

# OBJECTIVE HATE

THE PREQUEL



# TROI TORAIN

# Objective Hate

## The Prequel

*The total belief in one's self  
with the full understanding  
of man's true nature*

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# Objective Hate

1.

It employs no racist collaborators  
or symbols of secret societies.

2.

It breeds no spirit of deception  
or witch-hunt mission of sterilization.

3.

It has no mask of pretense and it provides  
no application for an Illuminati.

4.

It builds no illusions or smoke screens  
to present its warehouse of truth.

5.

It has no followers, supreme institutions,  
or leaders of the mystical world.



*To the young ego driven  
and radically hip*

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# Prologue

As sure as water seeks its own level, the inevitable doom will one day pay us all a visit. Most of my life I've feared that moment and foolishly wondered about the face of a fictitious God. It haunted me. It damaged me. Most of all, it hindered me. Who knows -- without that mystical voodoo grip I could have been something truly great. I awoke from my mental slumber around 1985 and declared war on everyone and everything -- not at the hands of any form of defeat, but instead in the bosom of objective reality.

I spent the prime of my life devouring hateful scrolls hand-picked by King James and company. I sought refuge in Arthur C. Clarke, Philip K. Dick, Miles Davis, and L. Ron Hubbard's mumbo jumbo. But over the years I never forgot the commanding words of Ayn Rand and her earth-shattering way of thinking. Like any soldier of war I was eager to swing my sword for this newfound light, but the real question was, who in America would take me seriously? Me, a child of mixed races, a Jr. Raiders MVP, a C-student, at best, and a devout pupil of "Gilligan's Island." Rand, this intellectually vicious woman who hailed from Russia, shook the Atlas of my feeble mind. Her gut-wrenching attacks and overpowering logic left me crippled and released at the same time. I wanted to tell the world—I needed someone to hear me out—but whores, hot wings,

and cocaine kept postponing my revolution. I slipped hints of her philosophy into the vehicles I had produced for myself, but it wasn't until the year 2000, at a radio station in New York City, that I really tried to regurgitate her legacy. Upon entering the world of media, I was what I was and there was no denying it: a man of obscure views and a non-conformist. In a sense I was like Howard Roark in Rand's novel *The Fountainhead*: a visionary fighting a creative war against contrived, superficial standards. But nurtured on social hate, how could I publicly make a connection between Objectivism and the ogre that I had become? Why should I attempt to tie one to the other and risk scrutiny from those who have, over the decades, been enlightened by Rand's work?

Objectivism was complex and evolving, yet it was the simple, rational truth. Hate was a shallow and cheap emotion, yet one that greeted me in the world every day. Realizing that hatred avoids reason and often leads to violence, I was stumped. So after years of living, learning, and engaging in discussions with strangers, confidants, and natural enemies, I concluded that there are few parallels between the two. Objective Hate became my antidote. To establish my definition of "Objective Hate," let me state first that my philosophy sees man's true nature as hateful, but does not condemn him in the sense of being evil.

The fact that certain civilizations take pride in suicide practice negates all claims that man's prime nature is about survival by any means necessary; no, survival is merely his choice of will. To declare man's true nature evil would mean to be devoid of a vision of hope. To insist that there is no hope would be to leave no room for man to manifest. Through the process of assumption, perception, and intention, it's the latter—intention—that releases mankind from the stamp of being evil by nature. Murder is a vicious act,

but to kill with no crutch of psychosis can also reflect hunger, fear, or even self-defense. Rage, obsession, and greed are conflicts of ideals, standards, or morals. I initially omitted the word “Objective” from my unveiling altogether, but my paralysis of hate could not be reached without the mental-massaging techniques of Objectivism. I’ve thought about substituting the word “Objective” with fancier terms, but after careful consideration found that it could land my philosophy in overly exotic territory. Furthermore, anyone who tinkers with the term “Objective Hate” in a trendy fashion but cannot offer you the pulse of its epistemology should be called out on the carpet and greeted with a nice, firm backhand.

But back to that radio station and the world of media. To aspiring rappers, groupies, vanity-driven whores, and disgruntled DJs, hosting a show on New York’s Hot 97 radio station would be the ultimate job. To me it was merely an opportunity to promote myself and collect capital to finance my Star & Buc Wild projects. As it turned out, bubble-gum R&B singer Aaliyah would become my publicity ticket, catapulting me into a spotlight of infamy. When I first heard the news that she had died in a small plane crash, it was 5:03 in the morning and I was driving to work at Hot 97. I really didn’t think much about it. Living through the crack wars of the ’80s in uptown Manhattan had numbed me to the plight of people dying. Back then, if you weren’t a part of my nucleus, I really didn’t give a fuck how you caught it.

The fact that Aaliyah was some half-cute singer adored by millions meant nothing to me. I was on the radio to promote Star & Buc Wild, at any expense. Some might think that this was the dawn of my Hate, but years before Aaliyah, my self-published magazine *Around The Way Connections* had been my actual launching pad. That morning, halfway through my radio show, it hit me: “Hell, I

can't let this little fishy get away." I told my research team to go into the production room and dig up some plane-crash sound effects. I wanted to find out just who was paying attention to my grind. After I ordered those now famous scream-and-crash sound effects to be played over and over again, I was honestly a little disappointed by the lack of mainstream media coverage I received.

Sure, the Negroes were upset, but aren't they always upset about something? If it had been P. Diddy on that plane I would have played that old Sammy Davis classic "Mr. Bojangles" and sprinkled gun-shots in the background for his fool ass. This was my shot, and I wasn't going to miss it. In the world of hip-hop it was big - the ultimate reality check - and prior to this stunt I had already been closing in on Howard Stern in the Arbitron ratings. This ratings shift hit the heart of the core-sales demo, the 18-to-34 year-olds. I was about to make history. Two hours after the show, Judy Ellis, General Manager of Emmis Communications, and Tracy Cloherty, Program Director of Hot 97, called me for a three-way telephone conversation. The dialogue was calm, but they expressed to me in no uncertain terms that people were very upset, and they had never gotten such a barrage of calls before. My reply was simply, "Okay." Ellis then asked, "Well, what should we do?" and I said, "What do you mean? It's not my radio station." They asked me if I'd apologize and I smiled, knowing that the fuse had already been lit. I said, "Sure. I have no problem with that." It was a quick conversation, without talks of suspension or anything of the kind. Afterward I went home, drank some Tang, and took my usual afternoon nap.

When I woke up, I found hundreds of messages on my voicemail, filled with knee-jerk emotional ramblings. My immediate thought was, "It's on and poppin'." This was the moment that defined me as the Original Hater. No one's gossip columns, interviews, or cute

little top-ten list had ever caused such a nationwide tremor in the arena of rap radio. Star & Buc Wild had arrived! I checked my voicemail every six minutes, listening for ABC, NBC, or CBS News to say, “Mr. Star, we would like to talk to you.” But nothing, all day and night—just a whole lot of death threats and hip-hop nonsense.

You might think it’s cruel for me to say it, but I’ll bet Jay-Z was in the studio working triple overtime when the Notorious B.I.G bit the dust. Aaliyah was sweet and loving, I’m sure, but to me she’d become just a pawn in my game of Hate. The rap world was suddenly looking at the new John Holmes and the big brass at the station just wasn’t prepared for this type of ride. I had to suggest my own suspension to the Program Director, in the hopes of getting some real media coverage. A few days later my request was granted and I was suspended.

The click-drag hags had an online petition going, which was doing the job that probably would have cost me \$50,000 if I’d had to pay a publicist. Thank you, whoever started that thing! As always, the ’hood had a rumor going about me—I’d gotten pistol whipped, it went—but I had no time for their fantasy nigger shit. I had to get hold of a Hollywood producer to try and pull off some kind of film deal.

But just one day after I got back from suspension and found the Jewish Defense League on my ass, down came the World Trade Center. My great transgression was cut short. Talk about a Negro having bad luck. The sobering lynch mob who’d wanted my head and who had become my independent campaign managers would forevermore be distracted.

# Chapter One Wheels of Energy

DISASTER WITH A SMILE AND CANDY FOR A FEW.  
THE EVIL WINGS OF LOVE, A SINGLE POINT OF VIEW.  
THE STORY NEVER ENDS; THE MISSION IS TO SOAR,  
A DESTINY THAT'S REAL - AND THIS MY SON IS WAR.

---

Ayn Rand once said, “Man survives by adjusting his background to himself.” That simply means that man has the ability to alter his environment and mold it to his needs. For me, changing my environment, changing my very reality, began in Scotch Plains, New Jersey.

Scotch Plains is not a remarkable town. Hell, you’ve probably never even heard of it. Originally settled by Dutch immigrants, now boasting a population of 22,000, it barely registers a blip on the map. Filled with well-kept cars, rolling green lawns, bubble gum-



popping mallrats, blue-blood housewives, and regular Joes doing the daily grind to make their mortgage and live the American Dream, Scotch Plains could be Anytown, USA. But it isn't. It's where I got my early training in the art of seeing the world, focusing the laser of my perception on a dream, and molding that dream into hard-core reality.

Who am I? I'm the guy who never gave a damn about going to a Russell Simmons party in the Hamptons. I'm the guy who celebrated for five days when Buster Douglas knocked Mike Tyson out in Tokyo, the guy who will pimp your tragedy for an early-morning chuckle, and also the man of color who promotes the blasphemy of reason over faith. Who am I? I'm known as The Hater: not a frustrated rapper who never got a chance to rock the mic in front of a crowd, not a DJ with a huge record collection but no business sense of the game. Not some fan who always wanted to pour Cristal on bitches in a Snoop Dogg video, but a person who has witnessed the birth of the most profitable pop culture in history and has earned the right to critique the madness.

I was born on May 3, 1964, the same year that President Lyndon B. Johnson signed that joke-ass Civil Rights Act, a year prior to Malcolm X being gunned down, soul-brother style, and just months after Martin Luther King Jr. pleaded with the white man for some table crumbs in Washington, DC. I was born in a period of turmoil, so it's natural that the energy around me is about turning the game of life on its end and flipping the rules. If I have to start a quiet riot to get where I'm going, so be it. This is how I've always gotten down; from grade school to high school I had my own focus, my own perspective on the wheel of life. A simple mind might take my attitude the wrong way, assume I don't give a fuck, and offer solu-

tions. Slow down. It's not that I don't give a damn; you've probably got it all wrong. Allow me to relate a yarn.

Deep within the bosom of Scotch Plains I quickly learned that I was not like most kids. I had a unique set of expectations and stereotypes to confront. American minds are driven by sets of codes and morals, as pencil pushers like to call them. These codes dictate where you live, how you live, and how you should carry yourself in various situations. In short, these cultural codes can ultimately determine your destiny—if you let them.

My destiny was to defy these codes. I used to watch documentaries on PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) with my mom quite often, so I witnessed a good amount of racial politics while sipping ice-cold Hawaiian Punch.

I became conscious of people like Bobby Seale, Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver (leaders of the Black Panther movement) but to me that was ghetto shit, pure and simple. That was those people's fight; I was more concerned with "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood." I came home to a beautiful house with color TVs, brand-new Lego sets and boxes of Hot Wheel cars. Racial politics didn't really disturb my focus, at least not at that point in my life. My mother and father were no-nonsense people. My household was fun but not silly. I remember in the early '70s there was a popular television show called "The Courtship of Eddie's Father," starring Bill Bixby, in which a single father always kissed his son on the lips when putting him to bed. After watching a couple of episodes of this show I asked my mother, "Hey, lady, why don't you guys kiss me like that?" My mother's explanation would help shape my attitude for years to come. She leaned over and, with a knowing gleam in her eye, told me that little boys need to one day let go of momma's apron and become strong, confident men.

No man can deny the genetic blueprint established by the man who came before him. Such is the case with my dad and I. My father was the pure definition of “man.” He was from the South, but not of the South. William Torain was never one to walk around as if he was better than anyone, but in the early ’40s and ’50s, in the heart of the Jim Crow South, he was damn sure the one who would look any white man directly in the eye and demand respect. Of course this led to a few scuffles here and there, but my father was never one to shy away from delivering a well-needed ass whooping. It’s funny how most history books don’t reference these kind of men of color but there are always two sides to every story and my dad was definitely leaning toward the dark side—a trait I proudly carry with me to this day.

My father went into the service in 1943, at the ripe old age of 15. That’s right, boys and girls: back then, if you could eat a man-sized plate, Uncle Sam wanted to see that ass in the trenches, defending the heartland. Today the government is sending parents to jail for letting kids that age stay home and cook their own dinner. In my father’s neck of the woods, children not only cooked for themselves, but at times even had to go out and hunt for some vittles, if they really wanted to eat.

William L. Torain entered the Navy and worked under the rank of Seaman. In the history of the U.S. military there was a time when Negroes weren’t allowed in high-profile positions in the service. Nevertheless my father fought alongside the rest of the sailors, loading missiles and bringing it to anyone crazy enough to hitch their fate to Adolph Hitler’s Nazi Germany. While in the Navy, my father traveled to places such as Panama, Cuba, and Spain. Seeing the world expanded his mind and allowed him to put things into perspective. But he was still young at the time, so when he left the

service at the age of 17, he found himself running moonshine back in his hometown of Durham, North Carolina. For those of you not up on your hillbilly vernacular, moonshine is illegally made liquor. Throughout the South, men would set up what they called “stills” and brew up gallons upon gallons of rot-gutting moonshine to be sold on the black market. My father was knee deep in this trade and hooked up with a pair notorious throughout North Carolina: the Cotton Brothers. With these two, my father got into all manner of brushes with the law, down-and-dirty scuffles, and your general backwoods mayhem. People today can speak up about police brutality, but back in those days there was no such thing. If you somehow ran afoul of the law and couldn’t cut some sort of deal with Mr. Charlie, your ass was toast. There would be no protest, no marches, and no outrage. That ass would just mysteriously disappear.

Somehow, my father managed to survive all of that madness, escape the south, and head north, deciding to make a more honest living as he grew into manhood. Remember the age thing: we’re talking about an old, hardened soul in the body of a twenty-something man. So, taking the straight and narrow path, dad decided to become a brick mason—another example of him defying the odds and attacking challenges many would shy away from. In those times, and to some extent even today, gaining any real position of authority in the construction world was unheard of for a black man. In particular, being a brick mason was considered an elite position, so my father had his work cut out for him. William L. Torain was a hard-working man and sacrificed a lot to create his own mason construction company (not to be confused with a demolition grunt). During the summer months I would work with him sometimes, and I witnessed him build some of the most beautiful fireplaces the

human eye has ever seen. My dad was the guy who planned and laid out the foundation of a house or building, and when they got ready to lay the blocks he set his lines and yelled for the cement mix from the laborers: “Hey, shithead, I need mud over here— hurry up!” When I became old enough to actually work for him, he would speak to me as if I were a piece of shit, too. This fine quality of giving orders is an art unto itself. I watched my dad and studied his mannerisms for years to come. His no-nonsense tone prepared me for the harsh world and helped me develop thick skin.

My parents met in 1958 in Jamaica, Queens, New York. My mom was working as a receptionist for one of the lumberyards that my father dealt with. After about a year of what they called, back then, “courting,” my parents got married. While sharing a similar outlook on life with my father, my mother’s background was quite different from his. She was born and raised in the upper-middle class confines of Queens, New York. As far back as I can remember, I recall my mother being an educated, confident, gutsy woman. In the late ’60s and early ’70s she was a reporter for a newspaper, *The Courier News*. Later she became a music teacher at Plainfield High School, in a town right next to Scotch Plains. The combination of that God-awful Helen Ready hit “I Am Woman, Hear Me Roar” and my mother chasing me with a switch on several occasions quickly awakened me to that fact that there was more to these sweet-smelling creatures than pretty faces and long nails. Music and theater were always my mother’s primary passions in life. By the time I was seven years old she had earned her Master’s degree in Liberal Arts from Drew University. As a child, I remember my mother often taking my older brother and I to the movies on Saturdays. This was an important time for me because it opened my mind and challenged my imagination. We’d see anything that seemed

interesting: *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, *Herbie the Love Bug*, *Dirty Harry*. All of it helped me develop a keen interest in the world of entertainment.

