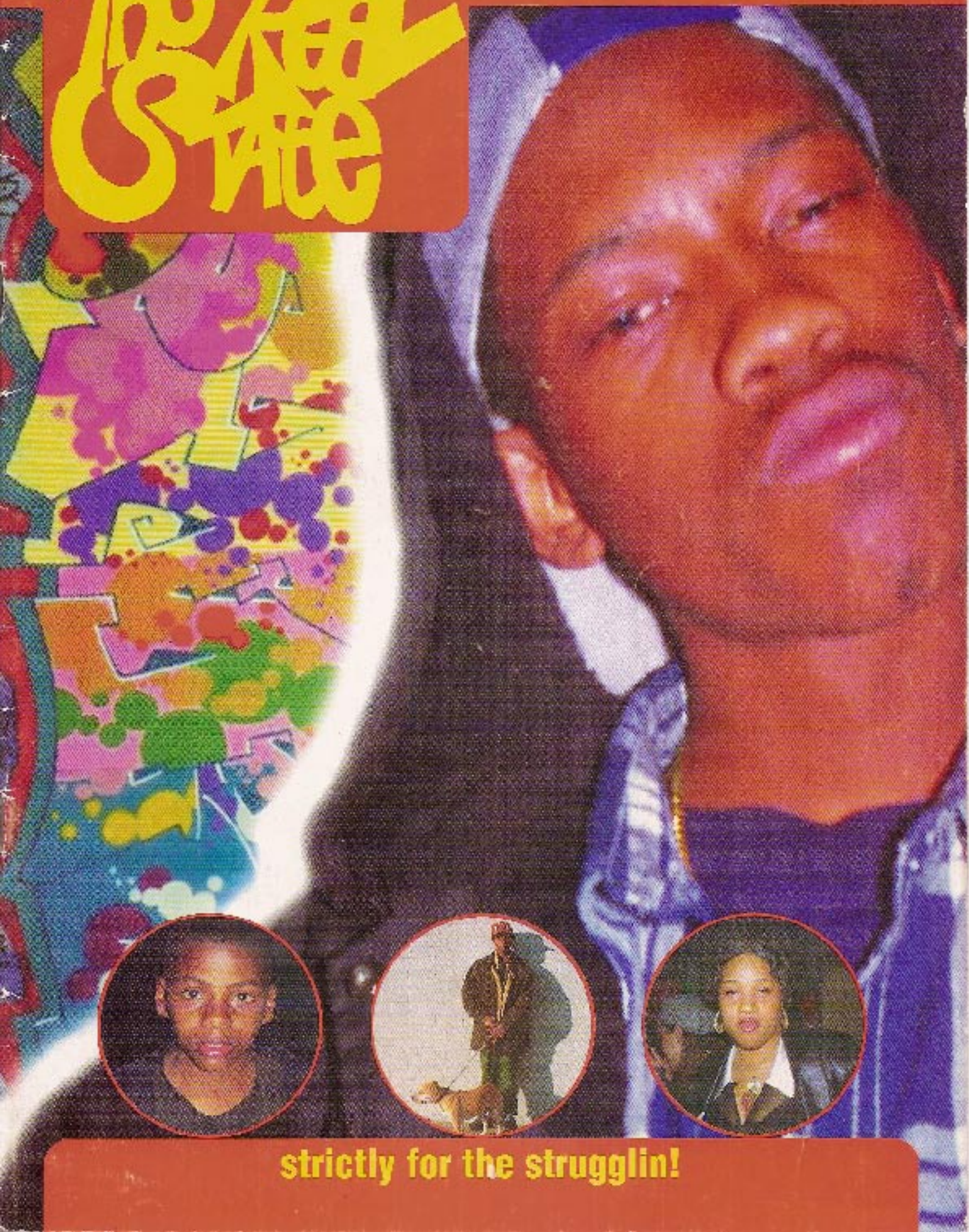


THE REAL STATE

Issue Eight

\$5/E3



strictly for the strugglin!

Introduction

In the beginning.....

Not about colour, not about fashion.
First things first, plain old soul expression.
Show your identity, state your reality.
Reach out and touch the unfilled part of humanity.

"A PEOPLE OF A DEEPER SPEECH THAN THOU CANST PERCEIVE..." Isaiah 33:9
The eye of pain sees

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only 1 rule - below street level

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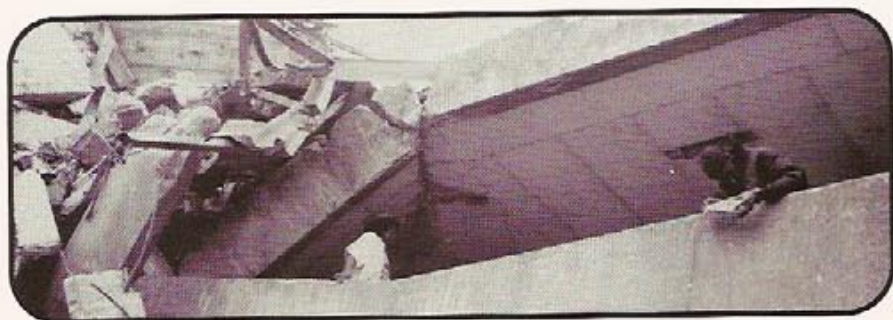
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ENJOY....

"Put down your guns and pick up your pens" Straight from the Dogg's mouth!
Snoop Doggy Dogg (March '95)

"The day of your watchmen has come" Habakkuk 2 v 4

10TH JANUARY WATTS 1995

It's raining blood
Not water today
The news tells me it's a state of emergency
The flood is rising
And the stars are falling
(But they didn't report that)
The moon turned red
It's on
And on and on til the breakdown
And it don't stop last night this morning
Pop-pop-pop Barokk! 44 shot
Using death like plastic
To buy another soul sealed in a bodybag casket
The blood calls too loud she screams too wild
I think they massacred the projects
Tell someone please but no,
Not even the police dare face the truth
Of an unwanted youth
And the reality of death, death in all of us
They say it's just them
Crazy niggas making up a fuss
I hear your wail, mamma, I feel your sobs, homie
Is it blood or rain soaking under
My front door
The "worthless 1 dollar"
Life leaves a void where a faceless
Bodiless bigger than life
PAIN
screams deeperlouder higher deeper
Waking the millionaire fat tycoon in his jumbojet sleeper,
The prisoner in his cell,
The dope fiend in his pleasureless hell,
The child from her slumber
No, it was not a number
But a soul
It was not all about getting paid, or paying back,
Being down or not taking no slack
It was about saving your soul
You said this was hell
But now hell is a hole
Spiralling down down with no ground
Despair and destruction
Are the Real Gangsters of the Ghetto,
Ignorance the weapon
And Fear the dope,
Choke out knowledge,
Crush dreams and hope
Love God, Love thy neighbor, Love Thyself
Change cuts deep to the heart
For unless we stop soon
Twilight zone
Forever enters the dark.



t h e **R e a s o n**

Who can really say why the trains are special? That running piece, that sacred sign, for just half an hour? The trainspotters, grafflickoholics, taggers and international aerosol crews pay homage, but do you know? That fly unreadable yet unmistakable word wasn't political, wasn't the urban topical, it wasn't even what writers maintain, 'the fullest artistic expression of themselves'. It didn't just burn the baddest, raze the roughest. It said: The Reason Why I Do This The Reason The Reason is in my Heart for This Life is Beyond Reason.

And when the bang of this fact hits you (in the gut not just the head), you're going to do the flyest s*** like you don't understand with a joy and energy and pain and vigour like you don't understand because it's the faith society cannot admit to.

Real understanding comes through faith not through knowledge and not through self-expression. Where all arts have failed, graffiti has succeeded. An international uncontrollable explosion of The Reason. Original writers wail "We've lost control." Of what? You lose it the minute you think you own it. You gain it the minute you give it. For an artist only moves with the rhythm of life itself, all its pain and pleasure - you knew it, you felt it, you gave it when you put that essence down (now THAT's control) to remind us of what we constantly choose to forget.





HELL'S SATISFACTION

Everybody reads the future
 But no one knows the time
 Everybody's shooting up
 But no one's getting high
 Everybody's travelling
 But nobody's moving
 Everybody's on their own path
 But no one's got direction
 Everybody's partying
 But no one's having fun
 Everybody's denying
 But no one can say no
 Everybody's suicidal
 But no one wants to die
 Everybody says "tell the truth"
 But they still prefer the lie
 Everybody's scared to fail
 But they're too terrified to try
 Everybody wants a life
 But it never seems to start.



STRAIGHT FROM THE HOOD

VICTORY OUTREACH LA PUENTE AND SOUTH CENTRAL

written & directed by Manuel Aguilar

Straight From the Hood and that's no lie for every member of the cast is recreating the reality which once bound them. The script for this production was born, not in a Hollywood suite, but on the streets of L A and in the hearts and minds of young people whose purpose in life is telling the full story of the ghetto and a real way out of the destruction and chaos.

The play was written by 23 year old Manuel Aguilar, a former drug addict and gangster from Albuquerque two years ago. Since then it has toured the whole of the USA and has been performed in front of 9,000 plus audiences.

The play opens with two kids, Danny and Jimmy, Junior High drop-outs with ambitions of being a cop and a policeman. Nightowl, a hardcore gangster, comes on the scene. He remarks on their aptitude for crime and that "it's time" for them to join a gang. He renames Danny "Creep" for the way he creeps away with purses and Jimmy "Rascal" because he is the one! BamBam, Danny's younger brother, stays carefully in the background. Nightowl invites them to a gang meeting and next time we see them it's four years later as fully fledged gangbangers, mocking each other for their broken dreams and for being sucked into life in the 'hood...



Party time, with popping, backflipping, butterfly...enter Cherry, the 'hood's mascot cokehead with her gyrating jaw, bug-eyed and tweaking like a paranoid frog. She asks for the double-up then the caviar and then the booyah. A converted Nightowl turns up with "something better than the booyah." "Better than the booyah?" Bug-eyes popping out. "Yeah - Jesus Christ." "Oh yeah," with sudden disappointment. "Just call round to my house later. Now where's the booyah?" Cherry continues scrabbling about for her rock. She's interrupted by the entrance of her neglected son. She wobbles, drops the pipe and curses and kicks the child. "I can't even get high no more! Come on, Andre, get up. I know you ain't hurt." Nightowl approaches the young gangbangers but his offer is met with: "Later. I'm growing up right now." "Yeah, but sometimes we grow up the wrong way, homie." Another response is: "Tomorrow. I'm busy right now." "But tomorrow isn't promised to you," says Nightowl and this is the theme of the play.

The partying and dealing continue as does the feud between Varrio Viajo and Cold Town Cartel. Gunshots aren't limited to the stage but fill the auditorium. Lowrider cars drive up and gunshots burst out. It's not just the emotions and scenarios that are 3D in this street play.

The next scene is an all-too-common family scene. A drunken, stoned father beats a worn out mother and wife, the kids disrespect the father and Nightowl enters to confront the father: "Look at your sons. They're hurting inside." "I didn't spend all that time in jail just to have you come preach to me. You know nothing. It's none of your business." But Nightowl doesn't give up: "We make our sons, man. WE make them what they are."

BamBam turns to Nightowl: "You bring in that Jesus stuff and your little Bible. Man, if there was a God, my family wouldn't be in this mess. You came in here thinking you know everything. You know nothing."



Eventually, they get rid of Nightowl by promising him they'll come to church...tomorrow.

Meanwhile, BamBam is looking for a female.. Unfortunately for him, the chosen one also happens to be a respectable, demure student, Amanda, who doesn't understand why he can't walk her to her door because it's "out of his turf". Still, the two stay together and when he takes her to his gang, the girls try to jump her. A shoot-out from Cold Town Cartel occurs and BamBam fluctuates between going with his gang or staying with his girl. After three calls from Rascal, he leaves his girl to follow the gang but neither Amanda nor Rascal are pleased with him. He makes up with Amanda and takes her home. Rascal tells Creep that BamBam "ranked out" on his neighborhood. This is one of the deepest crimes he could ever commit. Creep calls for the backing of his stoned father who has just smashed his bottle over his wife and child. He yells at his youngest son:

"We grew up in the varrio and we'll die in the varrio. The varrio's you, man. That's all we've got to live for - the varrio, man."

"A rucra can't change you," says Creep.

BamBam retaliates with: "All the times when you were locked up, where were you when I needed a father? I hate you. You were never

my father." Creep and BamBam disown each other as brothers and BamBam and Amanda leave.

They find themselves unstrapped in a neighborhood not their own. Cold Town Cartel pounce on them and BamBam is shot and taken to the hospital where he later dies. Monster, the leader of Cold Town Cartel, is the killer and when Rascal learns of BamBam's death, he gathers Varrio Viajo for the payback. Monster, being such a homie(!), pulls Trigger, his sidekick, in front of him as Rascal fires. Tinee, one of the chief members of the gang, turns on Monster as Trigger lies dead: "You've killed Trigger!"