When I first saw the science fiction film *Silent Running*, in 1971, I was scared, intrigued, and fascinated at the same time. Here was Freeman Lowell (Bruce Dern), deep in the middle of space with two robots, Huey and Duey, assisting him with his rebellion. Dern was attempting to save the last specimens of Earth's wildlife from destruction by the government, who believed the project had become obsolete. The story was about solitude, focus, and the ability to meet a seemingly insurmountable challenge. That film had a lasting impression on me, and in some ways I still feel very close to its protagonist.

Another film that had a great effect on me as a kid was *They Call Me Mr. Tibbs*, starring Sidney Poitier. It was a rush to see this confident man of color doing his thing in the white America. Poitier didn't have to scream and holler to get his point across; his coolness was impressive. My dad worked six days a week, so he didn't usually make it with us to the movies. My father didn't have time for the world of film; his life was locked into hardcore reality. He took the position that reality could be friend or foe, but one thing was for sure: whether you liked it or not, you had to embrace reality at one point or another. But don't get me wrong. He did occasionally show us a warmer, family-man side.

For years we took family trips to upstate New York in our Dodge station wagon. The trips were long and mostly enjoyable, but even in the back seat my brother was unsociable. Needless to say, after a few hours on the road with him, I was ready for whatever my parents had in store for me that day. These were the days before Play Stations or iPhones where you actually looked out of the car

window and used your imagination. We'd collect spring water from the mountain streams in Orange Country, New York, and fill up 50 one gallon jugs. These were also the days before Poland Spring and Deer Park cashed in on this natural resource. If it was a Sunday after we got back, we'd have our family dinner together. Dad sat at the head of the table in a bright white dress shirt that he'd put on for the occasion. As Protestants, my parents wanted us to regularly practice formality and manners.

Despite all his rules and teachings on how to conduct oneself, my father was never one to mince words or stay his hand when it came to putting my older brother Guy, in check. I watched Guy catch hell from our father and from that I learned what *not* to do. I usually sat back and laughed at these sparring sessions. Hell, sometimes I was even the *cause* of my brother's ass whoopings. Having ratted my brother out for some minor infraction of the house code, I never received any beatings from my dad. Once, in the middle of dinner, I watched my father put Guy in a headlock and then bite him right on top of his head: "Boy, didn't I tell you—Arrrrrrr!" That's right—tooth to noggin, just like that. Unfortunately, my brother just wasn't a good communicator, so this kind of stuff happened on occasion.

Guy, a malevolent, light-skinned Negro, made things difficult for me at times. A master of torture and evil looks, Guy made life with him a constant challenge. The only thing that spared me his perpetual wrath was the fact that we had separate bedrooms. (Sorry, this isn't a ghetto tale of five sleeping in one bed). My brother would administer occasional punches in the gut, knees in the groin or forearm smashes to the back of my head, just to practice some new wrestling technique he'd seen on television. That's about how it went down three out of five days. This would become the norm for me for a couple of years—until I got my weight up. With both

parents working and thus unable to provide a buffer from Guy's wrath, my level of physical endurance was strengthened. "Pain and suffering is a beautiful thing" are the words I remember Guy telling me on many occasions, after neatly planting a Joe Frazier uppercut to my chin. Back then it felt like the end of the world when this jerk-off pounded on me. A few times he threw me down the basement stairs. On another occasion he asked me, "Are those my socks you're wearing?" and when I said, "No, sir," he replied, "Well, here's a little something just in case you ever think about wearing my shit": *Kaplow*—a wheel kick was delivered to the left side of my head. Most brothers fight, but with my temper and his evil attitude we clashed all the time. Often the neighbors would see us out in the front or backyard throwing jabs and kicks at each other about small shit. This routine started as early as I can remember. I was just an overly aggressive little kid, and Guy was frustrated from having to take care of me while our parents were working or out food shopping. Sometimes I'd have to tag along with him and his friends, and of course he didn't like that. Being able to take Guy's punches was a regular test of my manhood. To this day, I tell people that if they have a problem with me—just swing.

Ultimately, my older brother was a real stranger to me growing up. He has one green eye and one grey eye, so based on that alone I didn't trust him as far as I could spit. Later in life we became the best of friends, but growing up he was a distant character who always woke up with an axe to grind. I remember reading the newspaper with my dad one Sunday morning and there was a story about a man who flipped out and shot up his whole family. Hell, that was big news in those days, so I suggested to my dad that he hide his guns from my brother just in case Guy saw the story and started getting some bright ideas.



Aside from my brother's grey-and-green-eyed theatrics, I also had the kids in the neighborhood to contend with. "Dick-weed." "Scumbag." "Prick." "Half-Nigger." These were just some of the words that kids used to refer to me, though never to my face. If you're thinking that this is some sort of sob story, then I've inadvertently led you astray. The modern pressure cooker that was my home-life was my boot camp. And like every young soldier, I was eager to test out what I'd learned. I slowly became a bully in my inner-circle with a passion for third-rate mischief. If you fell off your bike, chipped your tooth or had not yet developed hand eye coordination, I was the kid who laughed aloud and then called you an invalid from a lineage of retards.

I was aware of racism and prejudice, but when you're young and eager, those things can become tools, used to your advantage. I remember rounding up white kids from Scotch Plains to jump black kids from the Plainfield. It was about power for me, not "Who am I and how do I fit in?" Half of the time people pigeonhole you because of your race, and many times half of their job is done, thanks to how you carry yourself. I chose to be the oppressor instead of the victim. My influence was what mattered to me the most, and the reason for this was simple -- life was great!

## Chapter Two Avalon Streets

SMALL-TOWN SCAMS WITH ELVIS ON THE PLATE.  
I'M QUESTIONED BY A FEW WHO SIMPLY CAN'T  
RELATE. A BOY WHO WANTS TO RULE BUT WICKED  
IN THE MIND; A DEMON AT YOUR DOOR, WITH  
PICTURES CAUGHT IN TIME.

---

Being liked has never been a concern of mine. Being popular is something I've always been, but being respected is what motivates me on a daily basis. As a young, silly, and somewhat free Negro from the beautiful suburbs, I was easily impressed by people: Bruce Lee, David Cassidy, O.J. Simpson, Evel Knievel, and the host of the hippest trip in America -- Don Cornelius of "Soul Train." Wow,

was that Negro cool. All had an effect on me. But most impressive of all was a guy who came to life every Sunday afternoon. He wore expensive suits and fedora hats, and no matter what situation he found himself in, he was always what I strived to be: the boss. His name was Bud Abbott, and he was half of the greatest comedy team of all time: Abbott & Costello.

That weekly installment of cool-and-slick slapstick humor had a lasting impression on me. Of course I liked the antics and the humor of Lou Costello, but it was Bud Abbott who inspired me to go to school and order my friends around for the hell of it. That role fit my personality. Abbott and Costello were New Jersey natives like myself, and when my mother informed me of this fact at a young age I really got locked into their world. Even though Costello died in 1959 and Bud passed in 1974, if I sat in front of that television set once a week, they were still alive. Abbott and Costello made over 30 films, and with those blueprints, my childhood was laid out for me. At hockey and football games I didn't give a rat's ass who our team captain was; when the action got going I called the shots—just like Bud Abbott did. They say that by the time a child is five years old, the manner in which he or she will approach life's obstacles is pretty much already established. They call it a personality. Some kids fall victim to the pressures of society growing up, and this is especially true of children with racially mixed backgrounds. They get caught up in the hate: being called “too black,” or “not black enough,” or people saying they talk as if they're white. I never gave a fuck about any of that; I simply followed the lead of my childhood hero Bud Abbott and perceived everyone else as beneath me. When you have few friends, as I did, you really don't find yourself in situations in which you feel sad or left out. Sure, I had a few buddies with whom I teamed up once in a while. But usually, after their parents got one

look at my slick grin, I'd find myself outside on the porch or across the street for 20 minutes. Sometimes I'd come walking down the street to say hello to a group of kids and within seconds: "Here comes Torain!" *Whoosh*, like antelopes on the African Serengeti, they'd just vanish. Nobody knew what I was going to introduce into the fold next, and a lot of times they got out of Dodge before they'd have to find out. Even kids I marginally called friends had trouble convincing their folks that I was up to something other than pure wickedness.

The nearest shopping center to my house was called Blue Star, and that was my turf. For about four years, I patrolled that complex on my bike as if I owned the fucking place. I saw many stores transform and witnessed various people live their lives around that place. But the biggest change occurred when Blue Star opened up a store that catered directly to me: Toys "R" Us. That was when larceny and corruption entered my soul. Before that big kingdom of pleasure came to Blue Star in the early '70s, I was just a two-bit hustler and the word "mall" had not yet been fully woven into the American psyche. My parents gave me mostly everything I asked for. But this was something else; this was big. Hell, this was bigger than that guy eating a chick's ass out in the magazine under the seat of my father's work truck. Up until this point, the only bike I'd ever heard of was a Schwinn. But Toys "R" Us not only had variety; they had GI Joes up the anus—and I had to have them. Within six minutes of being inside of what would become my second home I quickly became a victim of commercials and the corporate boom. I remember saying, in a soft whisper under my breath, "Killer"—over and over again. The store was filled with everything my young imagination could conceive. I was hooked and I had to get some currency together, quickly. A lot of currency. Over the next year I

persuaded my parents to give me a bigger allowance. But I really focused on increasing my scams, so I could keep up with the latest Tyco and AFX cars.

It was during this time that Lee Majors, star of the hit television show “The Six Million Dollar Man,” was scheduled to make an appearance at Toys “R” Us. The name that Majors had on this hit television show was the *Bionic Man*; he was a former astronaut who suffered a horrific crash landing and was rebuilt by scientists with super powers. I had to meet this guy so I could ask him who would win if he had a fight with James Bond. The day that Lee Majors came to the Blue Star Shopping Center I stood in line along with hundreds of other spoiled suburban brats. As he was coming down the aisle and shaking everybody’s hand I was excited to meet him, but more than that, anxious to see and feel his bionic hand. This was it. He stuck his hand out and said to me, “Hey there, buddy; how’s it going?” With no verbal response I quickly grabbed his right hand with both of my hands and started checking to see if any wires were sticking out of this bionic thing. It felt normal, so I was a little disappointed. Then, instead of asking him the big question, I said, “Hey, dude, I’ll bet James Bond can kick your ass.” Majors looked at me, smiled, patted me on the head and kept it moving. I think I watched his show three more times after that and finally said, “Ah, fuck him. He’s a fraud.” That was the first person I ever hated on.

When I was 13 years old, I cooked up a scheme with my friends to steal all the pastry from the ShopRite at the Blue Star Shopping Center. It was a Sunday night and I had cased the place pretty thoroughly, so I felt relatively confident it would be a smooth job. Once a week a delivery truck left crates of sweet pastries unguarded in front of the store until the manager came to open up early the next morning. So I assembled a few kids from the neighborhood

and told them the plan. They were skeptical, but because I was a bully I was able to get them to come.

So we got there and waited for a while, and like I'd told them, the truck came. As soon as it left we pounced on its shelves. There were coffee cakes, muffins, and donuts; it was like a damn smorgasbord. We were eating as much as we were stashing in our coats. I had a bowling bag that I carried whenever I was looking to steal shit and that's where I stashed the goods. Just then, a hard, cold beam of light penetrated the shadows in which we were doing our dirt. It was the police. They'd been watching the shelves, and they said, "Police! Don't move!" We scattered like rats. I jumped on my bike and tried to get away. The cop car ran into my bike and I went flying onto the concrete. I scraped up the top of my head and my face and fucked up my arm, but I got up and started running. I ran toward this creek that was hard to navigate if you didn't know it. I ran about half a mile before I stopped.

Later that night we got back together and talked. We didn't have any pastry because what we had was wet from the creek. But it wasn't really about the score; it was about the excitement. I did this kind of shit all the time. I'd get on my bike at 3 in the morning—I didn't have a curfew—and cruise around different neighborhoods, exploring and looking for things to get into.

One of my favorite pastimes was breaking into neighbors' houses. Mind you, I wanted for nothing. I had clothes, food—whatever I needed. My parents took care of me. It wasn't about taking from someone else's purse; it was about getting restless in the suburbs and seeing what I could get away with. It was the challenge of getting my rocks off. I'd sit on my porch and watch as families drove off for a trip to the movies or a visit to another family member. Right then and there I'd do a head count in the car, just to make sure

the house was totally empty. Audacity wasn't my middle name; it was my *modus operandi*. Wasting no time I'd casually stroll over to the target house and case the joint: peek in a few windows, tap on a couple of doors—you know, just to make sure I didn't unexpectedly walk in on grandma while she was taking a sponge bath. Once inside, I'd get a feeling of relaxation mixed with excitement. Nothing beats looking people in the eye day after day, and then one day entering their domain and flipping through the secrets of their life to find out what makes them tick. The first thing I'd do after breaking in was check the refrigerator. You get insight as to who a person is when you look into his or her refrigerator. But truthfully, I was usually more interested in scarfing down some fresh goods than psychoanalyzing some working stiff who bought Hellmann's instead of Kraft mayo.

The next order of business, and I never missed this, was to go directly to the master bedroom and urinate on the bed. This little gesture was my way of letting a person know I'd been there. No hide-and-seek sneaky shit, just straight up, in-your-face “fuck you.” I always wished that I could see the look on their faces when they discovered that the sheets on their bed had been violated.

I never really got caught. Most of the time I'd select a house that looked dark inside, go to the backyard and knock on the door. If someone answered I'd just say some stupid shit like, “Hi, is David home?” David was a common name. If someone answered the door, he'd usually tell me that David doesn't live here, and I'd just leave, saying, “Oh, I'm sorry. I think I have the wrong house.” Don't try this today, kids. Back in the '70s security cameras just weren't that popular.

Once I was in the Fanwood area with a team, and we got hemmed up in this cul-de-sac. Stupidly, we passed the house about five times,

so it was probably obvious that we were casing the joint. We went into the back of the house and banged on the door. All of a sudden, a man came rushing out from the side of the house saying, “Come here, scumbags!” We bolted, except for one kid named Izzy, who froze up because the man had a gun. The fool started hollering my name: “Troi, hold up! Troi, come back!” I was running between houses for dear life when I heard—*BOOM!* The guy had let off a shot into the air. We looked back and saw the man slapping the shit out of Izzy. Later, Izzy caught up with us. He was sniffing and crying like a little bitch, but it was kind of understandable. The man had a gun, and later we found out that he was a cop. My time in Scotch Plains was full of little expeditions like those, which increased my sense of local power and continued giving me the high of trying things just to try them.

School served the same purpose. I thought of school as training ground for followers, a factory prepping you to be a spoke in the wheel, a stooge and a sheep. I had no intention of becoming a mindless drone, shuffling papers, reading inaccurate history books, or taking out-of-date chemistry courses. I was an independent thinker, so school became my lab, in which I could test out my own unique brand of social chaos theory.

One area that I wasn’t too eager to test but still got an unexpected lesson in was sex. For a lot of young guys, sex was the primary thing on their mind. In my neighborhood, especially, many guys focused on getting inside the drawers of some young, strawberry-smelling female just coming into her womanhood. Cracking a broad’s maiden wasn’t my priority; I was still focused on locking down my block as the bully that I was. Sounds unnatural, maybe, but even to this day I refuse to be ruled by my cock.



The first time I had sex I was about 13. It was a pretty scary experience. I was in the seventh grade and there was a girl in my school, Terrill Junior High, whom I couldn't take my eyes off of for about three weeks. Her name was Jill. She was a pale little white chick with long black hair and she was always real bubbly. This over-the-top whirlwind of beauty made me feel vulnerable just by laughing and playing with her hair. I literally pushed myself one day to ask her, "Hey, would you be my girlfriend?" She looked at me and said, "Hmmm. Torain, right? I'll tell you tomorrow." Up until that point we'd had little conversation, but I decided to take the chance anyway. Understand, I didn't smile a lot. I didn't have a rough childhood or anything; I just always had a devil's smirk on my face—I was a real fucking smart ass—so I was uncertain and didn't know if she even liked or noticed me at all. The next day in school, around third period, we locked eyes in the hallway, but she didn't come to me. I had to go to her for my response. Even though she was only a few feet away, it was the longest walk of my life.

Up until that point I'd always been in control of things, but the feeling of this little cupcake having the upper hand was a totally different vibe. I was alone walking toward her and she had two of her friends with her. I heard Jill say, "I'll be right back—I've got to tell Troi Torain something." Without hesitation she took two steps toward me, smiled, and said, "Yes, but don't tell anybody because I'm not supposed to be dating boys yet—okay?" I fucking froze. I guess in my mind I wanted her, or thought I needed her, or something like that, but I wasn't expecting her to say yes, just like that. It threw me off balance and I just stood there looking stupid and said, "Cool." Then, with both hands in my pockets, I said, "Well, I've got to go now. See you later."

This was the '70s and that little Jewish American Princess would give my sinful drive a new direction. That silly girl fascinated me, so whatever she wanted to do was fine with me. When I was walking her home during that first month we did the French kiss thing a few times, but nothing serious. I wasn't sure what to do, anyway; I'd just started jerking off a year earlier. About two months into the relationship we had sex, made love, shared lust—I don't know what it was, but the whole experience scared the shit out of me. That day I brought Jill into my secret world: my room. Bicycle tools, Tyco racing cars, Rock'Em Sock'Em Robots, and Lego shit everywhere. A real fucking tornado. I was into the rock group Kiss, so I had a big poster of Gene Simmons on the wall and an "Escape From the Planet of the Apes" trash can near the bed. I dug this chick so much that I didn't want to be pushy or come off as some sort of aggressive Don Juan. But soon I'm rubbing her stomach, nervously trying to touch one of her breasts. Then she made the first move and suggested we get into the bed.

For the first time in my life I was at someone else's mercy: in my bed with a girl. This was my personal space. We were in sheets that hadn't been washed in months. My mother had taught me at the age of nine to wash my own shit but I had kind of slacked off on this particular occasion. We had unprotected sex. I knew about condoms but I just never brought any, and I dared not go into the evil, light-skinned Negro's room downstairs to borrow one, because that would mean a brawl later. I was so nervous, asking about getting naked with her. Throughout the whole process Jill was grinning and asking me if I had ever done this before; of course, I told her. But she just laughed and said, "Yeah, right, Troi Torain." Soon I shut my mouth and went with the flow. I remember it being real quiet

during the act. All I could hear were chirping birds outside my window and this beautiful flower chomping on her bubble gum.

Within seconds of getting on top of her I fell in lust, not love, and decided that I would kill a motherfucker over this gem. For about two minutes we fumbled around with insertion procedures and when she turned her head and closed her eyes for that first thrust, I tasted my fingers and smiled like the seed of Satan. Within five minutes of this unstoppable act, I experienced the greatest urge and the most powerless feeling I had ever known. Afterward we talked for a while and tried to relax. I think we were both freaked out, since it was our first times.

Even so, she was dealing with the after-effects better than I and was a lot more confident. It took me about five hours to regain my mental balance. We dated for about eight more months, but eventually it ended, without much fanfare. We didn't have an argument or anything; we just kind of drifted apart. In all, I think we had sex five times. I just wasn't that comfortable with the concept of not being in control of my feelings. Over the next couple of years Jill would see me and smile, but I just gave her a head nod and kept it moving. In my mind she had surrendered to me the way the other kids had, thus making her no longer a challenge.

But as sweet as Scotch Plains gave it up, it also dished out heaping portions of pain and lessons in psychological warfare that I'd never forget. With its strong share of La Cosa Nostra brats, it was a constant game of dominance and slick talk that I enjoyed and gladly took part in. Aside from the nickel-and-dime shit and low-budget home invasions, we promoted our own fight clubs and backyard brawls, just to keep ourselves occupied and high-strung. Black eyes, gash marks, swollen limbs, and fractured bones were common things to have and be proud of. These were battle scars

and stripes of suburban gladiators. At least three times a month 20 kids would meet after school in the woods to see who wanted to let off some steam. It didn't matter who got the best of you on any given day. What mattered was how many times, after a good pummeling, you returned for an encore. Most of the times I gave out the pummeling, but on occasion I got a kick in the side of my head from one of the Colombo twins, just to even things out.

One of the most beautiful educations I would get in Scotch Plains was the schooling in White Power. Too often in America, Caucasian ideals are swallowed as morally supreme, which can be an impossible equation if you're not culturally diverse. If not understood, it could put you in danger. If embraced too much, it could leave you submissive. If resisted too much, it could make you a target.

By and large my family life was conservative, but the undertones were colorful and full of excitement. Sure, we had disagreements, as any family does, but looking back it was the greatest childhood a kid could ask for. Sounds corny, but it's true. This lasted until the late '70s. My Mom was a city girl. She wanted to get back to her teenage goal: singing on Broadway. Her job as music teacher at the local high school wasn't enough to keep her in Suburbia. My father, being from the South, was a bit more content with the routine of things. To put it plain, mom left dad and I was too busy perfecting scams and trying to find my own way in the world to be fazed by their breakup. I never tried to get them back together; I just accepted them as equals and remained tight with both of them. Plus, my older brother Guy had already left to live with an older woman in East Orange. The movie *The Mack* had really done a job on him and he was trying to become a pimp.

Just days after mom left for the Big Apple I decided to turn on the radio and blast some loud music in the house, which up until that

point I had never done. The song I heard was “Good Times,” by Chic. I had my assorted little collection of records from groups like the Ohio Players, Led Zeppelin, and Eddie Money, but it was the sound of Bernard Edwards, Nile Rodgers and Tony Thompson that instantly gave me newfound direction and attitude, along with the gateway to my manhood. Specifically, the bass player from Chic, Bernard Edwards, really inspired me. His style was more appealing than that of John Entwistle, who played with The Who, and Mark Adams, who played with another one of my favorite groups, Slave. I immediately hustled up some cash, got myself a bass guitar, and started teaching myself to play. Edwards was too good for me to just jump into playing his shit, so I started copying a bunch of sloppy motherfuckers: Black Sabbath and Cheap Trick. I played along with records and set the needle back on the stereo at least 50 times until I could figure out the groove of a song.

After six months of this routine I started taking guitar lessons after school at a music shop. I soon learned that there was a lot more to Bernard Edwards and Nile Rodgers than I had first imagined. These were some incredibly talented cats who happened to come along at a time in our history when people were calling music “disco.” Diversity, discipline, consistency, and creative genius were just some of the terms I applied to these well-dressed dudes who would take the place of Bud Abbott and Lou Costello in my mind for the next decade.

I hung around Scotch Plains for about another two years, but it suddenly wasn’t a place I felt I belonged anymore. The music of Chic was pushing me to make a move and I felt I needed to see the things that Bernard Edwards had experienced in order to even come close to his talent on the bass guitar. I let my room go. There was dust everywhere and it had turned into a crash pad. I

was spending a lot of time in Plainfield, New Jersey, with a gang who called themselves the Puma Crew. These were some tough, trouble-making hardheads, revved-up punks who were hotheads, like I was. But the difference between these advanced criminals and the stagnant chumps in Scotch Plains was their style. They were wearing plaid pants, sheepskin coats, mock necks, and dunce caps. This wasn't my style at all; I had been wearing tight corduroy pants, a big, curly, mop hairstyle, and Pro-Keds, but I geared up fast for this new Motown-styled thug shit.

By hanging out with the Puma Crew I got to experience New York's Delancey Street right at the beginning of hip-hop fashion. I chopped my Afro down to a Caesar and starting getting waves in my hair. My shit was so wavy, bitches got seasick. I was wearing V-neck sweaters and quarter-ville coats. My outer shell had changed, but inside I was the same solo act who never needed a support team to get a job done. And after another year of running around New Jersey robbing houses, getting into fights, and traveling to different 'hoods on suicide missions, I felt as if I was beating a dead horse. I needed to grow, and New York was calling me.

With no solid game plan, I decided to call my aunt Susan in Queens and ask her if I could move in with her family. She seemed surprised that I wanted to leave the suburbs for Jamaica, New York, but without hesitation she agreed.

Along with my aunt Susan and her new husband Danny, I would now be living with my cousins, Toi and Neal. Toi, three months younger than I, was known in the rap world as Sweet Tee, one of the pioneers of the female rap game. Excited, I packed up my bag of belongings and left for New York. My dad stayed in that house for another two years. He was really hurt by my mother leaving, and soon let the house go and moved to Newark with a couple of his

friends. My dad was always there for me as a kid, but I had to go and explore the world. Within three days of being in Queens, I knew I didn't belong in Scotch Plains anymore. That shit was behind me. I took a break from the Puma Crew. We stayed in touch, but I didn't feel obligated to come back to Plainfield or invite them to Queens.

The year was 1982 and I was going to Andrew Jackson High School in Hollis, Queens. It was the first time I'd ever seen security guards in a school. We had to show I.D. just to enter the building. I felt like some sort of Mafia capo going to trial. I had a grin on my face every day, walking into that jungle. I was fascinated as I observed the new, cool black styles I was being exposed to, but I was more interested in making tremors with my presence. The fly shit then was to have your name on a belt buckle. The way kids spoke was new, too; a lot of the slang was stuff I had only heard snippets of back in Plainfield.

I was excited and scared at the same time. I knew that there were a lot of badass motherfuckers in this school but I wanted whatever was coming to me. Even the bus ride on the Q4 was a primer. People were always pushing each other out of the way, something I wasn't accustomed to. You really had to grab your nuts and tell a kid to move the fuck out of the way on that bus.

I was pleasantly distracted and soon it began getting harder to concentrate on schoolwork and sports. I enjoyed the massive culture shock, and the abundance of pretty brown-skinned girls. The thugs were watching at all times. I was watching them, and the walls were watching us, and we're all looking for some sort of weakness in each other. Kids were stealing each other's coats and sneakers, so you had to look the part of a brawler. If someone recklessly eyeballed you and turned your head like a fucking punk, you could expect

that coat to come right up off your back. I had already perfected this art form, back in Jersey at the age of ten, so I wasn't worried about that confrontation. If a kid asked me the size of my coat or sneakers, the answer would be, "Your size, motherfucker -- why?"

Mentally, I was ready to deal with all challenges and confrontations at the drop of a hat. I didn't really stick out because I was already geared up the way my boys in the Puma Crew were. I only had drama in that school once—drama that I, as always, brought upon myself. These knuckleheads were shooting dice in the hallway. This one guy was winning all the hands and yelled out, "*Who wants some of this?* Who wants some of this?" When nobody answered, he hollered, "Aw, you're all faggots!" I felt compelled to speak up and said, "The only fag is the one holding the dice." Next thing you know we're thumping right there in the hallway, but it felt good, because I was far from my native area, holding my own. After a few minutes of hand motions and a couple of sucker punches from his friends, the teachers came, but they didn't say, "Break it up"; they told us to get out of the hallway and go to class. The vibe was tense and I loved it.

Another one of my most memorable times at Andrew Jackson High was when I posted up in the hallway with my red suede Pumas on, no laces, and all of a sudden heard gunfire. Everybody ran and I struggled, with a grin, to keep my Pumas on. Later I found out that some kid named Hurricane had gotten shot. He survived and years later went on to become the DJ for the Beastie Boys. Jason Mizell (better known as Jam Master Jay) also attended Jackson that same year. Although we never shared any words, his presence was felt and his demeanor definitely commanded respect.

I stayed in Queens at my aunt's house for about six months. After that I moved in with my mother in Manhattan on 156th Street and



Riverside Drive. Queens was cool but I wanted to get closer to the city and see what New York was really about. I wanted to get sharp and polished, like Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards. Hip-hop was blossoming but I had developed a real hatred toward it because of some losers who called themselves the Sugar Hill Gang. This group of untalented ghetto misfits had stolen a bass line from my idol, Bernard Edwards and people were loving it by way of a new song. CHIC's masterpiece was called "Good Times," brilliantly composed by Edwards and Rodgers, but blatantly ripped off and turned into a bottom-dwelling, Nigger-hoe-down anthem. I was also heated and torn apart because the savages I was hanging out with were acting like this new trash (Rappers Delight) was some great fucking original creation. What was this garbage and who the fuck stood by and allowed this to happen was all I could think of for months. To this day I detest that song and the minds that played a part in its huge success. Yes, the Sugar Hill clowns became the second victims of my not-yet developed hate.

But little did I know that the eighties (just around the corner) would prove to be the most diverse period for African American music combined with a new attitude toward whitey. Myself being a student of suburban Rock & Roll, would be caught right in the middle of this new culture clash. And although Heavy Metal was now putting on its ass-kicking boots, Hip-Hop was slowly spreading like a bad case of Gonorrhea, yet nobody was lining up to get a shot.

## Chapter Three Batter Up

LONG LIVE THUGS AND CORNBALL CAPERS,  
THOSE WHO CHASE CLOUDS AND THOSE WHO  
MAKE PAPER. THOSE WHO GET WRECKED AND THOSE  
WHO STAND STRONG, THOSE WHO MOVE TIME AND  
THOSE WHO PIMP STRONG.

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Arriving in the Big Apple (NYC) and experiencing racial politics first-hand inspired me to evolve from a boy to a man, and also transformed me into less of a physical bully. I had to dig deep into what I was taught in Scotch Plains about working certain situations to my advantage. I became more polished in my approach, but still aggressive. I also became more professional and charismatic.

I had just moved in with my mother, but she was a bit different than I remembered. Her style had changed. Not for the worse; she

was just different, and I wasn't the same little kid who use to ask her dumb questions. I was coming into my own and I was now more interested in roaming the streets and building my own nest. Sometimes I'd bring my street-rat girlfriends through her apartment for a shower and a quick plowing, but never to spend the night. One day, while strolling with one of my semen receptacles, I met some guys at a coffee shop on 158th Street and Broadway. They were holding their gig (guitar) bags and talking about music.

I walked up to the group of them and asked where they jammed. Back then that was an easy way to break the ice. Ask a cat where he jammed and an hour later you'd probably still be talking to him, on the same corner, about chord progressions and riffs. These guys told me that they were jamming at a spot right up the block. One of those cats was a guy named Jimmy Johnson, who was my introduction into a new world.

I'd started to attend George Washington High in uptown Manhattan but I barely went and eventually stopped going. I didn't hang out at my mother's place too often because she had her new boyfriend living with her, and although it wasn't as if I didn't like the guy, I was just into my own world and eager to find my way around. So I started spending a lot of time at Jimmy's house, which was really a flophouse. At least five people slept there every night. He was a real cool cat, and at 33 years old, he had a few things to teach me about Harlem and the music business. He was a hell of a guitar player. People would come over and jam all the time; that was actually where I got my real chops on the bass guitar. I even went as far as getting some chick to braid my hair and put in hair extensions so I could resemble Rick James. I had two leather outfits to match. I really got into the eighties music scene strong.