"It was either me or him and I die for nobody. He was just a little trigger nigger anyway" shows this G's total disrespect for life, even though Trigger was prepared to give his own self and was loyal to the end. The cause wasn't worth the sacrifice.

Creep is broken because his carnalito (BamBam) has died and they parted so bitterly. Nightowl is looking for Creep to tell him BamBam said the sinner's prayer before he died. Creep himself finally realises tomorrow is never promised and gives his life to God, asking for Christ's forgiveness and

receiving God's love. He goes back into his neighborhood to tell Rascal and the gang what's up. Rascal mocks him: "You're ranking out! I'll die for this neighborhood!" he boasts but Creep calmly says: "In this Bible, it says there's a guy who died for all of us already, homes. You know, you'll live and die for your neighborhood but it will NEVER do that for you. Let's go to church, homie."

Rascal: "No, man. Life's a gamble and I guess I'm a gambler. You go your way and I'll go mine." They touch and Rascal gives the gangsign. Creep is supposed to respond likewise but instead he raises the Bible and turns to leave. Goofy and Mousie, however, step forward to follow him. "You know what, I'll go with you. I'm tired of the guys telling me this week they love me and the next day they find another girl. I'm tired of the backstabbing and fighting."

Rascal calls out to Mousie: "Hey, Mousie. Whatever you do, don't be a phoney. Don't be a fake. When you were in the hood, you went all the way. Now you are a Christian, don't sell out. Go all the way." Rascal himself continues to front and party, but in his soliloquy he turns over what he's seen and been offered.



"Oh, well. There's always tomorrow." But tomorrow never came for Rascal dies in a shoot-out, asking for forgiveness as he dies in his own blood.

If you don't understand the strong bonds and conflicts in the neighborhood, make sure you see this play. This play states more clearly than all the books and policies in the world that it is a change of heart, not culture, that can bring life to the 'hood.

Director: Manuel Aguilar Tel: 818 961 4910

Eileen Solis (20) plays Mousie in "Straight From The Hood": "I was born in Huntington Park, Los Angeles. When I was 13, we moved to El Monte and I started smoking cigarettes, weed, doing parties, drinking...still going to church."

In fact, I used to smoke weed at church. My parents didn't know. I started drinking a lot. I was involved in church but my heart wasn't. I just wanted to experience the other life cos religion didn't make me feel good and I wanted to see if the other life would make me feel better. I started hanging out with gangs at 15. I got to taste the world for what it was: the backstabbing, the guys hurting me but that didn't fill the emptiness inside of me. At church, I got asked to perform in "Straight From The Hood". I was drinking heavily at this time. By now I'd moved on to hard liquor daily: Vodka, Bacardi, Presidente. My mum was telling me to go into a rehab home. She didn't know about the drinking. I still wanted to party and didn't want to go into a home. One day, I caught myself drinking too much and there and then I decided to go into the women's home at Victory Outreach.

I always felt that I was a person looking to be somebody, looking for belonging. I guess what really helped me in the home was people telling me continually that God has already made me somebody. My life counts for who I am cos God made me this way. I was in the women's home for five months and God changed me. I know I'll never be the same. I came out with a new purpose in life - to reach out to other people, to see young girls get saved and raised up to be what God called them to be, not what the world says they must be.

Now my desire is to serve God. Partying and drinking isn't worth anything cos it only lasts for a while cos after it's all gone - the hopelessness, the pain and the hurt is all there still. The love that filled that emptiness was the love from my family, the love from my Christian friends and, most of all, God's love.

The girl I play in "Straight From The Hood" (Mousie) is the girl I was before I gave it up to God. I was searching to be somebody, vulnerable, insecure, trying to fit in, be hard, trying to be something big and hard in front of my friends. I'd say to young girls just on the fringe of gangs and partying - give God a chance. Open your heart to God to fill that void inside you with His love that you're looking for in a boyfriend or in a neighborhood cos God is the only true happiness that there is in this world."

THE DUKE OF EARL

directed and written by **Ed Morales**

The original Chicano gangster play, fifteen years old this year and still drawing 15,000 plus audiences of the new generation of cholas and cholas, is not a story about a person so much as the story of inner city gangbanging. It is the story of the varrio. One of the first scenes is in prison. There is plenty of humour here, very inside humour and it's black (pardon the puns). The blacks laugh at how the Mexicans pose as gangsters whereas with them it's all to do with "money, money, monnnnehhh!" and getting the chance to enjoy a nice ride, music and a woman.....

Basically, the tale is about two rival Mexican gangs: the initiation, the lifestyle, the tragedies, the pressured families and the choices to be made. Duke, one of the gang's leaders, loses his girlfriend in a shoot-out. From then on, it's all down-hill. Drinking out the pain, he humiliates himself and his gang by stripping down at a party and kissing a chola who has just vomited. One of the black members of the gang says to him:

"Yo, homes. What's that hanging out of your teeth?"

"Check it out, homie." Duke pokes around in his mouth. "Chorizo, homes".

"Chorizo? Who's Chorizo?" asks



the black brother.

"Never mind. You stick to your chitlins."

His gang leaves him to his self-inflicted degradation. He breaks down and an OG enters with his wine bottle and asks him why he's crying. The OG gives him some unasked-for advice:

"You get used to the pain. First you get into gangs, get a rucra and some kids and an apartment, go in and out of jail, become a dope fiend and then a wino and then you die. You just get used to the pain. When my first son died in a driveby, I hurt real bad but somehow I couldn't cry. Then later, when my daughter left and I lost her, I stopped feeling so much. You just get used to it."

Duke is not convinced. He is full of pain and bitterness: "I love the varrio but it's never loved me back!"

OG: "It never said it would. Man, we tattoo our bodies so that if we die in another neighborhood they can locate our bodies to the right varrio and put us in the mail!! We're nothing to the varrio."

An ex-gangbanger, who has dealt with his pain and is living a new life now enters and says: "It's not about who's on top, who's running things. It's all about giving. Giving like Jesus gave himself for us."



The OG mocks the 'preacher'. Duke is faced with the choice of being an OG or changing his life. The OG says at last: "You know, if you want to be a true OG, do as I do. But, you know what? It's better to listen to him. Hey

preacher! I want you to come and preach at another funeral: mine."



Duke makes the choice to give up the pain. But meanwhile, his old gang have done a payback shooting on the rival gangleader, Indio's, girl and son. Indio is left screaming over their bleeding bodies and one of Duke's men tells Rock, the killer, to shoot Indio too.

"What for?" says Rock. "I've already killed his dream."

This play is hardcore like no movie out there, not skipping out any of the agonies, blood, shootings and details of inner city life. As a travelling play, it pulls over-capacity audiences each time and awaits only the bigger arena of The Screen.

Tel: Ed Morales (director) 408 445 3300

Bollie (Robert Maes) from San Jose plays the leader of the rival gang of Duke's in the play:

"I was in the gangs in the late '70s. All the friends that I grew up with got into gang warfare - a little bit for protection, a little bit for pride. I was in gangs between the ages of 14 - 20. In the beginning, it was fun, exciting to carry weapons, powerful, experimenting with drugs, lowriding, all the girls and then after a while the gang demands more commitment. They say: "Now you've kicked back with us for so long, get committed or get out. That's when we started to get more nervous - to the point that you didn't know whether you'd get out of that party alive. A lot of my friends got busted and I was getting tired of it. Seeing them either go to prison or die in my neighborhood. I started looking for something. I had three other brothers heavily into gangs. My mum was praying for us. I got jumped often and we hurt people. I saw people get killed. At first it scares you then you get numb to it. The code of the neighborhood is the tougher you are, the meaner you are, the more your reputation grows.

Then we went to a rally and all my gang got saved. Previous to this, the Pastor of our local church, Pastor Ed Morales, would come into our neighborhood and talk to us a lot. One of my friends listened to him and started going to church. We went to church in the end but within two weeks all of us were saved. The other gang members who didn't come respected us for our decision. The ones that didn't go for God are now either dead, in prison or messed up terminally with drugs. I think a gang member makes a good, tough Christian cos loyalty is a number one value in the gangs. It's a big thing - complete life commitment. Compromise is the most hated characteristic. We'd kill a man who ran from his commitment. You make a commitment to that gang, to those people you'll die for that gang. It was true blue. There was no playing games. None of that plastic stuff. When I first got

saved, I really felt how the Devil had my life like a puppet. It's so foolish as a gangmember to give so much commitment and your life to a cause that is meaningless. You're so deceived as to what you're doing.

Broken homes are a big factor in gang development. The gang provides a sense of community and belonging.

I feel more than ever now that people should be ministering to the gangs. When I was in the gang, we'd still fight with just our fists and knives. Guns were saved for big time. Now little kids have guns and it's on like never before. They are twenty times more violent. Drivebys are daily realities. People need to wake up to the fact that there's a whole generation out there dying. As a pastor of a church in Stockton, Sacramento, I try even harder now to reach out to the gangs. A gang member is really tender inside. They have many gifts and talents inside them but never an opportunity to release or to use them, to develop as people. They need to be loved as a person not as an animal or a thing. We recently performed "Duke of Earl" to over 18,000 gang members in Stockton. We concentrate on just getting out into the neighborhoods with rallies, rappers, plays, door-to-door visitation. Most people can relate to our ministry as most of us are from the streets and were notorious characters before.

I never looked back once I got saved. Once you've experienced God's love, that unconditional, complete, deep-filling love, there's nothing that can pull you back. When you trust the Lord completely, it immediately eliminates any values that the street or gang take. God did for me what no gang, no parents, no program, no girl could ever do. He touches the deepest part of man. He makes a contact with the darkest part of humanity through his Son. He touched me with love, something I didn't know about. When Jesus touched me, he overwhelmed me. I've never felt so loved and accepted in all my life. That love is so real and it's new every day. God has given me a freshness and a love I've never

had. That's what the world is looking for; somebody to love them unconditionally and when that takes place, how can you walk away?

As a father now, I see my receiving Christ into my life as breaking the curse of my family. My father, grandfather and great grandfather were all alcoholics. My son will not know that. All I want him to see is the presence and power of the Lord. I trust that the cycle of destruction has been broken forever."



Vince Molina plays Duke in the play. He is also from a background of gangs and drugs in San Jose: "I started getting involved in gangs when I was 12-13 years old. I wanted to be like my brothers, wanted the lifestyle, the dress code, the girls. I left sports cos I wanted to get involved in gangs. In the beginning it was fun but as time goes on, the results of living that type of lifestyle get to you. I got saved at a rally in San Jose. A little after that, I saw the Duke of Earl and my pastor, Ed Morales, helped me by getting me involved in the play. I got so involved, I never went back to the streets. When a youngster leaves a type of lifestyle, he needs something deeper and stronger to fill its place, something good and positive. I've now been involved in the play for over 14 years - half my life. We've played it out all over California and the South West and no, we've never tired of seeing souls saved and lives transformed by the move of God. That's the whole reason why we do the play so that the neighborhoods know that God loves THEM and calls THEM.

I would never trade in the things I'm doing for the Lord for any money or position. I wouldn't be the person I am today without him. I wouldn't have a wife and two children with one more on the way without God. How can I sell out

on Him?

The family is the root of all this pain and destruction. The hurt, the abuse, the brokenness - it's all there. Most times, young people lack any type of love, respect and discipline at home so they run to the streets.

Our future goals are to film "Duke of Earl" as a movie and to continue with our other plays in reaching the youth. We want to be able to reach out to ethnic groups and the unreached people. We get our scenarios from our daily lives in the inner city - the music, the talk, the slang, the action, posing, dancing and dealing."

Ed Morales is the writer and director of "The Duke Of Earl". He has also written other plays and a couple of books. An ex- drug addict, gang member and Vietnam veteran, he has been pastoring a church with his family in San Jose for over twenty years. Due to his previous heavy drug abuse, he has severe health problems, including a liver which doctors told him would give out 8 years ago and weakened kidneys. But this man, it would seem, lives on something beyond perfect health:

"When I was pioneering the church and gang members started getting saved aged from 15 years upwards, I saw that they had a lot of energy and couldn't sit in church and listen to preaching. They wanted to demonstrate what God had done in their life. They needed to preach the Gospel but not how I preached it. So we put some skits together and they really liked it and some of them showed some real acting ability so we decided to put a major play together. The first one was "Eighteen with a Bullet" about a teenager who gets to his 18th birthday and gets shot. Next came "What Becomes Of a Broken Heart" about a large family and then came "Duke of Earl". Now God was using them to preach the Gospel. It was something they felt comfortable and was their own expression of the truth that had happened to them. There was always a tremendous response and many young people got saved and

changed their lives. The young actors wanted to continue with the plays so I carried on writing.

I've always lived in the inner city and I get my storylines from my own life, the people around me and the people I've met who live in the inner city. They all have the same story of pain. The "Duke of Earl" isn't really a story about a person but about the inner city, the ghetto and that's why so many people relate to it. The ghetto affects everyone's life.

In the twenty years I've been here, the inner city has n't changed. It's still the same. It's just now it's become more publicised. Suddenly everyone wants to know about the ghetto, but it's been here since the Jews in World War II. Just now for some reason the media decide they want to write about us...When I first started, the media never gave us any attention. But we've always been here.

When street kids first came into the church, they were young people trying to find themselves and trying to be part of something. They've since developed into young men and women who are married and established in themselves. They've had to learn discipline and become godly people. To be in the play, they had to have solid testimonies rather than an ambition to act.

To survive in the inner city, you've got to be a good actor. You've got to act hard when you're not hard, be a lover when you're not, act crazy when you're not, be violent when you're not. None of the actors in the play have ever been to acting school; but then again, they've just been through the toughest school there is - the ghetto.

My aim is to make movies because touring and performing to 18,000 plus audiences is just too much now. I want the play to be shown on big screen cinemas cos we have so much talent in our churches that I want to take that talent and preach it around the world. I think "Duke of Earl" would be a good story to put on film because of its heavy violence and tragedy, "Young Gangstas" because of the broken family and

prison scenes. I've also got a script "Bobbie" about a young girl, but that's not been performed yet.

Since I was a kid, I always wanted to be a writer, even when I hated school and never graduated. I got kicked out of every school I went to. Even when I was fighting in Vietnam, I still had the desire to write inside me. When I gave my life to the Lord, he let my talents come out, leaning on his confidence.

For young people who have just got saved and want to redirect their energies, they need to find a church that promotes getting involved in the arts that will help them develop all those talents that they have inside them.

You can live in the inner city or a ranch house on the top of a hill but being trapped or in bondage is a condition of your heart and how you see it not a condition of your environment. When you give your life to Jesus Christ, you get the power to overcome those obstacles in your environment and see that your real prison was a state of mind."

Eva Canos (31 years) plays a gang leader's girlfriend who gets killed in a payback shooting in the play: "I've been in prison and youth detention centres. I started using drugs when I was 12-13, smoking pot, taking pills, smoking PCP, crack and then heroin at 25 years of age. I used drugs to escape and also because I liked it. I liked getting high. When you are in prison, you've got to take care of yourself and just do what you've got to do to make it in there. Sometimes I would feel lonely but when I got high I would feel alright. My aim was to get high and forget about everybody else. My sister-in-law got saved at Victory Outreach and I would make fun of her. To me church was real boring, sitting down and not saying anything. One day I was trying to offer her a beer and I started tripping cos she wouldn't take the beer and I knew then her life must have changed cos she used to love her drugs and drink. My brother-in-law got saved and he was in prison when he got out. He used to ring me up and tell me about God. I was pregnant with

my second child and smoking PCP every day right from the morning. I'd get my welfare check and spend it all on drugs. I had a nice apartment and just loved drugs. I knew that one day I'd get locked up or die from it. I used to cry about what would happen. Then I would just get high and forget about everything. I was eight months pregnant and loaded and started getting real bad stomach cramps, shaking etc. I saw the "Duke of Earl" on TV and the Holy Spirit came right out and touched me. It was like seeing my whole life before my eyes. I'd never felt like that before.

My sister in law took me to see a play: "It's a man's world" about a spousal abusing. I came from that background and got touched deeply during that play. I knew that I had to have an experience with God cos I felt the Holy Spirit fall on my body. I started crying and couldn't stop yet I didn't know why.

At first, it was a real struggle for me to go to church. I got high on drugs. God delivered me. My body was so dependent on drugs yet from one moment to the next - I was drug free. I got remarried and now have five lovely children God has been too good to me. Beforehand, nobody wanted me around cos I had so many kids and a drug problem but the women at the church helped me so much and never judged me. They gave me that love and that family support that I needed. As far as the drug part goes, only God can free you. Alcoholics Anonymous and all these programs fail because it's a bondage for life. You're always an EX drug addict, EX alcoholic but, with Jesus, he changes that deepest desire in you, your heart and you are a new creation. The old has gone.

While you are still alive, there's hope in God. Never think you're too bad for God's grace. He just waits for you to come to Him as you are, however drugged up, abused, crazy, violent, messed up you are. There is real hope in Jesus Christ."



THE TOAST

Happy Christmas raise the day
With a buck-buck-buck hooray
Another body hits the floor
Another child learns how to score
Seems Santa put glocks
In everybody's socks
This season
Where hate
(Not Love)
Is the Reason
For the decoration
Of blood, bullets and fear
Shouts and screams on the streets
Pull over the white sheet
And don't waste a tear.



WHO CREATED THE GHETTO?

As far as the media wants us to know, segregation and the ghetto is just the unfortunate leftover from a racist past but it is fading over time. In fact, the reverse is true. The ghetto as it is now has only been developed since the '60s since the Civil Rights movement. It is not because many blacks prefer to live in black neighborhoods, neither is it the 'natural' result of normal social and economic forces which produced Italian and Polish 'hoods in the past and Mexican and Korean areas today.

No other ethnic group in the history of the United States has ever experienced the sustained high level of residential segregation that has been imposed on blacks in large American cities for the past 50 years. Racial isolation is no accident. It was set up by whites through a series of self-conscious actions and purposeful institutional arrangements that continue today. Not only is the depth of black segregation unprecedented and unique compared to other groups but there's no sign of change with the passage of time or improvements in the economy. A ghetto society is being created to ensure that a certain group of people will be permanently outside mainstream society and its benefits. The fences outside the projects aren't just physical. Driving past the projects, my friend commented about the blue barrack-like buildings: "They look lonely, huh?"

Isolating a society to this extent in Western civilisation is equivalent to the creation of the black townships in South Africa: just another form of apartheid, but this time not even acknowledged by the media. In the daily news, South Central, Watts and Compton are rarely mentioned yet the activity and desperation there is growing to the level of that before the riots in 1992. A large part of America is condemned to experience a social environment where poverty and unemployment are the norm, where a majority of children are born out of wedlock to mothers under 16, where most

families are on welfare, where educational failure is the average and where social and physical deterioration abound. As long as blacks continue to be segregated in American cities, the United States cannot be called a race-blind society. Reformer Kenneth B. Clark states: "The dark ghetto's invisible walls have been erected by the white society, by those who have power, both to confine those who have no power and to perpetuate their powerlessness. The dark ghettos are social, political, educational and economic colonies. Their inhabitants are subject peoples, victims of the greed, cruelty, neglect, insensitivity, guilt and fear of their masters."

The Kerner Commission report concluded that "What white Americans have never fully understood - but what the Negro can never forget - is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto."

Until the end of the 19th century, blacks and whites were relatively integrated in both North and South cities. The typical black urban dweller would live in a predominantly white neighborhood. The construction of the ghetto was not a result of changes in the nation's market forces or the economy; it was set up by a series of definite institutional practices and public policies whereby whites sought to contain the increase in urban blacks and the change in the working population. Blacks are segregated regardless of how much money they earn. Housing audits carried out over the past 20 years show the persistence of widespread discrimination against black renters and homebuyers. A recent study carried out by the United States' Department of Housing and Urban Development suggests prior work has understated the degree of racism. Evidence also suggest discrimination in the allocation of home mortgages.

The creation of the ghetto was no historical accident; it was achieved through actions and practices that had the passive acceptance, if not the active support, of most whites in the United States. White institutions created it, white institutions

maintain it and white institutions approve of it.

The idea of segregation and territorial conflict didn't start with the gangs but with the federal government, real estate agencies and the banks. By the late 1950s, many cities were locked into a spiral of decline that was directly encouraged and largely supported by federal housing policies. As poor blacks from the south entered cities in large numbers, middle class whites fled to the suburbs to escape them and to insulate themselves from the social problems that accompanied the rising tide of the poor.

With the growing demand for city services, the cost of local government increasing, politicians felt compelled to raise taxes which further accelerated the flight of the white middle class to the suburbs, creating additional pressures for tax increases in the inner city. Still most cities were not completely stripped of their middle and upper classes. Universities, hospitals, libraries, foundations and businesses were held to the city by big capital investments. So the poor left in the cities are taxed for the rich's institutions while being deprived of their benefits, basic housing services and employment.

As in South Africa, residential segregation provides a solid basis for a wider system of racial injustice. Ghettos or townships force blacks to live under extraordinarily harsh conditions and to endure a social world where poverty is endemic. There is inadequate infrastructure, no education, fragmented families living under pressure, crime and violence every day realities, no banks, no stores, and few clinics and schools. There are no signs of buildings or repairs. It seems the only investments in the ghetto are churches, auto repair stores, liquor stores and check cashing outlets which charge \$5 per check if you don't hold a checking account...which would apply to most of the community. Food stamps, drugs and your own body is the currency of the ghetto.

It's time to start investing in the inner city ghettos.

AFTER THE RIOTS

the fire next time?

"The war has been raging on for 22 years. The death toll is in the thousands - wounded, uncountable, missing-in-action unthinkable. No one is keeping a tally. No one has noticed, except for those recently involved in the fighting...On April 29, 1992 the world witnessed the eruption of South Central Los Angeles, the concrete jungle - battlefield of the Crips and Bloods. The scar of over 20 years that had been tucked out of sight and passed off as 'just another ghetto problem' burst its suture and spewed blood across the stomach of America...All this began in South Central, the latest Third World battlefield".

from "Monster", the autobiography of an L.A. gang member by Sanyika Shakur aka Kody "Monster" Scott.

Lazy: "I've lived all my life in Watts. It's boring. The projects give the whole neighborhood a bad name. The people there. It's better than it used to be - not so much shooting and stuff as seven years ago. Things are now kind of quiet. There were more niggas on the street back then. They didn't know how to act, fighting over bulls***. Jealousy. Plus the gangs around here. Now there are new gangs coming up with 12/13 year olds - wannabes who don't know nothing and who don't listen to the OGs. Jacking old men and all that s***. That's why the police be jacking us up. They think we be doing that stuff."

Herman: "I've been five times in the Pen. Police want to whoop your a** for no reason. I seen more people get stuck in the Pen, people get battered, clothes cut off them with a razor, stuck with knives, killed..."

Lazy: "The new gangs couldn't

respect the older gangs. They've got to understand that people can't take over what somebody has already got. There are many reasons why people want to be in a gang: someone's got your back, they help you if you need something, just like a family. If your family can't help you, they'll help you. Many people move out of Watts, every day."

Herman: "But not me. Not me. I'm going to live here all my life, however long that be. We got here because at first my mama moved over the traffic lights down the road. We got into our new house and then I see all these Bloods around and I was "Mama, let's pack up. You went too far. You've got to move over there." So that night we packed right up again and the next day we were straight over here into safe territory."

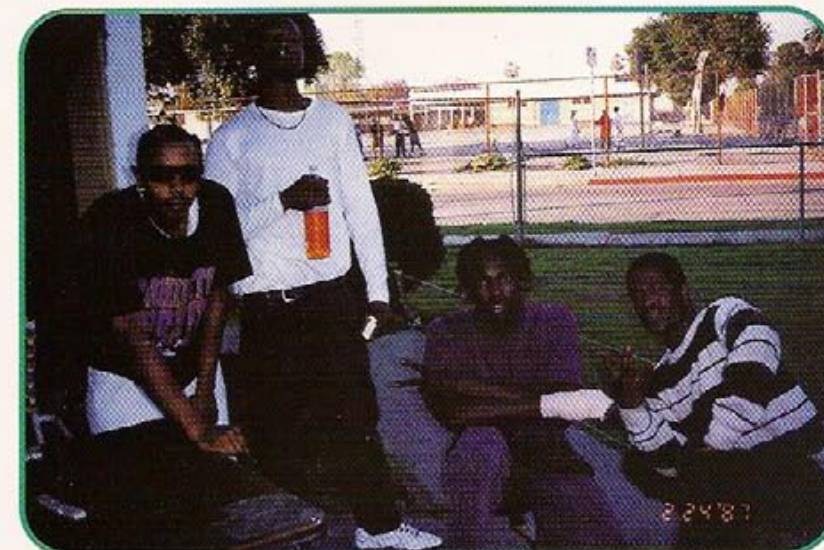
Lazy: "Even within one small area, you have so many rival gangs: the Southside Grapes, the Grape Street Crips, Eastside... Even gang members are moving out of Watts but they still come back during the day time to kick it with their homies and stuff. Gangs ain't ever going to go nowhere. Recently there's been an increase in shootings. Mexicans shooting up each other, black on Mexican and Mexican on black. Since the Peace Treaty in '92. The Mexicans are mad cos they can't



kick it like us, so they mad. The Treaty is still kind of on but not for long. It's crumbling. If you act sensible, not talking s***, you can get on ok.