Across from Jimmy's basement apartment was a bar called The Monarch. It was where I played my first live gig. We played a lot of R&B disco shit back then. Despite the music world and late-night lifestyle, Jimmy wasn't a druggie. He was just a naturally talented guy from the South who could play the shit out of a guitar. So, being in this atmosphere around all the slick bitches coming into the house, I was wide open for a new adventure. One day I saw this fine specimen of life walk into The Monarch and decide to spit my weak boyhood game at her. We spoke for about three minutes and she asked me where I was from. I told her Scotch Plains, New Jersey, and she said, "Oh, you're cute. You got any blow?" I said, "What's that?" and she smiled, cocked her head, and said, "Ooooooh -- come with me."

We walked up Broadway about five blocks to another bar, Dante's. I don't know if she bought the blow or if someone gave it to her on credit, but she came out with it somehow. We went back to Jimmy's basement and headed for the bathroom. She started sniffing white powder in a piece of aluminum foil. I didn't know what the fuck she was doing. I knew it was some sort of drug, but I had never been in contact with it—I was only 17. She said, "Here, this is called a one-on-one." I thought to myself, "Why not?" She went on to show me how to take a little straw and sniff the powder up one nostril, then the other. Afterward we went back into the living room, where the guys were jamming. I was mellowing out with this new Latin vixen as I tweaked on my very first hit of cocaine.

After that, I really started digging this girl. She had tunnel vision, unlike any broad I had ever known before: she was all about getting money. Her street name was Sheik—just like the band with Edwards and Rodgers, but spelled differently. I started hanging out with her, and since her thing was sniffing coke, I started sniffing coke, as well.

One day, after several hours of sexing, sniffing, and plotting small-time scams and escapades, Sheik stood up in the bed and said, “I got to go get some fucking money.” There I was, lying up in the bed like I’d done so many times back in Jersey, where after sex you’d wait for the chick to go to the kitchen and fix you a tuna sandwich, but this girl was different. Still, I was in the dark, and she started rushing me to get my clothes on to go with her somewhere. So we jumped on the 1 Train downtown and ended up on 11th Avenue and 38th Street. This was the ho track in those days, and man, was this some type of education.

I didn’t catch on until hours after she told me to stand on the corner and wait for her. I was clueless. Sure, I saw all these other girls walking around in loud, skimpy outfits, but I was in total darkness. A car pulled up and Sheik walked up to the car and started talking to some man. I was standing there, thinking, “Who the fuck is she talking to?” Back in Jersey, if a guy rolled up to your girl like that, it meant a situation that usually ended in physical confrontation. Before I could even wrap my mind around the situation, the bitch jumped in the car, waved to me, and said, “I’ll be back -- just wait here.”

She returned about 45 minutes later smoking a cigarette. She didn’t have cigarettes when we first came down there, so I’m even more suspicious now. All this boyfriend-girlfriend shit was going through my mind and I asked her, “Where did you get the cigarette, who was that dude, and where the fuck did you go?” She said, “Hold this” and passed me \$120 dollars. I froze and said, “Oh, shit!” At this point in my life I truly believed that my soul had become soiled. Some would say that this was getting paid. It was, but looking back, if I had not accepted that money from her in exchange for my morals, ethics, and values, who knows—my life

could have turned out totally differently. I could have even become a dentist, like my dad wanted. But really, who the fuck am I kidding? This was my come-up, and from this point, my hometown of Scotch Plains could no longer receive credit for producing me. I became a true Uptown player.

I jumped out of the Lee Jeans and British Walkers right into A.J. Lester slacks and Alligator shoes. I grew my hair back long and curly. Actually, I started getting my hair done by this Dominican lady on 167th Street and Broadway. I'd get my shit blow-dried and curled. I got away from anything having to do with hip-hop style; it just wasn't profitable to me anymore. Over the next year Sheik brought in about six different girls to ho for money. I was still deep into my music thing but I became everything it took to guide this new vessel. As far as conflict on the street, I had to lose my physical bully ways and learn some verbal finesse.

This was the early '80s and the pimp game was still a gentleman's world. Freebasing and the form of crack that brought about a much lower grade of pimps would not surface for another year. Sugar Love, Sweet Money, Brown Eyes, Sabu, Jersey Slim, Fat Man, Candy Man, King Zeus—these were just some of the pimps and midtown players of that era whom I watched and learned from, lost hos to, took hos from, and had verbal sparring matches with. I was at least ten years younger than most of these cats, and I had no wheels. That aspect of the game I never really got into, because every time my stack got tall I would head right over to Manny's Music on 48th Street and get a new bass guitar, or the latest Yamaha keyboard, or these new things that were becoming very popular: drum machines.

With my pimping money I began to build up my little music studio, and Sheik and I got a place together on 156th Street, between

Broadway and Amsterdam. The building was a five-story walk-up. We were so focused on getting money that we didn't even bother getting a television for about six months. When I was staying at my mother's place, I was hooked on MTV. But when I got with Sheik, we were focused solely on making money. Sheik and I always met at the apartment at least once a day, around 9 in the evening, so I could escort her down to the ho stroll while it was fresh and early.

I knew a lot Midtown hustlers through a good friend of mine named Kyle aka Alabama Red. Kyle was learning about the con-game on the streets and he was getting pretty good at it. Kyle would always be intertwined with these dudes from Gun Hill Road in the Bronx—Zack, Big Bob, Gusto, Neil, Tazz—and they all hung out in front of the Blimpie sandwich shop on 42nd Street and eighth avenue. These were some of the best Manhattan hustlers of that era. These guys were from the 'hood, but over the years they had acquired worldly knowledge, conversing with people from all over the globe who came to New York in search of something. There use to be an old saying: if you can't find it in Times Square, it doesn't exist. Always sporting fresh haircuts and the latest Adidas or Nikes, these kids were the ultimate street salesmen.

I was talking with Red one day on West 42nd street when a sexy light-skinned girl with D-cups walked by and I used my standard line on her: "Pardon me miss, you dropped something." This sweet and giggling angel stopped dead in her tracks and smiled; we kicked it for a minute and I found out that her name was Tina. Being that she was willing to have a conversation, I put down my Welch's Strawberry Soda and proceeded to spit my A game at her. We decided to go Uptown for some Chinese food and a joint of marijuana. Although she was small and bubbly, the bitch ate like a horse. She couldn't have been more than 17 years old, so I took a chance

and asked her if she needed a place to stay for the night. Next thing you know we're at my place laughing and talking about silly shit. She wasn't a runaway; she was just looking for something. I put the moves on her. Not sexual, just getting a little familiar—unwrapping the broad's mind state. Then I casually commented on her breasts and she said, "Ya wanna see'em?" Bingo! I smiled. She took her top off and I'm thinking of just how to wrap my lips around them. After that introduction, she willingly put the sex on me.

Later, we were lying up in the bed, dozing off, when Sheik came in the door tipsy, loud and cursing in Spanish. She looked at the bed and smiled. What was so cool about Sheik was that she always had money on her mind, and she was teaching me to think that way, too. So I woke up Tina, who was a little nervous, but I let Sheik do the talking. Within seconds Sheik slid in the bed and started touching Tina's hair and sweet-talking her. I got up, grabbed my guitar, and started strumming while Sheik pulled out some blow and got Tina's nose a little open. After a couple of hits of blow, Tina started getting loose. Sheik caught my cue and starting putting her tongue down this young broad's throat. Next thing you know, Sheik is sucking on this girl's pussy as if it's the end of the world.

The next day I worked out an agreement for Tina to stay with us as long as she contributed to the rent. I didn't know if she had done any hoing before, but she was hungry, and I was down to put her on the track. Tina wound up staying with me for a year, even after Sheik and I broke up for a while. Sheik had been teaching me about the streets and I was learning quickly. At the same time, I was my own man and had my own ways and ideas, so there were times when Sheik seemed to resent me for adapting too quickly to this new world. I was her cute, inexperienced boyfriend and that was what she dug about me, but at the same time I was a little too



cocky for her. But one cannot deny one's progressive traits. I had to be who I was, whether in Scotch Plains or Harlem.

Months later, Sheik and I were sniffing so much coke that we let the apartment go and I crashed with my mother again for a few months while Tina flowed from spot to spot. At that point I slowed down and started getting into recording music. I copped another brown-skinned street-walker one night with Tina at my side. Funny thing about the new bitch, she disappeared with her first trick. Tina, who at this point had started getting a little mouthy, blamed me for slacking on my verbal and not putting the cap on the situation. "You let that bitch play you out for a hot meal, a place to stay, and some stiff cock," Tina said. This may have been true, but I wasn't trying to hear it from this yellow bitch, whom I'd put on and given shelter to. Tina, who had a fetish for expensive clothes and shoes, eventually left my stable and got with another pimp. After about eight months I ran into her on the ho track, just after she'd run into some fucked-up luck. I wasn't on the streets but a few minutes before I saw Tina come staggering from around the corner with blood squirting out of at least four different spots on her body. The broad had mouthed off once too often and some hardcore trick had decided to slice that ass up—good. Mostly out of good business sense—a bleeding prostitute running the track scares away clients and brings attention from the authorities. Another pimp and myself put Tina in a cab and sent her to the hospital emergency room. I never saw that bitch again.

This whole lifestyle was a sharp reality check for me. The closest I had ever come to death was a funeral for one of my relatives when I was a child. Seeing people get beaten, shot, and stabbed before my eyes was an education that no college on earth could have given me.

Meanwhile, I was bankrolling my cash with an older player named Clint Edwards, my adviser. Clint was a professional photographer who had worked with some of New York's top models and agencies. He was also a sharp dresser, well versed in politics, history, and the streets. Though in his late 40s at the time, Clint possessed the style of a young, dapper hustler and when it came to the chicks his swagger was strong. I met Clint through a part-time ho named Monica, who was living with him at the time. Monica was about 19 and was into speed balling (shooting coke and dope with a needle). Clint gave this ho to me one evening because he said she was a wash-out and there was no hope of her return. There wasn't much I could do with her, either, but Clint and I became cool, thanks to this sloppy bitch.

Like my father, Clint was a jazz head, so we conversed on a few levels. He offered insight about pimping females but also kept it real about repercussions for pimps, in court and in jail. Because of the fact that I wasn't the sharpest knife in the drawer, I paid attention when Clint was talking about game, and worked on understanding people's motives and mastering my approach. I took a lot of Clint's wisdom and put it to work in my daily routines and rants on hos. I was evolving quickly and now, playing Pac-Man with other pimps at the diner on the ho track at four in the morning, I could add to the flow of the conversation as a bona-fide gentlemen of leisure and philosophical advisor.

During this period, Sheik and I broke up and got back together, on again, off again. Sometimes she'd disappear for days with some trick or a couple of girls. They might go down South or to Vegas in pursuit of money and the good life. Sheik was a real hostess and she really knew how to make a motherfucker party till he was drained. I

was practicing less on the bass guitar and sniffing more coke. Things started getting really messy.

Freebasing cocaine, the first incarnation of crack, had within a year changed a lot of shit in the underworld and the mainstream. It became harder to stack money, because you now had the tricks freebasing with the hookers, and you had the hos disappearing for days. So it became a constant headache that no pill could resolve. There were pimps who started getting strung out, freebasing and letting their attire start slipping. Coke dealers started driving through the track more often and the politics of the game started to fade. Finesse and style were gone, and even the cops wanted a piece of the free-base action. Occasionally cops would shake you down and you'd have to give up some cash, take a foot in the ass, and get the fuck off the block for the night. Coke became so visible in this world—to the point where pregnant hos with no shame started walking the track.

Clint was a good friend at this point in my life and he insisted that I stay away from pimps and hos who were freebasing. Although he sniffed coke, he informed me that people were losing their dignity by smoking the glass dick and warned me to stay away from it. Sheik also had no interest in the freebasing scene; in fact, she started robbing coked-out tricks and shopping on the East Side of Manhattan. She had several high-end Halston dresses and she kept a .25 automatic in her crotch. Sheik and Clint got along great. They were both native New Yorkers and from time to time Sheik would bring one of her young female friends over to Clint's apartment and drop her off for the night. With the knowledge of Clint and the go-getter drive of Sheik I soon became Captain Blood of the sea.

But with my outlook and superior confidence came a small price. On occasion Sheik would pick fights with guys or groups of people,

just to see how I would react in different situations. Sometimes she would look at me, smile with those pretty lips, and say, “are you ready—like really, really ready?” Then, within seconds, she’d confront some stranger and scream out, “Hey, motherfucker, my boyfriend wants to know why you’re staring at my tits.” I brawled on a few occasions over her outburst and ultimately learned that I was better off just throwing the first punch. If a guy wasn’t receptive to Sheik’s advance she would actually spit on him or his girl to intensify things. One time I didn’t put down my Welch’s strawberry soda fast enough and a guy slapped her in the face. Before I could even lunge on him, Sheik had pulled out her scratched-up .25, electrical tape wrapped around its handle, and fired two shots in the air. The guy froze and started begging, “Please don’t kill me—*please*.” The next thing I knew Sheik was digging in his pocket and cursing at him in Spanish.

I yelled at her not to shoot him but she quickly told me to shut the fuck up and look out for the cops. We were in the Bronx and I wasn’t familiar with the area so I wasn’t sure where to run to. After Sheik took \$76 from the victim, she flagged down a gypsy cab and we headed back to Manhattan. In the car she laughed and said her face hurt and asked me would I kiss it. I smiled, kissed her red face, and hugged her until we arrived at the coke spot.

Sheik was unpredictable: sexy, scary, and exciting, all rolled into one. At any moment you could be biting into a sandwich and the next thing you knew somebody was chasing you on a fire escape with an axe. She was the ultimate gangsta bitch, yet I never saw her wear a pair of sneakers. Whenever we trooped it through Alphabet City, in lower Manhattan, on every other block people greeted her as if she were the Queen of Spain. She was pleasant when she spoke

to them but under her breath she would say to me, “Watch yourself around these Spics. They’ll steal the soles off of your shoes.”

In between street escapades, Sheik would encourage me to head down to Manny’s music and stay connected to the music scene, but I was slipping and the coke was getting the best of me. After two years of this mentally exhausting lifestyle, I started drifting away from pimping because my desire to be a musician was getting lost in the haze. Cocaine was driving me and for the first time in my life I was losing control of my direction. Yes, the lack of and need for self-control saved me from falling deep into the depths of mental and physical hell. I was a bully back in Scotch Plains, and anything that threatened that mental conditioning would simply have to go. Cocaine was the warrior high but when you ran out of the drug and the girls were too tired to turn any more tricks you had to take lots of sleeping pills to avoid the reality of depression.

My course of petty crimes, delusional dumb-shit and bird-brain schemes was slowly coming to an end. Finally, one sunny afternoon while trying to force my self to eat some arroz con pollo to come down from being high, one of my maggot friends suggested we go rob people with ice-picks or kidnap the guy who worked in the coke spot for money. I politely declined and decided to get my shit together. At this point I was financially broke but mentally I was still charged for the long haul. Although my parents allowed me to run wild for the most part of my formative years, they also gave me strong words of encouragement that would carry me through the fire at times like this. I wasn’t afraid to ask questions, I wasn’t afraid to speak up and most important, I believed in myself.

## Chapter Four Mutiny and Malice

PLUSHED-OUT WHIPS WITH SHORT KIDS AND  
BATTLE SCARS. SMOKED-OUT CREWS WITH TWIN  
GLOCKS AND RATED-R. WELL-KEPT BROADS WITH  
LONG NAILS IN THE SPOT; CANDELIGHT DREAMS  
AND WHITE LINES TO MAKE IT HOT.

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After leaving the pimp game, I decided to clean up my act for a while. It was 1985 and I was 21. Sheik and I would fall out for the last time. She wanted a baby, but I wasn't ready for that. I truly loved her more than any girl I had ever known, but I was trying to be a rock n' roll star. We were riding the A train one day, headed downtown to the movies. We were arguing so loudly, we had to get off the train on 145th Street. She was cursing me out in Spanish and giving me ultimatums in English. Finally, she left me

right there on the platform, speechless. She left crying and I just sat down on one of the benches and let her walk away. I was burnt out and wasn't trying to do the family thing. Her past had nothing to do with my decision; in fact, because we had windows into each other's corrupt souls, my attraction to her was sincere. To this day I don't think I've ever trusted a woman as much as I trusted Sheik.