Half of our community is in the Pen. - no exaggeration. Half of Watts' niggas are in the Pen. - for life. Twenty five per cent are still out here, twenty five per cent moved out and the rest are in the Pen. That's why it's so quiet around here. Nothing's changed for us except they've locked up half of the community. I sit up here all day trying to count all them niggas doing life. And there's so many, I never seem to make it.

The reason for gang killings? The family don't give a f*** about them and the gang is their life. They have to test their loyalty to the gang. Sometimes you get caught, sometimes you don't. All these little bitties getting involved in ganglife



nowadays treat it like a game. They don't know nothing and they're getting caught, getting killed."

Charles: "Before the riots in 1992, it was like hell round here. Now it seems kind of calm but you know any time you may run into heat. You can't ever put your guard down. When the verdict on Rodney King came out we couldn't take any more. L.A. can't fade that. So we just took the law into our own hands."

Lazy: "The LAPD think that they are the baddest motha****s. They give you no respect whether you give it to them or not. You got to earn respect to be given respect."

We shoot the New Year in. We get no fireworks round here so we have our own fireworks!

Charles: "I ain't got enough bullets for all that this year. I need all mine."

Lazy: "These new rhino bullets which have just come out and are being used by the police - those bullets explode inside you and millions of little razors come out. The police get them before the street get them. Before the police got guns, niggas used to fight with fists, bats and chains. Then when guns became available so did drivebys and walkouts. For a twelve year old their main aim is to get strapped. They feel they're not dressed unless they're strapped. If they don't have a strap, they feel unprotected. An AK costs around \$150-200 on the streets."

"The rappers I feel who are truly representing are Ice Cube, MC Eiht, the Dogg Pound and Tupac - that's a good artist without his thugs - that's all played out now. Tupac better wake up fast cos he's going the wrong way. Ice Cube tells you how it is. What he sees, that's what he tells. But some rappers just making up stuff. MC Eiht - he raps about what he's been through and what he's seen. At the end of the day, it's all about money and business. This music is our music. A lot of us rap and our music will always be fresh but this is business so I respect that. The Dogg Pound - they're straight. They talk about their prison life."

"Menace II Society" was filmed around here. The dope scenes and beating up scenes were taken down an alley in the Jordan Down Projects just down the road.

O Dog (Larenz Tate) went to Jordan School and to a local church. That film was good cos it told it like it is. 'Poetic Justice' was on point too. They told the truth about the inner city.

How do I see the way forward? Man, I don't know. The young niggas now, they've got to get all this gang s*** out of their heads. The police can't do nothing. Watts is messed up and we need help but no one wants to help us. L.A. is just that city. Nobody can control the motha****s. The white man and his governors and

authorities ain't doing nothing. The governors ain't doing a damn thing to help out the motha****s. We vote them in and then...nothing. It's the football stars and rap stars who are our helpers. Before the Martin Luther King hospital was built, niggas be bleeding to death in waiting rooms, never being seen. Ice Cube donated \$35,000 to help build Martin Luther King Hospital. Now at least we can get some help. That's what I call taking care of business."

J Love - "LIFE OF A BLACKSHEEP"

Righteous Ruffneck Records

Production by DJ Nyx and J Love

"Mad Chillen" - jazzy bass beats with funky loops, going back to original grooves and music to make you feel good. It contains on point, dense lyrics, heavyweight sushi style. Whether he should or he shouldn't, he calls up token gangster rappers and wannabe hoodlums. It's not the real ones he's taking out but the fakes:

"I gots no need for the spliff

So blow off the weed

Listen up, my bro, you gots to take heed.

I was wondering yo

Isn't it ironic

That in '87 you didn't smoke the sense but in '93

Your album is the Chronic"

and "I'm making a way to positivity as you're making money off the death of the future

But I guess for money anything will suit ya."

With a raggachant and a tight rhythm, this is certainly a blacksheep amongst the volume of new releases out right now.

"Life of a Blacksheep" has a dug-out double bass and a gritty beat which demands a new dance rather than a critique. Funny and funky, it gets a simple message over fast and clear:

"Who's a blacksheep? What's a blacksheep?" He tells us that "God" has love for the blacksheep:

"Mary had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb Mary had a little lamb

That came into this world just to save

The black man."

and "Because the Messiah was a blacksheep

I'm living the life of a blacksheep"

He may call himself one, but this leader of styles and bold truths for his 'hood is certainly no sheep.

the FORGOTTEN CITY

In many of our inner cities today, it is growing more common to find youths in prison for big felonies by the age of fourteen. Life is tough, fast and hard. Before you barely know the difference between right and wrong, before you've learnt to read and write, before you've learnt to dream and play, to love or to share you learn how to kill, to deal, to get towed out on drink and drugs, to pimp and to fornicate, to run the streets, rob and ransack. Born without a choice or a chance to be a child and grow up, to fulfil their destiny, generations are being born to live out their life in the Pen....if they're lucky enough to get that far. Gang initiation starts from age eight upwards and new gangs are being formed all the time. Part of the Bloods initiation for new members last year involved driving down a road with no lights on their car and doing a driveby on any car that flashed headlights at them....

It is ironic that the State spends more than \$60,000 a year to keep a youth in jail. More money is used in maintaining the 'status quo' and keeping unsightly truths (like the ever-growing ghettos with sanitation levels to compare with those found in the Third World, big time fraud and drug industries, persistent racism and housing segregation) hidden than in investing in the youth of our nations, in their discipline, care, support and welfare. More finances go into warehousing and destroying the souls of our youth in jails than is spent reviving, renewing or resurrecting lives. In New York, one year at SUNY (college) costs \$6,000. One year at Attica (jail) costs \$60,000. In California, state college costs \$5,800. One year at Central Juvenile Correctional Center costs \$34,000.



Walking through the streets of South Central and Watts in 1995 you would be forgiven for thinking you walked through a ghost town. For youths on the streets, playing basketball, riding bikes. Most of them are either in bootcamp, jail, gangs or "staying home", attempting to stay drug/gang free but unable to go out or do anything because they're unable to live any other way in such an environment. It's not the shouts of children you hear on the streets but the persistent conversation of buck-buck-buck. This is not

Croatia or Beirut: this is the inner city of one of the most prominent and prosperous cities of the world....and a place where even the police dare not stalk and news teams will never cover. The Martin Luther King Hospital in Watts recruited its staff from military hospitals to deal with the casualties and traumatic injuries coming in each day. Yet while the News at Nine reports a woman was shot in a factory in West L.A. today, ten people died in Watts this morning. But then, that's not news...

As one youth said: "Go ahead and kill us; we're already dead."

Mark Garcia has been pastoring Victory Outreach South Central church for over six years and noticed the need of the youth and the gangs around him. Having already established a men's and a women's home where drug addicts and gang members could break their habits and begin to restore their lives through the power of God and learning personal care and discipline, he set up plans to open a "24/7 GANG Center" in the building next door to the church on the corner of Broadway and Manchester.

It is just that. A twentyfourseven 365 days a year center for gang members and youth. There is also a youth home where boys from the age of ten upwards are cared for and built up into a lifestyle with all their culture but none of the destructiveness of the streets, with space to develop their own identity and to fulfil their purpose in life. The discipline is tough, tougher even than the streets for ALL the leaders are ex-gang members themselves who have given their reformed lives over to

helping the next generation break the cycle. It is a 'home' not an institution and is continually busy. Its effectiveness is seen through the changed lives of its hardcore shorties, their changing attitudes towards their families and themselves and the explosion of talents and creativity now they are learning self-discipline and respect. Starting from March this year, G.E.D. classes will commence at the Center to allow people to get the same qualification as the diploma they missed. There will also be classes in upholstery and sewing and a computer lab will be set up.

Sergio Jinenez was a gang member and drug addict for 15 years. Since he became a Christian eighteen months ago, his life has dramatically changed and he now runs the Gang Center and a youth home on Broadway, South Central.

"I saw the need to reach out and help the youth in the community because I can recall when I was young that I never had someone to share with me the love of God or tell me another way. I had no love, no direction or discipline. I



know young people need hope and a new life that there is a real way out of drug addiction, gang banging and violence. I try to give back some of what God has given me. I just want them to know that it's alright to do good, that they don't have to be a criminal to be 'down'. I want to be as a big brother to them, to care for them, to see the potential in their lives, to always encourage them to show them the right way, that there's a hope and a way out. Here in the home we put principles in their lives, and a chance for them to learn love for themselves and other people. We show them that they can do something for their neighborhood, for their friends and their families. One of the priorities is teaching self-discipline.

A lot who come in here they hurt inside cos they've never had communication with their family. They really hurt from a deep pain from the family. A child can feel that and seek comfort in the wrong place. A gang will make you feel wanted but in the home we want to show them that they are accepted by God. Our main purpose is to show them the love of God and what he can do for them cos if He can do it for me he can do it for you. Cos a young person who changes his heart has unlimited potential in life. I have seen it happen.

I'm seeing how when people's hearts change, how the community changes. Young people love to come to church, to get busy in the Gang Center, to help other young people, to fulfil their own destinies. We need a lot of work still in the Gang Center but I know it's going to come. Right now, I feel good about South Central. I've lived here all my life but now I feel good about doing a work for the community."



TALE OF A SHORTIE OG

Jonathan, aged 16 years: "I used to have this teeny piece of a heart. Now I've got this much. All I need is a bit more then I will have a whole heart."

When we were little kids, gangbanging seemed like a challenge. You had to be down, put in work for your gang, get your enemies. You got to be down, have respect for your gang members, don't ever switch to another gang. It's up to you what you do to prove that loyalty. I did robberies. Most of the time I was with my friends but now I've realised that, in a gang, you don't have no friends. They come up to you and say: "What's up, homie?" After some time, they start switching. Say you go do a robbery with them and you've got the gun on a person. Your homies run and leave you. Then they come back later saying "No, we didn't run". When it comes to being down, they're not all that. They just don't have as much love as they're supposed to when you're in a gang. I feel like fighting when they do that. I've seen friends get killed right in front of me, aged between sixteen and twentyone. One of them was a real homie. He was sitting right by me when he died. He was one of my real homies cos he saved my life.

I was walking down a street alone. The other gang was driving up from the bottom of the street in a car. My friend was driving down a side street and saw what was going on. He turned round and came driving down the street, shooting at them. I ran down an alley and got in the car. The other gang's car drove up beside me and shot him twice in the head. I bent down to get his gun and tried to help him but it was too late. I still appreciate what he did. Even though I don't believe in gangbanging anymore, I know he is resting in peace.

I had to be jumped in (beat up) to get into the Hoover gang. When you're a gang member you never know how long your life is. You can never rest. You can just get shot any time cos when you have an enemy, they are going to shoot you. You are not on their side and they don't like you. The real problem with gangbangers? They got too much pride for themselves. They go out saying: "Man, I'm down. I'm not going to be touched, man. No one can take me out." They pride take over them. They've got to prove they are untouchable, indestructible and above anyone's law. They think they are hard and they can go shoot somebody and not get shot.

I've been caught for assault, attempted murder and robbery. I've got two felonies to my name. The last one, a robbery, was done by one of my homies. They got away and I got blamed so they couldn't get caught. So that's what I'm saying: you don't have no homies.

I was in Sylmar camp then Los Padrinos Juvenile Detention Centre and many more before going to prison. You always have to share a room unless you're in the infirmary. If your room-mate is from a rival gang, you have to fight because when you come out your homies will say "Man, you're a punk man". It takes a lot for you to turn away from a gang. It took me being shot, it took jail, it took me not going home, losing my homie to realise who I REALLY need to be. I now realise I'm a person of God and I don't have to worry now. I just thank God for pulling me away from the gang. I turned to God in jail and asked Jesus Christ into my life. I got back into my hood and slowed down. My heart was hardening again. My mum passed by the Gang Center and I came into the youth home. Now my heart is half alive again. Each day I feel I'm learning to live and love again and my hope now is to have a whole heart and to really be able to love people.

I thank God for caring for me when I was at my worst and for coming into my life."

Even the most noble gangster who dies for his hood can only demonstrate how human life has been cheapened to the colour of a rag or another payback. Their death often means more than their life did. IT IS TIME TO RESPECT THE LIVING, NOT JUST THE DEAD. Regardless of what white society says, our lives have immense value and our destiny is in OUR HANDS.

And remember - all war is, in the end, is destruction of the enemy. But do you even know who your real enemy is?

KUNG FU

street style

From March 1995, Kung Fu Wing Chung will be taught in eight weekly courses at the Gang Center, 8612 South Broadway, South Central by veteran Ron Henderson.

"I've studied Kung Fu for twenty years and am now using my martial arts to enable children, youth and adults to protect themselves and to avoid trouble. It starts with teaching them to look upon themselves with a positive attitude, to carry themselves in a better way and teaching them the things to look out for, be aware of, the areas to avoid. It's better to avoid a fight than to be caught up in one. There are wolves out there and you would be a fool to go out without being alert and ready. That doesn't mean guns and it doesn't mean being on the offensive. But if you look and act like a sheep, you're going to be in trouble. For example, you're walking down the street and there's a drug deal going on. You should cross the street but if you're not paying attention to what's going on, you could walk into a bad situation. What if they pull out a gun? Kung fu is not going stop no bullet. People are shot all the time merely because they're not watching. Be observant and you can avoid these type of situations.