When winter came, I managed to get a job at ABC security. I was a security guard for the soap operas "One Life To Live" and "All My Children." This worked out fine for about six months, until one fateful day, I was coming out of my building—527 West 152nd Street—and the news cameras were talking to my landlord, John Chaney. A woman in the building next to mine, which my landlord also owned, had passed away, and the tenants were claiming she died from lack of heat and hot water. Chaney was on television saying, "I didnt kill her, it was time for her to die" but the Mayor's office saw otherwise. Suddenly, the city stepped in and took this Negro's buildings like chicken wings at a black barbecue.

A couple of days later I came home and there was a lady in the hallway of my building with a pen and pad, trying to take information but no-one was cooperating with her. I started talking to her immediately, because she was kind of cute and I figured maybe I could get her to come upstairs and do a line of coke with me while she talked about the fucked-up living conditions.

We were talking, and she says, "You seem like an intelligent young man. Why don't you come down to my office and talk to me about fixing some of the building's problems." I agreed to go with her but changed my mind about offering her that line of coke. She took me to 100 Gold Street in Manhattan, to a place called the 7A Monitoring Unit. This city-run office took over poorly kept buildings and assigned temporary agents to them. The woman told me

about the program: it entailed my getting bonded before a judge and getting the tenants in the building to sign a form making me the new rent manager. It didn't mean I owned the buildings; I'd just collect the tenants' money and make sure it went toward heating oil, a super to take out the garbage, mopping the hallways, and all the rest. If there were problems to be addressed, the tenants would go through me. So I went back to the 'hood, turned on my charm, and got about 15 people to sign the papers that gave me landlord duties. I was then given control of two five-story dwellings: 531 and 527 West 152nd Street. To put it simply, I became a slumlord at the age of 23.

During that period, I not only collected all the rent money, I set the rent on all the leases. So I wrote myself a lease of \$100 a month for a one-bedroom apartment. My brother Guy was having problems with his daughter's mother in New Jersey, so I moved him in across the hall from me and wrote him a lease for \$125 a month. Anything I didn't have to use for the maintenance of the building I was spending on whatever the hell I wanted: guns, coke, coke and guns, guns, coke, coke and guns. Let me explain. I continued to sniff a little blow, but now I was renting out apartments to Dominican cats to sell crack and also loose coke from.

If a kid was a good worker, I would put up the money so he could get up on his feet and pay me back with interest. But let me say that I was not a drug lord, as so many people from that era claimed to be. I was simply getting it the way a lot of Uptown cats in those days were getting it. The cocaine game in those days was a dirty game and motherfuckers were swallowing slugs left and right. Niggas would be fly and jiggy one week and then the next thing you know they would turn up in the Bronx with their hands and feet tied behind their backs and battery acid poured all over their



bodies. A lot of people who were in the drug game in the '80s like to exaggerate their participation in events, but I'll be honest with you: those days were scary as hell. The money was flowing quickly and you couldn't trust many people around you. They were some of the most vicious times in American drug history.

Those were my slumlord days. Although people fell behind in their rent, I never evicted anybody because I had no time to go through the court process. Instead I'd have them hide guns and drugs in their apartments just in case the police kicked in my door on account of some rat who snitched me out. I had one old woman die on the third floor, and the day after she passed I was there with a crew bagging up all her shit, to turn that apartment into another crack house. I was rolling strong and spreading the cash around heavy. I even started dating one of Diana Ross's back-up singers, a sexy piece of brown sugar named Precious. I was ballin' and I started going to a lot of the high-level places in New York I'd always wanted to experience. I was taking broads downtown twice a week to do the horse-and-carriage thing in Central Park. Things were moving kind of nicely, and my pockets were fat. I stashed about \$85,000 cash in my apartment at one time and built a four-track recording studio in my kitchen. Between the crack and the rent payments, I was pulling in thousands a week.

It was then, right when I was feeling most comfortable, that my whole world damn near got taken right up from under me. This out-of-shape Dominican bitch strolled up to the stoop like the goddamned principal of a school or something and started asking me questions: "Are you gonna keep selling [crack] in my area? Who do you think you are?" She continued, "Do you know who I'm down with? You better move to another area, fast." My crew and I immediately saw the bitch was a joke, so we started in with verbal

cheap-shots. Slinging insults from the stoop is a longstanding tradition in New York and we quickly warmed up to the task. The four of us cursed this whore out for about 20 minutes. She was 40 years old and short, with a gut and a do-rag on her head. In retrospect, I can say that she was probably just some broad with no prospects in life, trying to feed her ghetto bastards. Not that that makes it right, but it offers perspective. Finally, when it seemed that the sloppy wench was willing to endure an entire night's worth of verbal abuse, we had to get rough and tell the bitch to scram from in front of our office before she got the fire slapped out of her ass. Basically, we punked the bitch, and she realized that we weren't trying to hear her fucking mouth, so she bounced.

But this situation proved that you never know what people are really capable of until you push them hard enough. While we were on the stoop laughing and recalling some of the sharp verbal daggers we buried in that bitch's forehead, she was getting her shit geared up. Less than an hour later—when dusk was in full effect, and the air on the streets was warm with the smell of quarter water, greasy pizza and the sound of kids getting called into their apartments—the shit hit the fan. The Dominican Aunt Jemima took us by surprise. A black livery cab rolled up to the front of the building, and this broad steps out with a small black Uzi. I didn't even see her at first. I heard the car door slam, and then I saw the bitch crouched down near the curb with a fucking killing machine in her stubby little hands. The livery cab screeched off the curb and, as in a scene from *Scarface*, she sprayed the whole front of our hangout spot.

There was no retreat on her part. The pigeon-toed Alf look-alike was bringing it to us for real. I had never been shot before and I wasn't trying to catch it this way. Two guys got shot in the arms and another kid caught a slug in the jaw. This was no laughing matter;

I was scared shitless, so scared it felt as if I were running in slow motion. I've had friends get shot two or three times in the leg and arm, run away from the action, then go over to their girlfriend's house for a bite to eat before thinking about going to the hospital. But I wasn't some O.G. veteran of streets. This was new to me, and the fact that someone had the power of death in their hands and was chasing me was a lot to digest.

Everybody ran into the building and upstairs for dear life. We were all running like straight bitches. I had a chrome .25 automatic, but against an Uzi, it wasn't much good. I got about two flights up, gasping and panting for breath, when I heard this bitch stomping up the goddamned steps like a fucking storm trooper. That was all I needed to get another burst of life-preserving energy and climb those stairs even more quickly. This vicious cow was on her job, busting up the stairs. I was shooting back down at her and one of the other guys who was with us, Derrick, was shooting a magnum in every direction, which was also scaring the shit out of me. At the time it felt like a straight-up movie scene, and if I could've clicked my heels three times—as Dorothy did in *The Wizard of Oz*—and gone back to Scotch Plains, I would have. I thought this was the end. I knew that selling crack was a dangerous game, but I had no intention of things getting *this* out of hand. The last thing I expected to be doing was having a turf-war shootout with some gangsta housewife screaming at the top of her lungs, "I'm gonna kill you, niggas!"

We were all running up the stairs from this Uzi-toting Dominican broad and as I get almost to the top I'm thinking out loud, "This bitch is gonna kill us—this is how I'm gonna die." The roof of the building was usually locked with a chain, so people couldn't come from other buildings and smoke crack in the hallways. Within

seconds I hear Mike, my gofer, say, “C’mon, the door’s open!” I had forgotten, but earlier that day I had been showing someone the roof to be re-tarred. The team of us ran through that door to the back of the building and jumped down to the fire escapes on each floor, until we reached the bottom of the alley. Then we ran like old slaves.

I came back about two hours later and there was no sign of the broad or anybody else who’d been on the stoop. The next day I paid this Jamaican kid named Winston, who had some sort of M-16, to just sit in my apartment and hold me down for a while. For weeks, every out-of-shape Dominican broad that I saw on the street looked like the gangsta housewife. I knew that sooner or later, because we were still selling our crack, she would come back and try to finish the job with that killing machine of hers. Luckily, Winston never had to use his hand cannon, because we never saw her again. But that situation taught me a powerful lesson about what people will do when even their low-level objectives are threatened.

Eventually, the city took the buildings back because the tenants didn’t want to buy their apartments. The city gave the tenants the opportunity to go co-op. But crack was strong in those days—people were smoking on every other floor—or they were just too old and didn’t have money saved for shit like that. I should have put money up to buy a couple of the apartments, but my head just wasn’t there. I was still trying to get the music thing popping. I was playing with different bands—writing, recording, and running through my six-figure savings on whores and coke.

Looking for a sense of stability and maybe some music-business experience, I asked my mother if she knew about any industry gigs. My mom had acquired a wealth of contacts in the business and she knew a woman who was the Director of Human Resources at MTV Networks. So I went down to MTV to see about a job. I was still

addicted to that fucking channel so I was really into the possibility of working there. After a brief interview, they hired me as a temp in the mailroom and six months later brought me on permanently.

Even though I was getting up and doing a corporate nine-to-five at MTV, I was still involved with a lot of crazy scams after work and on the weekends. I stole a lot of shit from MTV, too. This kid named Steve and I took everything that wasn't nailed down. Steve was a Jewish kid from the Bronx who was really into hip-hop. I was into rock and roll, so we had a great working relationship that allowed us to play off of one another's seemingly unlikely musical tastes. Anything that came in for the people in programming, acquisitions, any of those departments—let's just say that when it came to records, people saw very little of that stuff. The only way you could get your mail was if you were someone big, like a Senior Vice President. Only then would we let packages make it to their destination. We'd divvy shit up all the time. We had such a good system that if product came in and one of us was out sick or busy on a different floor, we'd actually put it in the other person's locker for safekeeping.

One time VH1 had some big Elvis Presley promotion going on and we were supposed to mail out 500 packages to the winners. Only a handful of those Elvis promos got to their destination. I preprinted labels with either my address or the address of a record store downtown that I was selling promos to. I'd just slap the label on a box and give it to the UPS man. The next day, I'd go down to the record store and pick up cash. I was learning a lot about corporate business at MTV and getting access to the music that I loved and grew up with. Plus, I was making \$1000 a week selling promotional records. At home I was writing so much music that it became frustrating: I felt as if I was becoming someone outside of that which I wanted to be a part of. The word "corporate" didn't

register with me at the time, but really, I was becoming a corporate square. I sensed it.

On one lunch break I went down to Colonial Books looking for something good to read. Even though my routines in life were dangerous and costly, there was still a light burning inside of me that made me seek out a book called *Anthem*. I learned about the author of that book (Ayn Rand) by reading the liner notes of a Rush album, “2112”: “Lyrics by Neal Peart, inspired by the genius of Ayn Rand.” Back in Jersey, Rush had been my number-two band (next to Chic, of course), and I had seen them live at least five times. But soon I would get a brighter window into their world and the combination of their immaculate sound and brilliant engineering of words would inspire my drive for living. So as I went down to the sports section of the bookstore, something said to me, “What am I doing here?” No longer did I give a fuck about some clown scrambling through a field of grunts, and how many yards he could rack up. I started walking up and down the aisles, and I remembered *Anthem*. I purchased the book, went back to work, and threw it into my locker.

I didn’t scan its pages until three days later. Published in England in 1938 and set in a dark future, the book featured a main character, Equality 7-2521, who committed horrible transgressions against his brothers (thinking outside the box) and who eventually discovered his own individualism. It was hard to digest at first. The story was pure and simple, but my mind had become stale and polluted. “What is this weird shit?” was my first reaction, but I had to figure out why Neal Peart had given this woman so much recognition. So I went back a couple of days later and played “2112” by Rush again and it was suddenly as if I was finding the pieces to a puzzle. Weeks later I purchased more Ayn Rand books: *For The New Intel-*

*lectual* (1961), *The Virtue Of Selfishness* (1964), and *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal* (1966). I felt I needed more time to get into Rand's ideology, but I couldn't find the opportunity up in Harlem because I still had too many distractions and shady dealings - whores and cocaine. I matured ten-fold when I finally understood Anthem. It literally felt like somebody whacked me over the head with a 2 by 4 piece of wood. Also, the music I had been consuming for the last eight years (Heavy Metal) slowly stopped holding my interest. I realized that Rush was saying a whole lot more than I had previously thought, and I wanted to take a moment to stop and catch my breath. My taste for living had now changed and although I educated myself the hard way, I wasn't looking to continue doing the things that had almost cost me my life.

All of this together convinced me that I needed to veer away from where I thought I was destined. So after two years I left the MTV mailroom for Martha's Vineyard Island. This was the place where I spent several summers as a kid and almost drowned once trying to wrestle a Bonita fish with my bare hands. My grandmother (Catherine Hightower) had a house built there in the early '70s and passed away in 1981. My grandfather Harold Johnson died later in the mid eighties so the family home was left empty, allowing me to go there and rebuild my mental foundation.

## Chapter Five A Time to Burn

EVERY PULL IS A COUGH, EVERY PAGE IS A BOOK,  
EVERY THOUGHT IS A DREAM, EVERY WORD IS A  
JOOK. EVERY STEP IS A MILE, EVERY FIGHT IS A WAR,  
EVERY STREET IS A MAP, AND EVERY DAY IS A TOUR.

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Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts; Winter, 1987. I had a job as a diet aide at the island hospital, which was exactly half a mile away from my grandmother's house. As a kid I had spent summers on the island with my grandparents, so I already had a few acquaintances there and I fit right in. My grandparents had since passed away and there I was, feeling like Jack Nicholson in *The Shining*. I used the fireplace and a kerosene heater to fight off the cold weather. The boiler and some of the pipes had been broken a



year prior to my arrival. It was bleeding cold and most of the time I was snowed in, but I needed to reassess the last couple of years I'd spent in New York City. I became numb to the elements; this was my refueling pad. Even now, when I want to find some peace of mind, I immediately look to the Vineyard, especially in the winter.

I had no motor vehicle, just a bicycle I used to go to the Reliable Supermarket, on Main Street in Oak Bluffs. Time was slow. I was listening to Rush, Swing Out Sister, Lee Morgan, Herb Alpert and the Carpenters. But this time around I was listening in a very different way: I actually felt like an adult, and the music was the soundtrack to my previous travels. I was absorbing the lyrics, trying to find new direction and at the same time licking my wounds. Rush had an album that really resonated for me at that time: "Power Windows." The cover of the album, by legendary painter Hugh Syme, features a kid in an old house, sitting in a chair in front of a window. The kid is in deep thought, alone. All around him are old television sets, but the kid is turned *away* from the televisions—away from the programming, facing the window. In the kid's hand is a remote control, but the remote control isn't pointed at the televisions; it's pointed at the window. The image represented where I was: at my own life's crossroads. Musically, Geddy Lee's bass playing and synthesizers created a tight and mature sound, and Neil Peart's drum work gave the album a cold, synchronized, rousing feel. Alex Lifeson's guitar work was another road map and a beautiful calling from the future. My choice cuts on the album are "Middletown Dreams" and "The Big Money," but another track, "Marathon," really stayed in my head during that time I spent on the Vineyard. Where I'd come from and where I was at were two totally different places. I was a product of suburban America, but for the last six years I had become a serpent in the grand city of cutthroats, losers,

and maggots. Although I dealt with it like a trooper and a boss, it wasn't where I wanted to wind up.

This time in my journey would be the third time that I would pause and review newspaper articles and magazine clippings that I had collected over the years. I had two Samsonite suitcases of literature and religious research that I was studying at a snail's pace. To most people this luggage of scraps would be considered junk mail, but during all those years of slithering around the underworld, these papers gave me a sense of stability and education. There was no structure or system to my learning. One day I would read two chapters of *Moonchild*, by Aleister Crowley; the next day I would try to get an understanding of Quantum Physics, at a bookstore in Vineyard Haven. Writing music and playing the bass guitar were still my passions but I needed to set my sights on another target, something I could get another charge from.

During this time my dad called to see how I was doing. In grade school and throughout my life, he was always there for me. I toyed with the idea of going back to Jersey for a while and working with him, but I needed him to know that his youngest son was built to last. Besides, it takes a certain type of man to withstand the grueling work of building foundations and chimneys and doing ornamental brickwork—and I was not up for the task.

Massachusetts would provide the perfect backdrop for my rehabilitation. There was a spot on Martha's Vineyard called Aquinnah, or, as it was known for years, Gay Head. Named after Native tribes, this became (and remains) a power spot for me: a place to look out into the ocean and see the wind strong on the water, creating waves and constant movement. It's one of the places where you can get a moment of solitude, develop a lump in your throat and say, "Wow." Looking into that ocean I thought that maybe I needed to slow

down and reconcile with Sheik. Maybe even start a family, or do something crazy like get a job parking cars. I really missed Sheik. I started smoking Garcia Vega cigars daily and watched reruns of “Cheers” to pass the time. While living this Grizzly Adams lifestyle I also tried to concentrate on business prospects and become less concerned about becoming a rock star.

Heavy Metal was the top-selling musical force at the time. It was wild, coke-fueled and sexual. This was the big-hair-and-spandex-pants era. Its music had defined and guided me for so long; some of my favorite groups were Dio, Ratt, Iron Maiden, Racer X, Bad Brains, and, of course, Metallica. A lot of great musicians came out of that era, as well: Vivian Campbell, Jake E. Lee, Tico Torres, Vinnie Appice. But I had simply outgrown that stage. Rush was cut from a different cloth and it was as if I’d graduated from college but Rush remained my personal professors. I was expanding my vocabulary while absorbing Ayn Rand’s philosophy, Objectivism, with a passion. The goal now was not just to become a man, but to become a man of exceptional substance. My ego was not harnessed but rather given a new sense of strength. I became stronger, sharper, and more confident, and I started feeling that I had something legitimate to offer the world. This process was by no means easy. I had no one to consult with in regard to Ayn Rand or her philosophy, except Clint Edwards and my mother, both back in New York. In between running his own stable of hos, Clint found time to send me literature on Ayn Rand. Many of Rand’s words and references were over my head, so I’d ring my mother’s phone quite often, for assistance. I also had to keep three dictionaries within arm’s length. The bully syndrome came in handy during this time in my life; I refused to be beaten by anything or anybody—Rand’s work included. The house started looking like a serial killer’s den: postcards pinned to

the wall of every room, big words and their definitions underlined. Like a rapper getting ready for a stage performance, I memorized Rand quotes and talked to myself profusely.

Time was precious but also plentiful. One of my best skills has always been that I am a good communicator, so while visiting island libraries and bookstores I asked for assistance from clerks and anybody who happened to glance in my direction. One person in particular was an elderly lady from Maine who said she was on the island for a few weeks, restoring her family home. Her name was Jillian Dunn and we met in Edgartown at a bar called the Warf. She was there with two of her friends and she ultimately not only elevated my approach to learning but also sent me into the throes of obsessive-compulsive disorder, which would haunt me for years to come. My new, unconventional system of comprehension, though self-enlightening, self-fulfilling and self-defining, brought on nervous conditions, repetitive patterns, and mood swings. The simplistic approach that I declined in my juvenile days was now longed for, but gone were those who once cared.

Jillian made it clear that she was no Rand fan, but she respected Rand's place in philosophical history. During the two hours of time I shared with her and her friends at this small, upscale tavern, she sketched out a chart for me on the inside of a cigarette box. Some of the names she put on that list were Friedrich Nietzsche, Thomas Hobbes, Arthur Schopenhauer and Immanuel Kant. Jillian had a sincere and concerned look on her face while talking to me, and for the first time I wasn't in defensive bully mode. She had the right approach and even though she was sitting with two other lady friends she seemed to give me her complete attention. She was at least 35 years older than I was but I was attracted to her mind and her knowledge of the field. She resembled Diane Keaton, and when

she spoke to me in her flirtatious manner, I could clearly see that despite her wrinkled face, once upon a time she was a hot piece of ass. After finishing my gin and tonic I decided to jump on my ten-speed Cadillac and head back to Oak Bluffs. I never saw Mrs. Dunn after that night but what she had given me mentally was far superior to any orgasm I'd experienced.

For leisure escapades, Martha's Vineyard offered up the finest beer-and-sour-apple- smelling teen queens known to play a skin flute. The Atlantic Connection was the hot spot on Main Street and most of the island kids intermingled there at least once or twice a month. I had a friend named Peter and from time to time he and I went to the Atlantic Connection, seeking girls with cars or jobs. If those prospects were slim on any given night, casual, drunken sex would be my focus and I'd lock eyes with the first pair of D-cups in sight. Peter had a steady girlfriend in town but he had no problem helping me sift through the island's female trash. Peter, by the way, was an incredible drummer who attended the Berklee College of Music in Boston.

Once in a while we would jam and work on musical techniques for hours, but for the most part I was trying to jump-start my life again, and music was slowly becoming secondary. After two months of cold and bitter grinding, I finally found the blue-eyed winter princess who would make the rest of my stay as comfortable as possible. Her name was Gail, and she was a sloppy wench but she was dedicated to my needs and she could really handle a Chevy going 75 around corners while sipping on Yukon Jack. Gail and I would spend four days a week together for the next five months. She was willing to move in but my new hunger for learning had already started triggering weird repetitive patterns that I thought were helpful at the time, which I now realize were the beginning of

OCD behavior. When Gail did come over, she didn't question the post cards on the wall or the house lighting, which evoked a NASA landing strip. I had research papers placed neatly on the kitchen counter, with sheets of Glad Wrap and rocks on top of them, to keep things from moving about.

Hatred was something that I wasn't focused on just yet, but at the same time I really wasn't much of a threat to anyone on any level, either. After seven more months of recharging my brain cells I decided to head back, with a vengeance, to the jungle of New York. My thirst for life was now different and the individual within me had finally emerged.

When I came back to New York, I came back strong. I had a new perspective. I wanted a new type of woman. I wanted a new direction for myself and I knew I was capable of finding it. I was back in my old digs but I managed to stay focused and elude the nonsense and the mental vampires. It wasn't as if I thought I was better than my old cronies—I was just different. I got clean-shaven and put on my best game face. I hooked up with a temp agency, Time Warner Temps. A couple of interviews later, they placed me in the mailroom of the Warner/Elektra/Atlantic Music Group. Since I had worked in the mailroom at MTV, I was familiar with the Pitney Bowes machine and the UPS packages and the various mailroom duties.

At WEA I worked for Paul McDermott, who was in charge of the merchandisers: putting up posters, snipes, and flats in record stores. This time around I was a lot more attentive with regard to career opportunities inside the machine. I still stole everything that wasn't nailed down, but instead of making b-lines uptown for cocaine, I strolled down to the public library on 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue three times a week, to follow up on the unanswered

questions Rand's philosophy had presented to me on Martha's Vineyard. I had help with my research at the library from an old tenant of mine, Sherry, who'd meet me at work when I got off and head over to the library with me. Sherry was a Jamaican girl in her late 30s, educated in England. She was slightly disfigured in the face, the result of a domestic disagreement, and she was also a dedicated coke-head. But what Sherry brought to my table was priceless, and in my eyes that bitch was sexier than a loaded .357 on a Friday night. She could read like a fucking linguistics professor and there was no word she didn't know the meaning of. We'd pick out books on philosophy and religion and sit in Bryant park, and she would read out loud to me and tell me what books she thought were a waste of time or ramblings by the disillusioned. I paid Sherry in coke and sometimes in cash but overall she had no qualms about the business arrangement, and I was now getting a new education. Also enlightening about those times were the random people who would overhear Sherry reading to me and try to add commentary. Whether they disagreed with what they heard or not, some people just felt compelled to investigate what was being versed out loud. This was the hate that I needed to see, and Sherry not only could debate with the best of them, she had a real antipathy for Americans who questioned her intelligence or schooling. This pattern went on for about four months, until I learned that Sherry was killed during a robbery at a crack house in the Bronx.

After almost a year at WEA, a position opened up for an Atlantic Records Research Representative. The guy doing the hiring was John Weston, East Coast Radio Promotions Manager for Atlantic. He covered radio stations like Z100 and WPLJ—pop stations. He was looking for someone to do aggressive promotional calls, along with weekly reports and flyers for the record stores. Weston

happened to be in the mail room one day, which was rare for him because he was one of those promo guys who always stayed in his office on the phone, and other than going to the bathroom once in a while, he didn't get around much. Without hesitation I came at him straight and asked him about a meeting for the research job. He was a bit surprised by my confidence and asked if I was into rock and pop music. I replied, "Hell, yeah—that's all I'm into." We had a quick conversation about the music and the demands of the job. When Weston finished packing his FedEx box, he said he would get back to me. Weston didn't look at me with any prejudice, and after a week he and a guy named Steve Kline took me to lunch and spoke to me about the business of music. He and Steve stressed that they needed an animal to bang the phones with a headset, literally calling over 300 record stores a week to promote pop and rock singles.

I got the job. It was 1988 and this was my first real-deal promotional gig. I came back to the mailroom hyped and went to tell my boss, Paul McDermott, that I'd gotten a new job in the WEA structure and would be moving on. McDermott, who was for the most part a cool guy, turned red and, damn near stuttering, said, "But we had plans for you here, Troi." In my best impersonation of a slave set free, I thanked him politely but told him my mind was made up and I was moving on. After that, McDermott didn't seem to care for me much, but I was off and running and I didn't look back.

I began calling retail stores in the Tri-State area to find out how the pop and rock product was selling: Debbie Gibson, Ratt, Winger, Skid Row, White Lion. Specifically, I promoted Atlantic Records product, did weekly reports on a typewriter, and sometimes, if I missed the mail drop, ran the reports over five blocks to the main branch. Computers were not common in the workplace at the time and I had to do percentage breakdowns, stock inventory, and weekly



radio mailings in a timely fashion. For the next two-and-a-half years at WEA I elevated my corporate game and learned how to roll with the punches. That weekly report was always on my ass. Even if I was absent or on my deathbed, the report had to be done by Friday and sent throughout the company via inter-office mail. (This was also before fax machines, kids). Weston was hard but fair. He'd circle shit with his red pen and shoot it right back to me. That's how I learned.

Hip-hop was creeping into the mainstream. But even though artists like Kurtis Blow were signed to major labels, it really hadn't kicked in strong and there was a sea of doubters in the industry. All the R&B radio promotion reps for WEA worked on the same floor, so I started becoming familiar with hip-hop acts like Super Lover C & Casanova Rud, Audio Two, Kwame and a bunch of other names I'd catch from the Elektra rep., Barry Roberts. Roberts was one of those old-school guys who knew his craft well, and when passing my cubical on the way to his office he would often say to me, "Hey, nigga, are you learning anything in this game, or are you just sucking up valuable air?" Roberts would inspire me to push myself during those WEA years. He was a realist and a black belt in the martial arts.

WEA had marketing meetings every week, during which each of the label reps would stand up and talk to the marketing and sales department, explaining what was happening with particular projects. So I started becoming more aware of hip-hop, but I didn't really like it; in fact, I detested it. I was a musician who created sounds, rhythms, and melodies with instruments, and I viewed rappers as untalented knock offs. Slowly I gave rap music a chance—all because of a cute little girl named MC Lyte. She was the type of sassy-mouthed black girl I'd never had much dating contact with growing up. And yeah, she had a way with words.

In 1989, major record labels were starting up rap music departments. I applied for the new position of National Rap Promotions Manager for Atlantic Records. I managed to get an interview with Sylvia Rhone, then President of Atlantic's Black Music Division. She gave me her full attention and at some points even seemed to be rooting for me. I had a self-assured approach but all I had to talk about was the pop stuff I was promoting. I knew rock music, but I knew very little about hip-hop culture and even less about its key players. Hell, I wasn't even conscious of Mr. Magic or Kool DJ Red Alert. During that interview my lack of hip-hop experience was apparent, but I still had the balls to come across as sure of myself. About two weeks later Sylvia Rhone called me herself and very politely told me she had chosen someone else for the position. But she also told me that she was glad a brother was over in the pop department expanding his boundaries. Ms. Rhone was very hands-on, and the impact that she made on me with that one call stays with me to this day. She could have had someone else call, or not called at all. In spite of small or huge rejections, I felt positive about my capabilities as a soon-to-be boss. I knew, deep down, that I wasn't yet ready to run a board meeting, but I always knew that my day would come. In fact, I would make it happen.

## Chapter Six Re-ignition

I'VE GOT MOVES TO BE MADE AND HANDS TO BE SHOOK, GOALS TO BE REACHED AND TOURS TO BE BOOKED. PLANES TO BE FLOWN AND FLICKS TO BE MADE, HOMES TO BE FLOTTED AND DIMES TO BE SLAYED.

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Looking for new angles and perspectives, I reached out to Nat Robinson, owner of First Priority Music -- the home of MC Lyte and Audio Two. I was still working at WEA in the pop music department, but I told Nat that if he ever needed any help with his acts, to give me a call. One day he did. Trying to get crossover sales through rap songs at that time was really hard because rock music was still dominant and raking in the big dollars.

So I got into the hip-hop marketing game and tried to broaden my sense. I wasn't even sure if this was the right direction to go in; I just knew that I wanted to progress in the business of music. Also, those weekly reports were starting to wear on my ass. I began acquiring a sizeable hip-hop record collection and gained knowledge of the different groups. One day Nat said to me that he had just did a deal with Virgin Records to distribute another one of his labels, Bum Rush, and he wanted to put someone in the position at the label to oversee its promotions. Based upon my loyalty and go-getter drive, he quickly recommended me to the big brass at Virgin. There were other people in line for the job, but since this was Nat's deal, his word meant more than anyone else's. The title of the position was National Director of Alternative R&B. That title still makes me laugh. "Alternative R&B"—what the fuck does that mean? What it meant back then was, "We're starting a rap department but we really don't want to call it that; we just want to cash in."

I went to see about the job. The person doing the actual hiring was a woman named Sharon Heywerd, based in the California office. She was in New York for meetings, so I went to talk with her briefly. I had seen her before a few times over the years, but I didn't know her. At the hiring meeting Sharon and I spoke about my time at WEA and promotion in general, and she said I had been recommended by a lot of people over at the WEA branch. This interview would be different from the one I'd had with Sylvia Rhone. It was nine months later and this time around I was better prepared, but this would ultimately end up being the worst industry experience I ever had. I got the job—making \$63,000 a year. There I was, in a new position at a record label that wanted to reap the benefits of this new thing called rap music, but didn't want to get its hands

dirty. Incorporate a guy who's confident and proud of his ego into that equation, and you have the makings of a bomb.

Things just didn't click from the word "go," and on top of that I got some real weak product to promote—Harmony, Lela Hathaway and The College Boys. Word got around the office and quickly I was perceived as someone with a chip on his shoulder. I remember having dinner with one of their artists, Redhead, and his manager to discuss his upcoming project and kick around some promotional ideas. Because I wasn't enough of a "groupie," Redhead's manager told my boss Sharon that they didn't think I liked Redhead and that I wouldn't do a good job. My first big project was promoting Harmony, KRS-1's sister-in-law. Harmony came out at a bad time; she was the pre-low-budget Erykah Badu and her album was garbage. Her first single was called "Pound Cake." At that time Def Jam had BWP (Bitches With Problems) making noise in the market. MC Lyte was on fire, Roxanne Shante was still in the game, Queen Latifah was ruling shit, and that cornball Yo Yo was repping the West coast. Harmony just wasn't a strong enough threat to any of these broads, and I had to rep her product.