After urban awareness and 'alternatives to stupidity', I'm teaching the basic martial arts self defence. The size of the individual doesn't matter. The type of kung fu I teach (Wing Chung) was developed by a Chinese woman. A Shaolin nun taught this particular Chinese woman for a year. After this, the woman was able to overcome her betrothed. He said that if he could defeat her on their wedding night then he could have his way with her. He was a leader in martial arts. On the wedding night, she defeated him. He bowed down to her and she became his teacher in Wing Chung. That's where Bruce Lee learnt his stuff from. All the stuff you see on TV masquerading as kung fu - that's not the real hardcore movements. They don't show the real power or effectiveness of Kung Fu at its fullest.

Wing Chung is about getting close to the person and using little effort. By using deft angular movements without any wastage, you can overcome the other person easily. I doesn't have to do with physical strength. I've seen slips of girls overturn 200lb guys just by mastering balance and these moves.

Wing Chung is a short route to self defence. I was taught to be respectful not aggressive. These days, people don't have respect for life or for anybody. We need respect for one another and as always, life itself. Gang members will kill you for a dollar. We must realise that each individual is a precious entity on God's earth. People don't think about the consequences of their actions. For every action, there is a reaction and there is a cost. It's not like how it is on the movies. You've got to justify your actions. It's better to maim than to kill but even to maim is bad. When you kill somebody, you've got to justify that with the law, yourself and God ultimately. And that's one thing that people don't get. They become numb to all that. The TV and the films don't show the consequences of people's actions. They just shoot/kill and they show that that's how you eliminate a problem but that's not a reality. We've got to instil within the youth a responsible attitude towards their actions and teach self-control.

The introductory course is eight weeks long. This will also determine who is serious about learning martial arts kung fu. It's not just learning how to fight. It's discipline, muscle tone, developing your mentality cos you've got to learn the forms and each individual will grow according to how much they can retain. Everyone will grow at their own pace. They will be able to analyse their own street behaviour and the different areas where they live. They could identify difficult areas and spots to avoid.

Instead of women walking with their car keys rattling, they should walk

with it held like a weapon. Don't just stand there when approached. Turn and move. Get busy. Be aware of your terrain. Most women are not aware. They're walking along, looking down or engaged in a conversation when someone is out to do wrong. A criminal is looking for easy victims, not someone who is alert. Women should keep their ears and eyes open and avoid certain situations. When you are alert, there's a certain aura around you. Criminals can feel it. They're working a strictly animal instinct. Determination and a positive attitude are the biggest defences. They will determine how you are going to do in any type of accosting. For example, if you work out and give 50% effort you get 50% effectiveness; 100% effort and you get 100% effectiveness. More than ever, you should make time to keep fit in the inner city. Push ups and sit ups don't cost money and investing in your health is one of the best things you can do.

"You stretch your body, you stretch your life" is an old Chinese saying and it's true. I'm 40 years old but I know it's through working out and the kung fu that I feel no older than I did at 20 years. Isometrics is another good way to keep fit. Exercise three times a week, that's sufficient or one solid hour of sweat a week. That's all it takes. You'll be surprised at the effect and endurance level you will increase to.

Diet is important too. All the youth eat burgers, chips and candy bars. Eat as many vegetables as you can. Get into your own personal health and deeper into the martial arts. Kung fu in Chinese means "hard work". It means discipline but when you finally get a grip of it, when you have that total self-discipline, you can cope with any situation. I would encourage any youth to start now with Kung Fu. It won't stop no bullet but it will teach you how to avoid certain situations and make you more wise to your terrain than your assailant. It will certainly increase your chance of survival and escape dramatically. Your predator is depending on his weapon, your fear and stupidity and his strength. With kung fu and urban awareness, all the chances rest on his weapon only.

"Whatever you do, do it Kung Fu."

THE DEVIL'S MOST WANTED

South Central, Los Angeles

Three teenagers, all under fifteen, have been ripping up the streets for the past two years with their rhymes and fresh beats. For them, it really is all about getting their message out on the street. In South Central, Watts and Compton, where rap, funky basslines and the buck-buck are the backdrop to everyday life, that's no easy thing unless you've got 24/7 radio/MTV play or complete bullet-proof armour. So why do folks sit up and listen to three shorties from church?

The lead rapper, London England Lee (his sister's called Paris France and the other Asia...) is thirteen years old and has been attending Victory Outreach South Central since he was six years old. Encouraged by his Pastor, Mark Garcia, and his youth leader, ex-Grip Terris Cruise, he developed his raw rapping skills and improved his rhymes. Along with four other youths, they set up "Devil's Most Wanted" in 1991.

"One day we had a service at our church when another church visited us. We had no tapes but one of the guys started beatboxing. Pastor Mark asked us up and we danced and freestyled. We just liked to rap. T.C., our youth leader, wrote a few raps for us which I learnt and ever since then I've written my own. One of the youths in the group, Alex, decided we needed a name. We chose D M W (Devil's Most Wanted) because we know God has chosen us and He has us but the Devil wants us too. The Devil is serious about getting the youth snared up in destruction. He wants to get the youth first before they get a chance to receive the good news about Jesus cos that's the only real way to survive in the ghetto. But we're determined the Devil isn't going to get his way cos we're set on following Christ. We are the Now Generation. The Devil has been able to get a lot of adults and mess

their lives up. The youths haven't yet got wisdom and understanding and the Devil wants to exploit our curiosity and energy by getting us before we've a chance to develop and get a hold of the truth.

We do a lot of shows in services and open air rallies in areas around here. Before a show, we pray to ask the Lord to give us a sound mind and a right mind. After rapping and sharing about God, the Devil is going to try and hit us with confusion and pain cos you become aware of what the audience is feeling.

In our rap, I'm talking to hurting people. I've always lived in South Central so I tell them there's other alternatives and opportunities besides gangs, drugs or struggling to find bitsy work. We're encouraged to stay in college, develop our skills and self-discipline. We get a lot of support from the Gang Center at the church. We have a shop, snack bar, a youth home, a sports and music ministry, counselling, Bible studies and do plays. There's a lot of opportunity for us to express ourselves our way and to develop new skills.

In rap, we show we don't need to curse or boast to prove our manhood. Sensitivity and reality expressed clearly and dynamically get the truth to cut through. Being in South Central, you can't be a phoney cos each day you've got to know which side you're on or else you'll fall under. There's gangs all over, drugs all over. My friends know that I'm a Christian and generally respect me cos I've made a stand and that's it now. I know that I know that I'm saved and that if I get shot today I'm sure of where I'm going and have no fears.

In our concerts or main events, we let the audience know what's happening and challenge them to let God come into their lives. Outsiders may think South Central is the worst place but that's not true. We have a radical pastor and our church is developing and we have just as much place and activity here as gang members and drug addicts and poverty. This is our habitat. But all the media wants to show is that black neighborhoods are bad. But I

like my city, it's a nice place to be. I'm proud to be from South Central and to be involved in recreating it.

All this fuss over reality rap and gangsta rap...what's the cussing for when you can say a positive message that is REAL? Our reality is respecting elders, parents, each other - the complete opposite to what the world tells us to do. The world tells us we're always going to be poor so we might as well take, but we know we are rich and we are blessed in the Lord and will receive more to come. We've no need to be greedy, selfish or have a poverty mentality. The world wants me to feel shame but in Jesus I have no shame cos He took it all for me. Disrespecting others and cussing out each other is what helped cause all this mess in the first place so I don't see what's so cool about carrying on the cycle.

I pray before each rap in each concert to ask God to give me anointing and tell me what to say. I create a dictionary of rhymes and use my imagination and intelligence rather than copying other people's and 'avoiding' cuss words.

We see ourselves as young gospel rappers and getting a record deal is not our main focus. If we never get signed but someone gets saved or gets out of this destructive mess, then that's our goal achieved. We work hard on getting hard images and strong beats to get our message over as most of the audience is composed of gang members.

People may laugh cos we're youths but it says in the Bible that God uses the weak and the young. Look at David; he was just a shepherd boy and yet he killed a giant with a sling and five pebbles and he became king of a nation.

I've seen enough to know that Death has no name on it. Whoever is in its way, gets it. The road to destruction is wide and easy but to serve God requires commitment and focus."

"There ain't no party like a Gospel party cos a Gospel party don't stop!"
lyrics from one of DMW's latest jams.

"I grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I've been rapping since I was 10. At first it was just something I did at family get-togethers etc. but three years ago I started getting more serious about it. Rap is a musical expression of what's really going on inside the individual artist, the rapper. It's our way of teaching, relating, letting out our true feelings about what we feel about things. Rap is an expression of the ghetto kids. It's from the ghetto - the people that are never heard. It's our way of letting the world know what we feel like, what kind of things we like and hate. We are a people almost without any identity according to the world at large and we have taken on an identity all our own. Right now, the language of the young generation from 10 to 30 is hip hop. Our language is rap. If you want a message to get across, you'll put it in rap. Rap is the speak of the ghetto and this is the age of the ghetto. Every year rap is getting stronger and stronger simply because rap is a poor people's art and there are more poor and coloured people coming up in the world.

Nowadays it is cool to be 'ghetto'. I think our culture has really been exploited. Sagging clothes and pop rap. Sagging clothes comes from jailhouse garb and having hand-me-downs from older cousins and brothers but we made it look good, gave ourselves respect and identity. Now sagging clothes mean money in the pockets of big companies and rich people but the ghetto isn't benefitting from this money. The world doesn't want to hear what the ghetto really is or what it's saying. All the media portray is violence, crime and hate when

J LOVE

actually there are a lot of people who love and care and still hope. There are churches and families who are loyal to each other whereas in the corporate world, which makes all the decisions about the ghetto, there is no sense of loyalty or family. In the ghetto there is love. In the world, everybody's out for themselves. In the ghetto, we try to take care of each other. Most times you fail cos the odds are against you, but you still try. The downside is that you are considered a chump or a punk if you are smart, go to school or get an education. Everybody wants to be a rap star or a dope star cos its fast easy money. But this traps you into a poverty state of mind so that you don't see anything wrong with the ghetto. But there's a difference between a poverty ghetto and an economic ghetto. A ghetto is a poor neighborhood in economic terms. A ghetto is gang turf in poverty terms. It's where street drug dealing goes on, hookers - anything for quick, fast money. Its where the only law is that of survival, where you're taught you have to be bad and hard to survive, where money in the hand is the aim and protecting yourself is the game. But that's not true. You should have the chance to be whatever you have the heart to be.

Through music we can bring an awareness that we need to educate ourselves. We have the highest drop-out rate, the highest rate of kids getting pregnant, becoming young parents, gang fights, AIDS, suicide, crime...We need to bring the family back into the picture. To start and continue a child in an environment of love and of discipline and support. The ghetto doesn't have to stay a place of poverty anymore. It doesn't have to be a place of crime and corruption. We should be producing presidents, lawyers and doctors instead of gangbangers, pimps, dope fiends and prostitutes and let them know that there's hope in Jesus Christ.

I live in Corona now and what gives me hope for the ghetto is that I was able to make it. I'm a kid from the

ghetto who everybody said would never make it or be anything. Yet now I'm about to travel all around the world. If somebody like me can make it, anybody can. I never had hope in my life. My relationship with Jesus Christ gave me hope. Right now, fashionable rap music is kind of irritating to me cos 90% of popular rap is not really reporting as it started out. What it's now doing is promoting and glorifying gang violence and drug dealing. When I was a gang member you were looked down upon. Now it seems that's the coolest thing to be.

There's a big lack of substance in rap. Anybody can talk about packing a gun and blowing a hole in someone's head or sex. But can anyone take a situation and give light into it and give hope? Can they really stretch their artistic abilities and their ancestral past? Do they know where they're coming from or where they're going to? The same blood of the pioneers and warriors runs through their veins.

My dreams for the future are for my record company (Righteous Ruffnecks) to really be a family of hope where young talented individuals don't just come for fame, glory and fortune but to make something of themselves, to take their success to help others. In the future, I'm looking to become a youth pastor. I want to be in movies. I want my record company to be really large. I want my success to reach points and heights where I can pretty much, literally, almost help anybody.

My album "Life of a Blacksheep" is about my life growing up being a blacksheep of the family. About school, the streets, life and how under all that I was taken through it all. If you are a blacksheep, it doesn't necessarily mean you are bad but that you are special; that you are different."