At one point, I took a trip out to the Virgin West Coast office. I go in for a meeting in the conference room and here's another one of their artists: a sloppy Mexican telling a gang story to a bunch of white people sitting around, looking at him in awe. His name was Kid Frost and he was a so-called rapper signed to Virgin at the time. He had all these people impressed with this wack-ass 'hood story. I saw him for what he was: a burrito-eating clown with tight pants who looked like a real buster. I looked right at him and he read my expression: "You're a joke, and I know that you know I know you're a joke." I was standing there in a bright-red Nike suit and he said to everyone in the room, "You see him, he couldn't even come to

my neighborhood looking like that.” I politely replied, “Fuck your neighborhood.” He continued his story and I just sat there and snickered at his barrio bullshit.

The job became a fucking disaster. We had a video department that didn’t want to promote a group’s product, “Nod Your Head To This,” because the video featured a white maid serving a man of color. We had to hire independent video promoters. The \$63,000 I was making was blood money, so the company could have a point man or errand boy. But I needed the check. I had moved to an exclusive area of Manhattan called Battery Park City, and right outside of my front window, literally across the street, was the World Trade Center. I was traveling around the country to places like Atlanta, San Francisco, Texas, Chicago, St. Louis, and Louisiana. I was always up in the sky. My assistant Rene was my friend, but at the end of the day, I was on my own.

It was a matter of time before I got tossed out of Virgin like a Caesar salad. The axe came even sooner than I had expected. I was making a promo trip to Houston when I caught wind that Sharon was interviewing people for my job back in Los Angeles. Still on the road, I took a long drive from Houston to Prairie View, to visit a college station. As I was driving and playing the radio in a tiny little rental car, I started thinking about the reality of getting fired from a job for the first time in my life. After Houston I stopped in Atlantic City for some little upstart rap convention. At the time there were dozens of little jump-off hip-hop hustlers getting money from major labels. I’m down there hanging out with my Virgin Records American Express corporate card, and boom—it hit me: I should try to buy myself some time. So I decided to have a party in my hotel room. I wound up spending \$3,000 in one night on room

service: shrimp, lobsters, and champagne. I wilded the fuck out at the Tropicana Hotel.

When I got back to my New York office I sensed a real uneasy aura. It was a feeling I hadn't had since I'd resisted taking a bitch down to the ho track. I really resented a lot of things about Virgin Records at that time. I was being perceived, by those who were satisfied with just having a job, as something other than an intelligent man. I had weird conversations with co-workers, and often found myself having to soften my tone when speaking. There I was, qualified and busting my ass, but the company just wanted a "yes" boy who would smile and work miracles.

I was having some deep conversations within myself. I couldn't go into a depression, because I didn't know the concept of depression. I was becoming the fall guy and I was preparing for it, mentally. I had a \$1,600-a-month crib in Battery Park City, and even when I tried to think of something illegal to do, it just didn't pan out. I had left that world alone for almost three years, and I just couldn't bear the thought of going backwards. So I went shopping with the American Express corporate card. I went to the movies every other night, just to think and relax. I started buying junk for friends. I had a new girlfriend whom I showered with clothes and jewelry that in one week totaled five grand. I bought myself nice things in the hopes of reselling them at some point.

My boss Sharon and I just weren't communicating and it was known throughout the company that she was interviewing people for my job. One fine day, Sharon called me from L.A. and told me I needed to go through some "re-training" out in L.A. Of course, I took offense; the conversations between us weren't productive and she just wanted to be able to report success to her superiors. Regardless, I went to Los Angeles to live and work for about three

months. They set me up in a hotel but the whole situation had a weird vibe. The real deal was to get me out of the office in New York, to decentralize any influence I had built up out there in order to make getting rid of me that much easier. One day she called me into her office and, stuttering, asked, “What’s going on with the American Express corporate card?” I looked at her and said, “What do mean, ‘What’s going on?’” I played it off. She knew that something wasn’t right, but no one was going to come out and say it. She told me I needed to go back to New York and work out my finances. A couple of days later, after I’m back, I get a call from the accounting department about the charges. That would be the so-called reason for Virgin letting me go, when in reality it was a build-up of things, combined with the fact that I just wasn’t buck dancing for the company. My theory was that they would have to give me time to pay off the credit-card charges, and for a short while it worked. Virgin was more concerned with my paying back the money than having me promote records. So I started taking days off, calling in sick and looking for other gigs.

I was about to be tossed out and I knew it. Sharon came to New York that December, but I didn’t have any meetings set up with her. It was about three weeks before Christmas and she called me into her temporary New York office to say, “It’s over.” I knew what she was getting at and I replied calmly. She tried to start a conversation, but I put my hand up and said, “It’s cool.” I dug into my pocket for my office keys, put them on her desk and said, “Thanks a lot.” Within six minutes I had all my belongings and was in the elevator on my way downstairs. Virgin was history and I realized that this point in my life was my true test of durability.

Once again there was no going backwards and there was no mommy and daddy’s house to crash at until things panned out. My



name was now mud in the industry, and getting a return phone call about another job at a record label was not happening. This experience strengthened my sense of individualism even more—but in the meantime my rent at Battery Park was piling up and it became clear that there was no way I could stay there. I called cats about jobs—nothing. I called cats to borrow money—nothing. Rather than break down and get a slave job, I was determined to get back in the fucking rat race. I called my aunt Susan, who used to live in Queens but had moved to Freeport, Long Island. I told her I had caught a hard right to the head and I needed a place to stay. She was always there for me, so I moved out to Freeport.

My aunt had two young daughters in the house. While there I slowed everything down and decided to build a clubhouse in the backyard for my two nieces. It was another mental rebuilding period for me. I had saved about \$2,000 from my time at Virgin, but I went ahead and spent half of that buying wood for the clubhouse. I actually talked my nieces into the clubhouse idea. Mentally, I needed to do it. I spent 50 days building an oversized dollhouse in the bleeding cold. My aunt's new husband, Danny, was a contractor, and he had all the tools I needed to build this monster. On several occasions Danny came out to the backyard and said, "You're fucking crazy! It's below freezing out here." But every morning I got up and worked. It was my way of getting back to basics -- no surrender; no retreat.

I was also calling people in the music industry with whom I had worked before. A guy named Neil Levine, at a company called Round the Globe Music, gave me a chance to get back into the industry. He brought me in as the head of his radio promotion department. So after that cold period, after finishing the clubhouse, I was banging the phones in the music world once again. I was

promoting Ice Cube, 2 Live Crew and a whole bunch of other stuff from the South—DJ Magic Mike out of Orlando and the Ghetto Boys out of Houston. I was working southern rap shit at radio, and Neil was working the retail stores strong. I was getting back into the game, but it was different this time. There was less socializing with other industry people. All the hanging out and rubbing elbows that I did in '88, '89, '90—I no longer wanted any part of it. I ended up staying at Round the Globe for two years, but business started to slow down, and again I was left trying to find some real income. Neil and I never had any friction, but it was time to move on.

I had lost touch with old band mates, and becoming a musician was something of the past. I had a little money saved, so I was able to make some solid moves. Soon after I left Neil's company, I bumped into a sexy girl from Queens named Kia. I met her in front of the Apollo Theater in Harlem on Amateur Night. She said she was a singer and before long we had moved in together into a new place in Hollis. With the help of my savings, I was able to swing it for a while. Kia was getting welfare and child support for her two kids.

I was also dating a beautiful woman named Rosalyn, who was pursuing her Master's at Rutgers University. What attracted me to Rosalyn was her intellect, but I couldn't stay with Rosalyn in her college dorm, so the pimp in me looked at the Kia situation as a solution. Here I was with a broad with two kids, a chick rocking a jheri curl in 1992 who wouldn't give that motherfucker up. As a survivor, I put my head down and did what I had to do. There was no going back to Jersey and there was no going back to Harlem.

So sweet mama Kia was collecting welfare and child support and working as a waitress, and I was at the house playing Mister Mom. At the same time I was trying to start my own record label,

Torain Records. I had an artist named Fonz, from the South Side of Jamaica, Queens. Even though I was just a small independent label, I was able to get Pete Townsend of The Who to approve a demo single that I sent to his lawyer in London for a sample we wanted to use from “Eminence Front.” This would be the first and only release on my label and it was titled “Cruisin’ in the Benz.” Fonz was 15, a smart little kid with strong rap skills. I wanted to see about getting my own label deal with a parent company. I pursued it for about ten months, pressing up 2,000 12-inch records and trying to make a go of it. I had a potential pop smash and I was hyped. I sent the record across the country, using FedEx numbers from WEA and MTV. I was getting some press on the project, but my money was running low and I couldn’t really stick it out.

Then Fonz got impatient and started flipping on me. The rap group Kriss Kross was hot at the time and Fonz thought he should be bouncing in and out of limos like they were. As polite and businesslike as I’d been to him and his family, his grandmother started telling me that Def Jam wanted to sign him. I simply told them, “Okay, if it develops, let me know.” Meanwhile I was able to book an engagement for Fonz at the old club Mars on the West Side of Manhattan, where Fonz would be the opening act for Redman. The evening of the show, he and his little team came into the club, walked right by me, and said nothing. I spoke to one of his buddies, who told me that the kid’s head was starting to get big. I immediately left, and when I got back home, I calmly tore up his contract. The next day I called his family and told them Fonz was free to do whatever he liked. That would be the last time I’d try to promote someone else’s dream.

So I’m in Queens with this poor man’s version of Halle Berry, and I’m frustrated and trying to avoid robbing a grocery store.

All of a sudden we started fighting. The cute witch wanted to get married, but I told her I wasn't ready for that game. So to ease the tension I concentrated on the role I had been playing as Mister Mom. I'd get the kids up in the morning and take them to school, then pick Kia up from work in the evening. This went on for a little under four months. The relationship didn't even last a year, because our perceptions on life were just different.

The straw that broke the camel's back came one night as I was sitting at the kitchen table, looking at some designs I'd done on the computer back at Round The Globe. It was the outline for a magazine idea I'd had: *Around The Way Connections*. It was based on the dating ads I had seen in the *Village Voice*. Kia came into the kitchen and I said, "Hey, sit down. I want to show you something." I started explaining my idea for the magazine to her, showing her the layout ideas and the outlines. The bitch looked at me and said, "Sounds like a good scam, but my kids need school uniforms. What are you gonna do about that?" I could see that she wasn't even trying to hear me out; it was as if she'd spit in my face. But I couldn't blame her—some people are just shortsighted. That second I knew that I had to get the fuck away from her; she was a vampire with a vagina. So I said okay and put my shit away. After that, we kept arguing and grew apart.

Finally, we had a physical fight. Her family came over one night and one of her brothers started walking around the house. I told him to slow down and I'd get Kia for him. He had an attitude, so that added to the already built-up tension in the air. She finally came out and they went off to talk. After her family left and I got back in the bed, she got up in my face and clocked me in the head. Even in my heyday of pimping, I never had to hit a female, but the moon was full on this particular night so I obliged her with a few rounds of

ghetto love. Just when things started getting steamy this basket case runs into the kitchen and grabs a knife. I closed the bedroom door and within ten seconds Kia was screaming at the top of her lungs as if we were in some fucking slasher flick: “I’m gonna kill you!” She started stabbing away at the door, inhuman savage strength coursing through her veins. Then she started slicing with the knife under the door. I had a flashback of the movie *Trilogy of Terror*, in which actress Karen Black is fighting against a little demon doll with a tiny spear.

I tried to cop a plea but she was one of those females who had to take it all the way. So I went into my suitcase and got out my Chinese Connection nun chucks. I flung open the bedroom door and swung those sticks in front of her. I tried again to reason with her: “Calm down, calm down!” But she charged like a beast. So I got into a Ninja stance and hit her in the shin with the nun chucks—*KAPLOOOW!* She dropped to the floor like a sack of potatoes. But now her two bundles of joy are awake and screaming because they don’t know what the fuck is going on. After the TKO I walked to the backyard to cool out. I heard the bitch crying, but I thought nothing of it.

Twenty minutes later the police were at the door. When the cops came in, this drama queen started performing as if she were accepting an Oscar. The police took me down to the station. Being in jail those 24 hours, I still had the magazine idea in the forefront of my mind. I knew that when I got out, this broad and I were finished. So the next evening I headed on home, and since my name was on the lease for the house I immediately told her, “Pack your shit, bitch. You’ve got to go.” I actually packed her things for her. She was so used to storming out of the house, this time didn’t even

seem like a big deal. It took her a week to get all of her belongings, but the jheri curl was finally out of my life.

After she left, I got busy making the magazine a reality. I turned my place into a crash pad and geared up for the publishing grind. A friend of mine suggested I use the pen name Buc Wild for a column in which I'd take pot shots at people in the music industry. The name would become my alter ego and the early version of the column was called "Street Flavor." My savings was down to \$800. With some of that money, I printed up 500 copies of the first issue. It was kind of raggedy, but it existed. The target demographic was 17 to 25 and I would encourage sexually graphic personal ads, just for the shock value.

Up until that point there was no real hate in the arena of hip-hop. The overall vibe of rap music at the time was positive and conscious: Public Enemy, Boogie Down Productions, and so on. In my publication I was pioneering raw, remorseless hate. This hate was at first targeted at the record companies and later at the fact that so much rap garbage was getting through the mainstream gates. I felt as if I was blackballed from the industry, so my new vehicle now motivated me to succeed even more.

I got my nickname (Star) from a 17 year-old girl named Karen whom I began dating at the time. She was also that kind of sassy little black chick whom I'd never dated coming up and was now attractive to me in a new way. She was a cutie, and had the fire in her that reminded me of MC Lyte. One day we were smoking blunts in my kitchen and making grilled cheese sandwiches. She would cut school to come hang out with me, and as she watched me vent, pacing back and forth on the phone, she said, "You're gonna be famous one day. I see it in you. You should call yourself Star." This was 1992, and although Karen was young, she gave me

a crown. My relationship with this little flower was just a hangout thing; she wasn't even supposed to be dating boys yet.

I took the first issue I printed and got out there by foot. I started giving the magazine out at high schools in Queens. I'd also take magazines into the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan. I really got into the hip-hop world this time around, and I started exclusively dating 'hood-rat girls. In the past I hadn't spent a lot of time getting to know the kids and how they interacted with each other. But now I was moving inside the culture.

Priorities being what they were, I put more money into the magazine and stopped paying rent. A guy that I'd met from Laurelton, Queens, named Shawn Moon, helped me out. I was about to get evicted from the house I was renting, when Shawn offered me a room at his house. I was barely surviving, so I took him up on the offer. Shawn's parents had just moved down to the Carolinas and he and his brother Sam had control of the house. This was the summer of '93, and I was broke as fuck. It was also hot as hell, which led to my losing 25 pounds. Every day was a mental grind. Shawn was into fighting pit bulls, working out, and twisting bitches out. He was also dating Queen Latifah, and occasionally we would ride around Queens in her Bronco and I would try to perfect my hip-hop slang.

Three weeks before I moved in with Shawn and his brother Sam, I met a young girl named Kathy who had just moved up to Hollis from Pensacola, Florida. She was 17, but this sweet, chocolate thing took care of me for about three months. What can I say—pimp or die. She was babysitting her nephew for money and brought me half, every Friday. So there I was: in a small room in my friend's house with one fan, answering my phone and pretending to be the receptionist for my magazine. I was drinking quarter water—vile sugar water sold only in ghetto areas—and \$1.50 hero sandwiches

from the local deli. Still, I never stopped getting up five days a week to catch the dollar van from Merrick Blvd. and 227<sup>th</sup> street to the E train, which I would then catch into the city, where I'd try and make things happen.