(See Review on Page 15)

THA DOGG POUND *pays a visit*

DAZ

"IF A NIGGA HAD A PRAYER BEFORE HE DIED, WOULD A NIGGA STAY ALIVE OR WOULD HE DIE? AND IF I WERE IN YOUR SHOES, WOULD I SURVIVE? PROBABLY NOT. YOU'D PROBABLY LET YOUR GLOCK GO POP."

from "What Would u Do?" Tha Dogg Pound on "Murder Was The Case"

"Why did I start rapping? (laughs) I was black! No, I was an observer. I observed what was going on around me and took it into my own consideration to do what I had to do."

From 1985, I was always creating beats and rhythms from the feel of being with people. If I'm with a person and I'm thinking with him, then I'll be making the beat of that vibe. We are creating a song together so you're just vibing together.

We've got 12-16 songs ready to be put on Tha Dogg Pound's first album. We're going to have a whole new formula cos it gets worn out or stolen if you keep to the same. You've got to be constantly pushing forward. The name of the album is "Dogg Food." It was going to be "After all this, what do you have?" relating to what's of real importance if you die. Tomorrow - it's not worth it to do all that s***. After all the gangs, after all the drugs and tales, what do you have? You've still got to go home and face the bulls***. If you die, you can't take all this with you. Just enjoy your life and what you have while you have it now.

Or maybe we'll call the album just "Some More Doggy S***" or maybe just a question mark! We're bringing out Lil' Style, Tray Deee, Slip (Capone), Enemy and Grench on this album and are starting a label with Snoop called "Murder Incorporated" and also a production company "C-Style Productions" with C-Style, Priest "Superfly" Brooks and Dave

Nice. Kurupt and I have just finished a track with Lil' Malik. But my aim is to sit behind a desk! I've got to have a business out of this s***.

We've just finished making a video for the single "What Would u Do?" but we plan on making a large scale movie called "From The Heart of The Ghetto". That's going to be about lives on the streets, in the Pen., gang life, death, everything, and most importantly, how we all came into this rap game. When I get up everyday, there's a story. Every morning one of my homies has a story to tell me. I'm still as

involved in life out there as possible. The movie will come in time. It has a lot of feelings and a lot about the real side to what goes on.

To all the homies out there - thanks for your support and just maintain as Gs. Me myself, I'm just a G maintainer. What do I think about all the trouble in South Central, Long Beach and Watts? You've got to deal with it and you got to handle it like a G. You've got to handle your position."

KURUPT

Born in Philadelphia on the East Coast but hailing from South Central on the West Coast, Kurupt has been through some of the toughest schools in rap and street warfare. After working his way through the obligatory mc battles since he was in Junior High and throughout his time at Leuzinger School, he finally got wise to the fact that battling mcs don't make ends. Running the streets of South Central, however, gave him a determination to survive which propelled him to a greater destiny than the less motivated. Growing up in the fiercest gang city in the USA, he realised it was a dog-eat-dog world and worked at being the most feared mc and the most paid mc. "Mcs need to wake up and realise that there's a whole world out there that could be yours if they'd stop all this battling s*** and start using their brains and imagination". Ironically, it was his gang affiliation, not music, which brought him into contact with Daz, Snoop's cousin. They formed Tha Dogg Pound along with several others. But it was Daz and Kurupt who decided to put it on the record and represent the Pound.

"Battling and doing all that rhyming as an mc is all very well but that's not what's going to get you paid. You've got to convert that energy into something that's going to work for you. Forming Tha Dogg Pound helped me to focus on making SONGS with Daz - songs that are the bomb and that will appeal to everyone. If you've got the skills, the capacity - you're aiming at is so great and so diverse, why limit yourself in your music? The DPG is all about making the bomb, making hits every time. Daz and I realised we could clique Tha Dogg Pound, that we could be the DPG and represent."

My inspiration comes from being around Daz, Snoop, Nate Dogg - we all inspire each other. Daz and I were in Tha Dogg Pound from the start. Then, when the time was right, we put it down on record. We were with Snoop from before the days he got recognised and blew up.

South Central taught me how to survive. It gave me a survival instinct. I got that instinct from my homeboys out there. I can never forget that, so my music is always representing for them. When I rap about guns, I'm rapping their tales and I'm rapping reality. Rap for me is entertainment and I'm an entertainer - that's my job. To get someone to listen and to learn. Rap is the outlet, the dimension where the whole story can be told. I'll tell a tale about something my homeboy's been through but from my perspective. Or I'll talk about some things that have occurred, may have occurred or things that will occur if patterns don't change."

HIGHER LEARNING

Columbus Productions

written and directed by **John Singleton**

Off the streets and onto campus brings out a fuller dimension of the depth of racism in the nine five. A definite move from his usual ghetto-centric black-and-not-so-white films, Singleton explores the pressures of college life as unprepared students wake up to life in America - or the difference between its ideals and the reals.

Bulging with too much talent, the story line gets lost somewhat in the characters and their on-point reactions. Omar Epps (of "Juice" fame) comes out as the hero once again, although this time it's a white man, not Tupac, who's the enemy. Epps demonstrates the metamorphosis of a clueless athlete, who just wants a degree, to a focussed and angry scholar, who prefers to know the truth and "stick with his own people". But there's an unexpected development by the end of the film and Epps is remarkably convincing...

Busta Rhyme, Ice Cube and Regina King are examples of explosive talent under tight-reins! Still, they give solid performances and Cube certainly shows another side (I suppose it is unacceptable to use the word 'cute', but maybe not too many have seen the caring and convicted parts...) Apart from the peer pressure scenarios exploring racism, sexism, rape, to-be-a-lesbian-or-not-to-be, and other college insecurities, the most original performance must come from Laurence Fishburne, the tough professor with the African accent who refuses to pity Malik (Omar Epps) or be kind to brown nosers. Instead, he goads Malik on to overcome his apathy and to achieve his potential, the knowledge and understanding that will set him free. His sensitive portrayal of a teacher with great anger and vision, AND both feet on the ground, should be an inspiration to less-clued in academics.

Tyra Banks (Deja - Malik's girl) is, admittedly, not the dumb model. Her plainness in the film allows her to show some pretty heavy emotions in some charged scenes, all the more noticeable on her slight frame. She's not as fragile as the catwalk would have us believe. Another surprise is in the soundtrack. It's not pure hip hop, but has a high proportion of grunge, Tori Amos and other angst-ridden ballads. Before you squeal "sell out!", check it out.

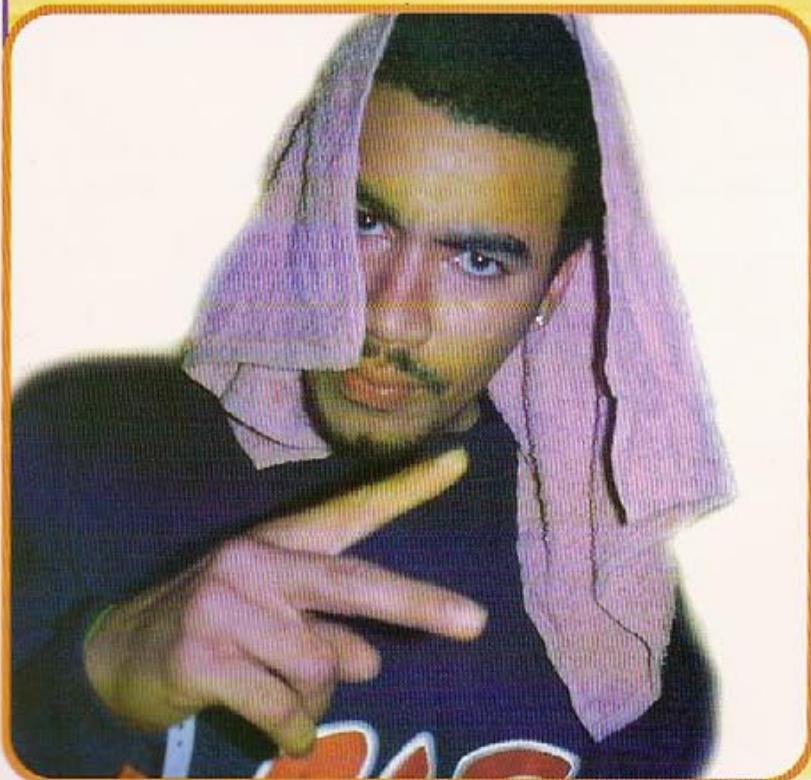
Singleton has redeemed himself after 'Poetic Justice' with more than good drama. With the heavy increase in BNP, the National Front and Neonazism in Europe and the ever-volatile racial tensions in the United States, this film is on time.



the Alkaholiks

JRo, Tash, E-Swift, and XZibit are still producing the unstoppable flow in '95, releasing their new album "Coast to Coast" in February of this year.

JRo: I come from Pacoima, California, Tash from Columbus, Ohio and E-Swift from Tolito, Ohio. But we all met up in Los Angeles in '89. We were all into hip hop and just wanted to come out with our own stuff. We came out with a number on King Tee's second album "The Trifling Album". Our track was called "I got it Bad".



I'd describe our music as strictly house party music. We came up djing at house parties and stuff. We still want our records to sound like we are at a house party wrecking it. We want people to bug off every word the mc is saying. Hip hop is kind of changing a whole new generation. Groups like us and Masta Ace, East Coast and West Coast, are trying to keep the old hip hop alive. We aim to keep with the older rules which many are forgetting. Like never bite other mcs' styles and keeping your style original. There were certain things that you would talk about. Now it seems people are talking about anything they like. Another big rule was to always keep it real but, like I said, people are forgetting the reasons behind hip hop.

I hate wack hip hop.

For ourselves, our first aim is to make a song we like and then for the immediate friends around us. Then for the other mcs around the world.

Los Angeles has grown kinda wild. The world is just getting worse and everybody has to do something to turn it around but who knows when that's going to happen. But we are a positive group, having fun, partying instead of violence. We enjoy doing live performances because you can see people's reaction in front of your face. But we also like going into the studio cos we get to create something out of nothing.

My inspiration comes from whatever I see on TV or in real life. Life inspires me." (A bar man empties a tub of bottles into a metal trolley drowning out the conversation here) JRo just laughs: "Like my man dropping bottles over here - that inspires me to write something. For upcoming artists, I'd advise them to learn about the business cos in the music industry rap artists are on the bottom of the totum pole. You've got to have your stuff tight. Everything has got to be tight. We just want to keep on rocking albums. Just to keep on rocking."

T BONE is from San Francisco, Northern California

"I've been rapping since I was 8 years old. I am now 21. I started out rapping out myself, gangs, who's the toughest, who's the best. Just normal everyday rap. By 17 I was in a gang. I used to do the regular stuff: jump people, beat them up. My father was a pastor but to me it just didn't make sense. Then one day, an incident led me to change my life. Me and my homeboys were at a park.

One of them, a Norteno (i.e. he claimed the colour red) got shot. As he was dying, you'd have expected him to say: "Tell my mom/dad/sister/girl/brother I love them" or something. Instead, he said "Tell everyone to wear red at my funeral". That made me think "Man, what am I doing? Dying for the sake of a COLOR?" I started to search for God and I went to my Dad's church. I prayed "God, if you're for real, change my life and help me help my homeboys on the street so that they won't keep dying." I wanted to go all the way for Jesus when I'd experienced what the Lord had to offer. I changed my rap from just boasting and regular rap to a message to reach kids. I started out on the street doing shows and going from youth group to youth group. I say kids drop their guns and colors in front of the stage and so that made me want to carry on doing what I was doing more and more. I'm now signed to METRO 1 and Solar Records. I am trying to reach everybody and tell them about the Lord. I talk a lot about gangs and drugs and that there is a real way out for those who want it. Out of my gang, some are in prison, some still on drugs and some are evangelists. One of

them was only 8 when he started shooting up. He got saved when only 16 and now is an evangelist and also my road manager. My non-Christian friends have always respected what I'm doing. My last record "Redeemed Hoodlum" sold 80-90,000 and I'm currently working with the L A Posse on more projects and bringing out Mr. Grimm's album "Life After Death".

People get rap and gangster rap all wrong. It's not like other musical artforms. All the anger, pain and destruction expressed is a result of deep, deep hurt. A real rapper states correctly the problem but what I'm attempting to do is to give the problem and the answer. Jesus is the only way to go. Every best thing the world has to offer is nothing but a temporary high. It never lasts. Jesus Christ is an all-time high which lasts forever."

The L. A. Posse's chief, Dwayne "Muff" Simons, has produced both of T-Bone's albums. The 12 year production veteran, who has worked with such artists as LL Cool J, Whodini, Run DMC, the real Roxanne, King T, Mista Grimm, Teddy Riley and Heavy D, III Al Skretch to name but a few, has some strong comments on his latest protege:

"I've worked with the rest. Now I'm working with the best. It's all hip hop. T-Bone is just coming on the positive tip. People need to stop categorising it cos they'll be missing out on a truly good artist."

Muffler is keen to emphasise the priority of genuine hip hop and that it really doesn't matter what angle the artist has as long as it's real and from the streets.

"The test of a true artist is his or her will to do it. If they want to

do it badly enough, they'll do what it takes to be that artist. If they don't, then they'll drag you (the producer's) feet and I won't f*** with that.

T-Bone stands out because he's taken time out with his producers to write real songs and has come out with a focussed album. His first album was a sloppy ghoulish but this album ("Redeemed Hoodlum") has some specific and heavy subject matter. All this gangster/reality/Christian rap - what IS that? Good rap is rap. A dope track could be saying "The Lord is my Shepherd" or "Mothaf***a, I'll shoot you" - if it's real, it's good rap. But groups like DC Talk coming out saying they're "Christian" rappers - that's not on. They can't rap. They are singers so it just p***es me off when they come out claiming they're rap. That's gospel music.

T-Bone is a true rapper. Hip hop is from the streets. We don't talk about nothing that we don't know about. T-Bone talks about what he knows: the streets, gangs, God, Jesus Christ and how he changed his life. He states his reality and it holds. He's passing on a real message, not an idea or a concept so it's rap. But the tracks he has laid down are heavy. It could be Snoop or Cube rapping over these tracks; they are solid tracks.

True rap is always going to be here. Ten years ago, people were saying, it's a fad and that disco was here to stay. Hello, where's disco in '95? Or people say R & B is the backbone of black music. No. It's rap. Rap is the voice of black music and rap is here to stay."

NATE DOGG

Long Beach born Nate Dogg calls his music "1995 Blues" and his sweet vocals and beats with his urgent relevant message justify this title.

"I used to sing in church with my mom, little brother Sam Dogg and my sister Pam. The group was called The Hale Family. I went to school with Snoop. We were friends before that but at High School we hooked up. We used to be in the PE area in the back of the school rapping. We were 16 years old at the time. I could rap but not as good as Snoop could so I'd sing and make hooks for what he was rapping about. Snoop and Warren G were best friends so we three started hanging out together. We'd go to the VIP Record Store together, rap, sing and make our own tapes. We called our group the 213 after the area code of Long Beach. Even though they've changed the area code of Long Beach we're still in the 213.

We'd make tapes and sell them



to make ends meet so we could go to Cal State, Long Beach where they had the parties at. We'd go off in a car called "The Green Hornet" which we used to ride in.

I got signed to Death Row Records by Dr. Dre in 1992 through some songs I'd done with Snoop.

My musical influences are primarily my mother and all her sisters and brothers. They used to sing in choirs. Every year there would be a Gospel Special. My family does the Gospel Concert each year. I love the way my family sing. I get shivers just to hear them.

Other influences were The Whispers, The Temptations, many gospel groups, Andre Crouch and people like that because when I was growing up my father, as a pastor, wouldn't let me listen to everything that came on the radio. Marvin Gaye - he was another big inspiration. Really any group that had harmonising.

It was never an 'idea' that I sing and Snoop and Warren rap. It was just what I knew how to do. Most singers whose style I liked were just singing love songs about their woman and marriage and "I want you to have my baby." That wasn't the reality I was living. I had the heart of rap but my style was to sing so that's what I did. That romantic stuff wasn't the most pressing thing in my life. What me and my homeboys are going through in life - that's our reality and that's what I sing about.

"One More Day" is about how I've experienced things and what I've seen happen in my life. Things that really didn't have to happen. At that point in

time, you made the wrong decision. You couldn't take the pressure no more. You just come to a point where you don't know what to do and the choice you make ends up being the wrong one. That song is really about me and how I'm feeling. Not about anybody else. Right now I'm going through things that are really painful. Something ain't going right but at least I'm living. Maybe I can change some of the problems cos I'm still hanging around. There's a chance to make a right decision. **I've got one more day. When you're dead, you don't have anymore days.**

I want people to listen to my music and have fun but still to learn from it. There's a moral to everything I write. Put a little something in your brain cells instead of just drugs! for the future, I don't want to be doing just anything. I need to write. I call my music the blues cos that's what it is. 1995 blues.

What's the key to breaking the cycle? Determination is the key. You've got to be educated. You got to have patience. You've got to wait your turn. You can't make it overnight. No place. Nobody can, it doesn't matter how good you are.

Nate Dogg was featured on Tupac's and Thug Life's "How long will They Mourn Me?" He says of Tupac and his crew of Thugs: "I can understand Tupac and Thug Life, even though our music is so different. I feel that one. And Tupac - he's just my people. I'm wit him. Tupac and his court cases and everything that's happened - he knows the time, if no one else does. I'm wit him."

Fu Schnickens

FU SCHNICKENS consist of Moc, Poc and Chip and hail from Brooklyn, New York - which Moc refers to as "a little town". "We got together to create a fusion of three totally different styles, a fusion of lyrics, rhythms and beats. They all work together in production to make that special fusion.

Our best track hasn't been. We believe in escalation. If we thought we were the best, we'd never get any better. Our challenge is to constantly challenge ourselves musically and to challenge the listener to open their ears and diversify their tastes. A lot of listeners today are sick of being preached at. Times are heavy enough as it is. They'd rather just live their lives and do what they want to do, make their own choices. Our music is to chill out to.

In L.A. there are a lot more outlets to see artists live and people are willing to support them and come out to see them. Whereas in New York, it's not like that anymore. This is because the scene is going back underground. Most of the hip hop game has now become centered around money and what sells. We need to get back to roots and start creating and claiming it back, to stop confusing the masses with fake stuff. Underground is that one outlet where real hip hop can be generated.

Hip hop for me started in uptown New York. We were 7 years old, listening to the radio, Marley Marl, Mr. Magic, Planet Rock and Lodi Dodi. I used to play around it. I became serious about it when I heard the Red Alert show. That's when I really fell in love with it.

Our aim now is to keep putting out good music and giving people exactly what they want. No holding back, just moving forward.

As far as society goes in '95 - everything is still the same. The game never changes. The rules change but the game stays the same. You just have to adjust to it.

We have to stay focussed and never let our jobs get to us and get us stressed. To always stay hungry. Once you become comfortable, you never move and tend to fall off. Our inspiration is all of this - the true stuff, signed and

unsigned cos we are all striving for the same thing gold and platinum and just people to respect you just for what you give them, for your art.

Originality always breaks through the clutter. Once that's gone, you're left out in the cold. My advice to mcs is to develop your own style and to make the best of your style. Our inspirations are God and our fellow peers."



Funkmaster Flex

with a new single out on Nervous Records "Nutten but Flavor" written alongside Biz Markie, Old Dirty Bastard and Charlie Brown, Funkmaster Flex is working with the rest of the best in pushing hip hop's production frontiers.

"I started in '83. In '84, there was a lot of djing starting to get popular: Red Alert, Marley Marl, making dj records and getting popular. I like to play for the crowd myself. I like to play whatever they want to hear.

London and New York crowds are much more energetic than L.A. crowds. My aim is to make good party records that work in the club. I play old skool, new skool and reggae. I do like jungle and have played it a few times on the radio in New York. Recently, the club scenes have been real safe for the past few months with little violence.

My inspirations are Red Alert. He's a veteran of hip hop but he keeps track of his new music and his old music. He's a ten year veteran on the radio. I didn't know hip hop was going to grow as large as this. I thought it would keep tight but concentrated, certainly never be as international as it's becoming right now. But that's nothing but a good thing."

East London (England) Poems

The Puppet by Warren J

I wish not to hurt you

So let us depart from each other's
mental groups
I don't really want to be
unleashed from your focus
It kind of gives me unparalleled
pleasure
To be captured by your mind
But then again it also gives me
anger
I've never possessed before.
I cannot determine
Are you a vitamin or a poison?
At this moment you are a poison
Whereas tomorrow you will be a
vitamin
Giving me superhuman strength
You're a nutter
But I love you
Why do this to me
When I treat you as good as I
would a queen.
It's only when I swear and shout
that you listen.
Although at the moment I want to
Hurt you and give you
displeasure
Alas, I cannot.
What a response to the way that
you treat me!
Are you turning me into a
member of the female gender?
No, this is all wrong.
The sounds of time need to be
emptied
Back into the other side of the
hour or,
In our case, life glass.
Why am I writing this?
What type of person does it make
you
To be able to affect my life in a
negative way and
Have me writing to you a sonnet
of my feelings?
The twilight zone is the dimension
which I am in.
You are the ruler of that
dimension,
Subconsciously determining my
every move
Gepetto of love.

THE LAST CALL by Warren J

Listen to me.
You're not deaf.
Why do you pretend that you are
deaf,
Breaking this now empty shell in
two each time you do
Is it some sort of perversion?
Listening to me when it suits you.
Do people do it to you?
Treating you like that seven year
old child
Waiting to be heard
By the world?
When I become that pubic hair
Infested homosapien who is
supposed to
Not listen,
I will.
I know the longing which that
child
Locked within what seems to be
A soundproof glass box.
I know that feeling
To be seen and not heard.
No one can hear you when you're
young.
I am not being heard.
Am I E?
My cries are being swallowed up
by the abyss.
The abyss of children's cries from
The whole world.
As they all ring in chorus.
Listen to me.

Do you want me around?
Yes.
No.
What?
I need to know. My mind cannot
take this.
What is your problem? Tell me.
Is this love I feel or anger?
I am a stranger to this world
You have bred me into.
Don't leave me in this place.
I'll wither away and die through
starvation of you.
Why do I need you?
You turn your back on me yet, yet
I need you.
You crept into my life without
making a sound.
You can't just leave without
turning it
Back around.
I am your Pinocchio
With whom you are taking the
p***
But I can't stop you.
Why has it come to this?
You're playing with my life.
Where do I stand?
Answer my questions.

REALISATION by Warren J.

Where would I be if not here?
Who would I be with?
Where would the person I am
with be?
Would it be a person with two
Egyptian pyramids
Or a person with an Italian
gondola?
What would their thoughts at that
particular time be?
Maybe they would be thinking
who is this person, why am I with
him?
Maybe they would think I am
weird but will not tell me because
they are
Scared I may attack them in a
frenzy of wild passionate anger.

Do I have any friends?
What are friends?
Friends are people with whom we
grow up with for a certain amount
of our lives,
Telling them our every problem,
obliging them with our every joke.
A friend is a person with whom
we go through thick and thin.
After a while all a friend is is a let
down.
It's like they build your hopes up,
making you believe that you have
the ultimate
Friendship, the ultimate trust,
And then they let you down.
What is a friend.

The world. What is it?
Some say it's a mass of hundreds
of molecules or atoms. I don't
bloody know.
Others say that it's a wonderful
place where new life is a miracle
of nature.
Others still would say that the
world is a place where life is
brought about only
To be sacrificed and tormented,
to be distorted and destroyed.
I would say the world is a place
of life and death, good and bad,
where both love and death
exist.
But, basically, the world sucks
DICK.

West London Poems

by Ebony N Joy

DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOM

Wake up in the morning,
crying on the phone.
Dragging myself into the
world where I'm still very
much alone.
Walking to the doctor's
where people wait for
their cures.
Girl reading baby books,
clad with dog and
packed lunch.
The buzzer burbs, the
lights flash, my heart
goes crunch.
Man waiting for
psycholadine, hands
clasped in prayer,
Wide eyes of
anticipation, penetrating
stare.
Other man stands. He
has a skinhead. He's
been here for ages
And announces that he's
dead.
No one laughs, or didn't
they even hear. No one
laughs
In this confinement of
fear.

I think of diving into the
toy boxes as the church
organs play their tune
What a bad choice of
music for a doctor's
waiting room.
People without
appointments arrive with
buts and ands.
The foreign people raise
their voices but no one
understands.
The heavy kamikaze
smokers hang around
outside
They come back in and
smell as if they already
have died.
Middle aged women
holds her ribs in pain.
Black man has to see a
shrink but he doesn't
look insane.
He's wearing shorts in
February - this I must
explain!
Baby screaming while
mum puts on its red suit.
She's as gentle as a
lamb
But he cries like she's a
brute.
Old man wheezing and
dribbling from his mush.
All this on a Thursday
morning in good old
Shepherd's Bush.

UNTITLED

Didn't anybody tell you
Or did they leave you in
the dark
Now that we are moving
on,
You should really play
your part.

Didn't anyone tell you
We don't have to fight for
land.
Your greed is going to
kill you.
Please try to understand.

Didn't anyone tell you
To find love we must
view inside.
Didn't you know love was
a feeling
We definitely shouldn't
hide.

All the knots of
ignorance
Should already be
undone.
So instead of being tied
up,
Be at peace with
everyone,
Be at peace with
everyone.



KILLAZ *the generation of the time*

'I tried to warn you but you missed it. You shoulda listened when I said don't get it twisted'

*"Don't get it twisted" by Thug Life
Interscope Records*

According to the FBI, juvenile arrests for violent crime rose 68% from 1984.

"Never in our history have we seen this phenomenon of youth violence as random and as inexplicable," says Attorney General Janet Reno. There has been a great increase in 'no parent homes'. By 2005, FBI director Louis Freeh says that these neglected children will be angry youths who will "literally be killing people".



Maybe his prediction is 10 years too late. Suicide is rising dramatically amongst 15-24 year olds while decreasing for the older population. Mortality rates in urban young will be



affected for many years to come by cocaine, heroin, casual gunfire and by teen pregnancy. Medicine now has to deal with crack babies and AIDS babies and an increase in premature babies born to single teens who had no prenatal care. While 25% of whites completed college aged 25, less than 10% of blacks did.

There's a violent crime every 16 seconds, a robbery every 48 seconds, a rape every 5 minutes, a murder every 21 minutes, a property crime every three seconds and a motor vehicle theft every 20 seconds. Youth gang killings have increased at a phenomenal rate from 200 in 1985 to over 1,200 in 1994 and the average age of the person arrested for murder continues to drop. Ten years

ago it was 36; now it's 26. When Dre and Cube talk about "natural born killaz", it is no case of a stretched imagination or some heavy weed trip: they speak reality. Killing is too real on the streets in '95 and shows no sign of letting up.

At the end of 1994, nearly 1,000,000 prisoners were in state and federal facilities compared to 400,000 in 1985. But is killing or mass incarceration solving the ever-increasing pain or the deep injustice?

For over 22 years, gang killings have been going on and thousands have been murdered or jailed for life. Still, politicians, religious leaders and society at large fail to see the signs of the times. All the attempts at locking away the deep truths of America have only resulted in a birth of an ever-growing population of natural born killers. The causes aren't sudden and inexplicable; they have been available for those who wanted to know for years. But society preferred to sweep it off as a 'ghetto problem' or a 'crime problem'. Now finally it has to wake up to the fact that it's a 'me problem' and an American problem.

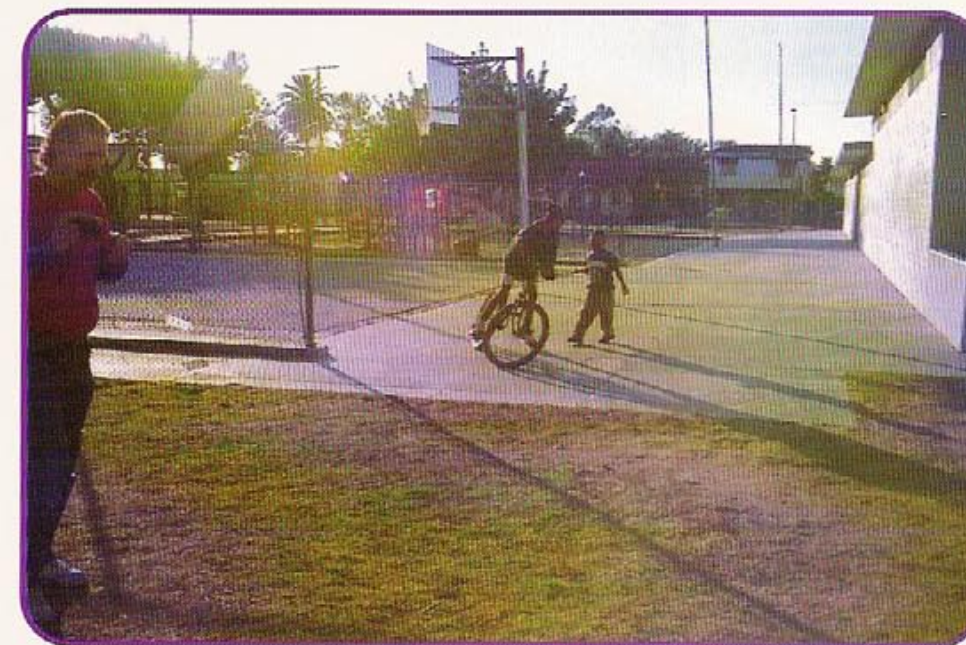
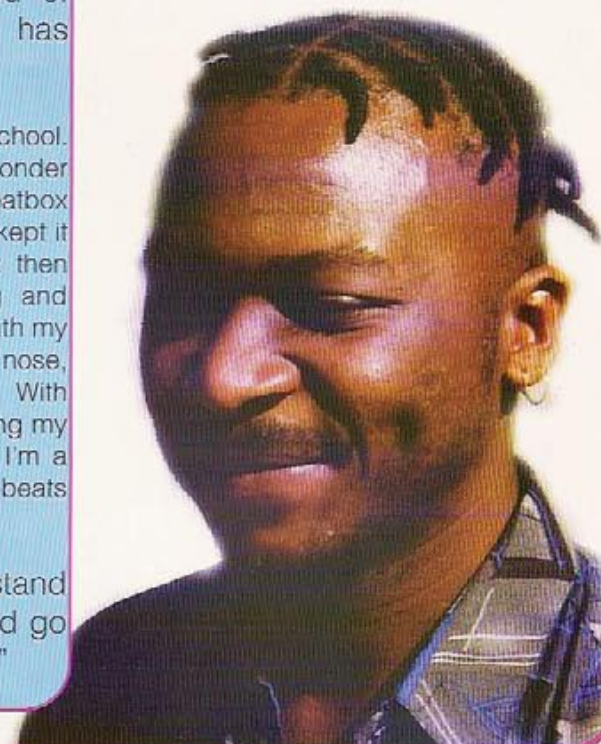


The RADIO BEAT of WATTS

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Is it a digital 24 track? No, it's the living, breathing beatbox booming sounds and beats that could only have evolved from that funkykrazy hood of Watts. Michael Banks aka "RadioBeat" has lived here all his life:

"I've been beatboxing since I was in Junior High School. After I'd heard the Fat Boys, that was it. I would wonder down Venice Beach trying to get a platform to beatbox from but, after a while, I got discouraged and just kept it to myself and my homies. I'd do the beatbox then someone would come in with a little rapping and freestyle. When I get a mic, then I can really go with my beatbox - use the whole of my throat, teeth, nose, windpipe! I'm dreaming up new beats all the time. With a mic, I can get up to 10 beats going. I like making my own style, making my own music. With a mic, I'm a human orchestra - get a combination of all my beats and keep going for hours.

The 'hood is still the same. I don't understand the killing. It's just something I wish would go away so people could get along together."



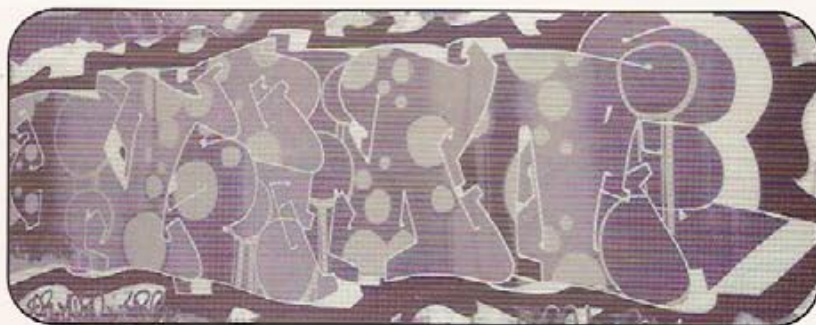
the **BREAK**

Blood on my fingers
And blood on my thighs
Blood in my mouth
And blood in my eyes
You call me an innocent
I'm too guilty to reply
So just tear up my mind
And let my spirit
Fly.

the **LEGACY**

Yelloweyed redcut
To my mouth
North to south
Open up the sore
And let the pus and gore
Flow
Down your milkwhite
Satin skin
Does it not burn you like
Acid?
You scream now
You're not so passive
But this pain and this
rotting,
The bloodlife of a soul
forgotten,
Will now tell all:
While you hunted for
yourself
You spent my unclaimed
wealth.

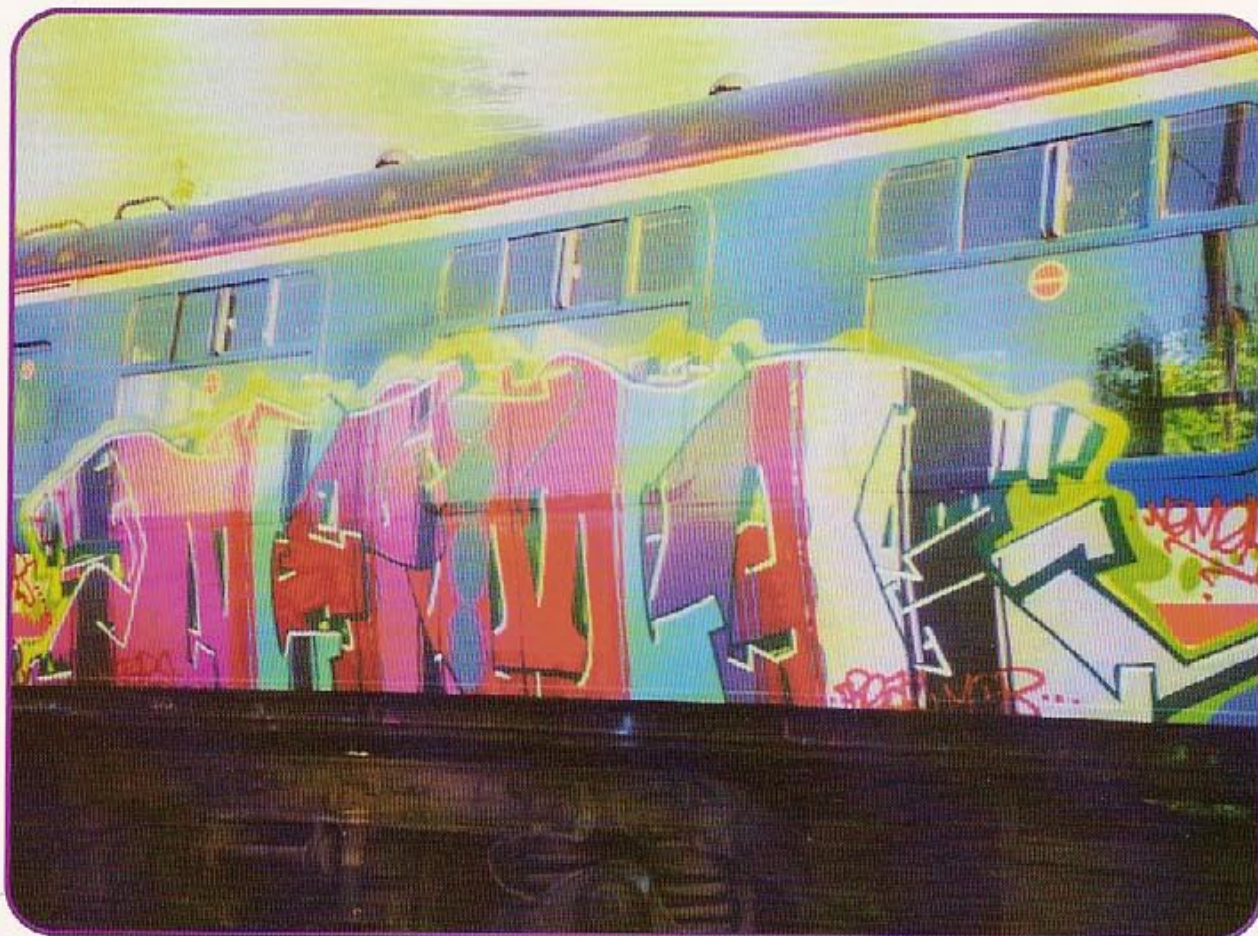
THE RISK
I thought I'd die
when I let go
but what I lost
was a vapid waste
and out of pain and
chaos rose my first life
taste



Touch the Blind

It was not my crime
But I was born
With a heart that was blind.
I knew a thing by feeling
Didn't recognise faces
Stumbled and explored strange dark places
Surfed waves and ran races
Til pain grabbed me
From behind, front and below
And I fell into the bottomless hole
Where demons fester and grow.
There I learnt their faces and names,
Was victim to their lies and games.
Trapped 4 ever in a web
Of agony and fear
Each time I thought I'd touched base,
I'd tumble into a deeper space.
Spiralling ground,
Round and round.
Hate deceived me it was the Ruler
And life would only get crueler
Once upon a Time
I saw the eye of mercy,
A hand that bled,
Reached out and touched me,
Gave a feeling I'd never known
A rush of life to
My frozen bone
I ran I broke
Gave in to the Word that Spoke
Release
Then I believed
I could be free
Still I ran I broke
Gave into the Love
That was Release
Now I am
Free.





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THE STONE YOU BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CAPSTONE. SALVATION IS FOUND IN NO ONE ELSE. FOR THERE IS NO OTHER NAME UNDER HEAVEN GIVEN TO MEN BY WHICH WE MUST BE SAVED." Acts 4:11-12

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You were the hardest teachers and the best.

Last but 4most my Lord & Saviour, alpha & omega Jesus Christ - All the Glory is Yours.

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the international underground arts & music magazine

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THE SWORD IS UPON THE LAND