This was a grind period like no other. I was going up to MTV twice-a-week to make business calls for hours. My old friend Carl Williams worked in the mailroom there since 1982, and was just promoted to supervisor, so I was always his guest in the building. Carl would always let me make thousands of flyers on their copy machines and I'd also go into the MTV kitchen for the leftover bagels and coffee. I'd load up a gym bag with those scraps and hit the pavement, attacking record labels and trying to get ads for the next issue of my magazine.

At my room in Queens, I made sure to answer my phone, 24 hours a day, with, "*Around The Way Connections.*" I couldn't afford to miss any opportunity, and I was actually hooking people up via the dating portion of the magazine. They would call about a particular ad, and then I would relay the message to the appropriate person. I would also pretend to be the marketing manager for the magazine—a guy named Bob Rosenthal, a character I made up.

One night someone called and said, "Is this the magazine Wendy Williams talks about on the radio? How can I get a copy?" Somehow Wendy Williams, a popular New York radio host, had gotten a copy of the magazine. I knew that she was on the radio in the afternoons, but after my little record with Fonz didn't pop off, I'd lost interest in that world and stopped listening to the popular R&B stations. But the next day I went up to Kiss FM with a new issue of the magazine and left Wendy a note saying, "Thanks for your support." At the time I had another girlfriend named Khaleela, and I asked her to listen to the Wendy Williams Show to hear if we got any more



mentions. I couldn't do it because I had to pound the streets. I got the report later that day that Wendy did in fact talk about the new issue. Thanks to Wendy's show the magazine started to gain momentum, and even if some people were looking down on it, it didn't matter -- I got exposure.

Business started to pick up and soon I began to get legitimate advertisements from big companies. Monica Lynch, President of Tommy Boy Music, was a strong supporter of my work. She purchased the back cover of the magazine for a whole year. She believed in what I was doing. Later she would also cut me a \$3,000 check to film a pilot for a cable show idea that I had.

I started to feel good about my progression and I began to go back and read more of Ayn Rand's books for motivation, particularly *For the New Intellectual*. I started having fun and enjoying my work for the first time in years. For a long time my life had been running on a kill- or-be-killed pressure valve. But now I was learning to live. I was only dating girls who could adjust their lives to my schedule. This was a new me. I had a new kind of energy, and I had the feeling that I could ride this pony all the way to the finish line. Also at this point I had to gear up again for corporate-world grudge matches. But this time around I would be even more of a problem in the eyes of some. My understanding of my surroundings had become more acute and my appetite for independence had grown.

## Chapter Seven Grand Designs

FLIRT WITH ME, BABY, BUT DON'T GET IT TWISTED,  
REACH FOR IT PAPI, BUT MAKE SURE YOU BLAST IT.  
CHAT 'BOUT IT FOOL, AND SCREAM LIKE IT'S  
LOADED, SMOKE SOME OF THIS KID AND DIG HOW  
IT'S CODED.

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I had to make a move out of my friend Shawn's house. I appreciated his gesture, but I had no money to contribute to his household. Thankfully, my old friend Nat Robinson had an office in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, where he'd started First Priority Music.

He offered me the place to set up shop and I jumped on it without hesitation. All I had to do was pay utilities. It was a sweet deal, but there was a catch: It was on St. Johns Place and Nostrand Ave.—the murder capital of Brooklyn. But like I said, I was hungry and I didn't care. I was ready to go.

So I moved into Crown Heights, anxious and eager all over again. Being in that modern-day concentration camp made me even more anxious to succeed, more creatively vicious than I had been back in Harlem in the '80s. The daily combination of gunshots and dance-hall music got my wheels and mind spinning.

Being able to be alone with my own thoughts is when I'm at my most productive. The first two months in Brooklyn I had no funds at all. My girlfriend Kathy, who back in Queens had been an occasional source of money and food, decided to move back to Florida. One day, as I was leaving *The Source* magazine, where I'd dropped off copies of *Around The Way Connections*, Source publisher Dave Mays was coming into the building. I knew Dave from my Virgin Record days; we didn't know each other well, but we were cool. He had just moved the magazine to New York from Boston a couple of years ago and now the magazine was the top dog in the hip-hop world. He stopped and congratulated me on my publication, which he'd heard about. We had a light conversation about current events and bullshit in the business, and then I kept it moving. I had more magazines to deliver on foot.

There were other small hip-hop 'zines out at the time, trying to be cutting-edge and vulgar, all trying to take the place of *The Source* but I showed Dave a lot of respect and gave him props through my publication. At one point, Dave had a big fight with some of his staff. Two editors walked out and took most of the writing team with them. A couple of days later, an anonymous fax was sent to

my office. It was a letter, going out everyone in the hip-hop industry, calling for a boycott of *The Source* and for Dave to resign his position. That shit sounded so absurd, I actually got a good laugh reading it. I called Dave the next day and left a message saying, “Star & Buc Wild got your back.” About a week later he called me at midnight to say thanks and explained that he was going through a restructuring period. During that conversation, he asked about Buc Wild (my alter ego) doing a comic-relief column in *The Source*. I gave him my full support and signed on to do a column called “Reality Check.”

Soon, *Around The Way Connections* began to pick up steam because of my Source affiliation. I was getting a good amount of fan mail from people nationwide who were really feeling *The Source* column. This period in Hate was very important for the growth of my independent business, because *The Source* had relationships with all of the top artists and the magazine was also expanding its advertising base. I also had to grow quickly as a writer. I had to teach myself to be entertaining and at the same time be effective. Occasionally Dave would give me a call and say, “Hey Star, I can’t print some off your attacks. It’s a money thing—I hope you understand.” Within my own publication I was ripping people apart with no remorse but the “Reality Check” column was mainstream and that was where I longed to be. So I learned finesse and perfected my approach yet again. By and large my relationship with *The Source* was a smooth one. The popularity of the column made me consider taking the Buc Wild idea further. But to do this I needed more to work with. I began to look to the young street savages who became my primary inspiration.

To make extra cash, I had opened up an arcade in the front of Nat’s building. In this game room, young people would hang out

and smoke cigarettes and weed, which I had no problem with. I was there to make money, not to be anybody's father. I've always been the type of person to sometimes invite trouble to my door. I spent a lot of years being a troublemaker, so this was natural to me. Having these thugs-in-training near me—they literally had guns on their waists and were rolling up blunts in the bathroom—made me get deep into the 'hood again. The difference between my old stomping grounds of Harlem and this new arena of Crown Heights was that back in Harlem I was committing crime first-hand. But in Brooklyn, the kids would come in and I'd try to give them direction. Even though it was criminal direction, it was direction nevertheless.

Analyzing these young urban gladiators every day, I clearly saw that I needed to bring the Buc Wild character to life. I was too old and wasn't the eye candy that I used to be, so I started to envision a newer version of the terror that I was growing up in the '70s, but with fewer of the bully qualities that I possessed. Into the game room and my life came Timothy Joseph: skinny and wooly-headed, smoking a cigarette at the age of fourteen. He and his crew were a bunch of dropouts who started ringing my bell at 9:30 in the morning on school days. I told them that I'd get a ticket from the cops if I opened up the arcade that early, so Tim boldly suggested that we have hooky parties so we could charge people to get in. Tim had balls and a hunger for money. So we started having cut parties at least four times a month.

One day as I was writing a new "Reality Check" and Tim was sitting in my office, I told him about the column and my idea about bringing the Buc Wild character to life. At first, he wasn't that excited about it because he wasn't really into hip-hop—Tim and his friends were into dancehall reggae artists like Bounty Killer and Buju Banton. I actually had to talk him into it and convince

him that there was money to be made. After getting to know me, he eventually agreed to assume the role of Buc Wild and things began to take shape. One year later, when we were in the office in Crown Heights and I had just finished a “Reality Check” column, I told him to check it out and tell me what he thought. I poured myself a glass of Absolut and went out into the backyard, laughing about what I had just written. Half of the fun I had writing those columns was amusing myself with the wild shit I came up with. When I stepped back in the office he was on the couch twisting his hair—but he wasn’t laughing. I said, “Did you read that shit?” He said, “Yeah.” I said, “And that’s all you have to say?” And that’s when it hit me that he had trouble reading. I quickly moved on to another subject, before we could face any kind of uncomfortable silence. Back where I grew up I’d never encountered anyone who had reading problems. Of course, we had our share of guys who weren’t as sharp as most, but pretty much everyone could at least get by. I sensed that Tim was embarrassed, so I let it go.

My girlfriend Daisy talked to me about it later that night. She was two years older than Tim, but we’d had adult conversations before, so I knew I could talk to her about this. After I explained what happened, she immediately told me that she had two friends with the same problem: dyslexia. This brought it home to me that I was really in the heart of the ghetto—where life spans are short and illiteracy is high. I didn’t make a big thing about it. About two weeks later I talked to Tim in an indirect way, so as not to be overly rough or pushy. It was one of our usual days at the office: he was rolling up a blunt and I was throwing back some special brewed shit designed to rot the insides. I casually said, “Hey, man, are you in need of a little assistance with your reading?” His quick response was, “Naw, I’m okay -- I’m good.” But I pressed on and told him

that since we were in this situation together, I could help him. I had to be careful. I didn't want to say the wrong thing and make him feel as if I was going to make jokes about it. So I kept the conversation light and knew from his response that he was having more trouble than he was admitting to.

I brought it up again two weeks later, when I'd finished my next column for *The Source*. I read the column to him and gave him a copy so he could follow my reading and try to learn at the same time. I would slowly read, and he'd follow along with the text in his hand. We did it that way for the next year. It was always a private thing, just between the two of us. We'd close the door and lock it and then I'd start reading the column to him. That was a big first step in our ability to trust each other. I didn't condemn him or make him feel weird. It was important that we made that move in our relationship, because I had big plans and I knew that there could be no secrets between us if the situation was going to work. Tim also, I knew, believed that he was smart, in his own way. Tim is very street savvy, and he has great common sense, something a lot of college graduates don't have.

I decided to enroll Tim aka Buc Wild in an alternative school in Bedford Stuyvesant. To encourage him, I bought him brand-new Nikes and a 500 dollar BMX bike. I had given him his own apartment on the second floor in the brownstone I was maintaining for Nat, but it was only available to him on the condition that he stayed in school. When he stopped going, two months later, I put him out and sent him back to his mother's house. I had to play hardball. Get soft with a kid from the mean streets of Brooklyn and he'll take you on a never-ending ride of mind games. Although I was frustrated with my plan falling apart, I resolved to get back on top of the problem when I had more resources and more time.

Crown Heights became my oasis, for more reasons than one. I now had a solid foundation on which to grow as a businessman. My computer skills needed work and everyday I was pushing myself to learn Photo Shop, Quark and Microsoft Word. The Internet boom was one year away and with no time to blink or shake I would be right on course. Living all alone in that three-story building was essential to the creative growth of *Around The Way Connections*. Not only was I, with no experience, designing pages and covers, I was determined to sell it to the masses like a piece of bad swamp-land down in Florida. Chock full of misspellings and featuring a “ghetto princess” centerfold, sex coupons, and amateur graphics, the magazine left me no time or money to make corrections or reprint issues. With most start-up companies, there’s always doubt among the staff, and often people are just looking for experience via an entry-level position.

But this magazine would become my meal ticket for the next five years, and there was simply no second-guessing and no margin of error. Lip-glossed teenage girls became vice presidents of publicity; crack dealers became market managers; stick-up kids became directors of promotion. As for me, my phone etiquette became game tight. I was the informative receptionist, the fast-talking ad-sales manager, the gay publicist, the unavailable CEO, and the standby foot-messenger, all rolled into one. I learned these multi-tasking skills as a kid by watching my mother. She could make a lemon meringue pie, pay the newspaper boy at the front door, slap the shit out of you, sing an opera in Italian and talk on the phone to her sister in New York at the same time.

I can only imagine that had I started the magazine with partners or college classmates, my goal would have been different and my drive not as strong. My new religion became capitalism and



my bible was now the *New York Times*. I became a modern-day, ghetto version of Mussolini, leading a band of misfits into corporate battles. Seven days a week I woke up at the crack of dawn to news radio. I had to earn, produce, and provide -- in order to rule.

One day I had the idea to get a radio show somewhere, so I could promote my magazine the way Wendy Williams did on her show. After some aggressive footwork I made it happen, at Adelphi University's WBAU, in Garden City, Long Island. Soon I would encounter two new guys who would become great friends to me and instrumental to the development of the magazine and my numerous ideas. Rod Weston, aka Video Master, was a marketing machine beast, one of the first people I ever saw carry a camcorder every day. He didn't believe in sleep and was down for any adventure. He helped me organize focus groups, high-school tours, and countless marketing drives. Kevin Moorner, aka Big Kev, was another up-and-coming member in the empire of hate. Hailing from Red Fern projects in Far Rockaway Queens. He possessed computer skills, creative talent and dedication that were vital to my growth. Big Kev took over the layout for the magazine and created the web site [www.starandbucwild.com](http://www.starandbucwild.com). Rod, meanwhile, found a young up-and-coming DJ for the radio show—a guy named Clue. The show lasted only seven months, because there were too many complaints about my language and content, and besides, I was not a student or alumni of the school. For the short time that it lasted, though, the show motivated me to reach new heights.

The next three years became, for me, pure growth on all levels: I moved up in the magazine business, financed street wars, and impersonated undercover cops. You name it, and Star & Buc Wild

had it popping. My *Source* columns were becoming reflections of our everyday lives. We were becoming ghetto celebrities.

Eventually, after two years of writing it, I lost interest in doing my *Source* column. I've always been a person who needs constant change and I like when my back is against the wall -- when I've got to damn near fight my way out of a situation. My *Source* column, though, wasn't so much about fighting my way out but about building and creating something new—the same way I built the clubhouse in Long Island.

As a result of hard work, in 1996 I got to take a much-needed break in Hollywood, California. Paul Stewart, an old industry friend of mine from the late '80s, had his own label out in Cali called PMP (Power Move Promotions). Paul worked his way up from doing independent promotion and managed to score a distribution deal through BMG. One day he sent me a letter praising the column and saying that he wanted to record a comedy CD, along the lines of what Cheech & Chong did in the '70s. So I called him and identified myself as writer of the "Reality Check" column. I had to do that because a few people in the industry already knew that I was really Buc Wild. We laughed about it, reminisced about old times in the promotion game, and got down to business. Bottom line: he loved what I was doing and wanted to make a deal. He faxed me a contract shortly thereafter, and since I had experience with contracts, thanks to my days at record labels, I quickly saw that he was offering me a pretty good deal. It was exactly the kind of thing I'd had in mind—a way to take the Star & Buc Wild idea in another direction. So Paul booked Tim and I two tickets to Hollywood and we immediately headed for the golden gates of Tinsel Town. After touching down in Los Angeles, we settled in at the Orchid Suites.

In Hollywood I took my attempts to help Tim with his reading problem to the next level. Our focus was the comedy CD, but it was also a pivotal point in terms of he and I taking each other seriously. After working on the CD during the day and exploring the L.A. streets at night, we would go back to the hotel and I'd use flash cards to help Tim with his reading. We'd picked up the cards from a children's store at the mall. It was a funny scene: two grown men—one in his boxers, taking shots of Absolut; the other, smoking a blunt—sitting with flash cards in a Hollywood hotel. Housekeeping would come to the room and knock on the door and Tim would quickly jump up and say, “Oh, shit! Stash the cards! Stash the cards! Hurry up!” It was hilarious to watch, but it was real, and I understood his feelings. It could have been a touching moment, but to me it was just business. He got better everyday I worked with him during that two-month stay in California. It was the first time I'd adopted a big-brother role toward anyone.

As for our CD recordings, they were rough, rugged, and raw. The process was slow because of what I was trying to project, though Tim aka Buc Wild. Buc isn't really a spontaneous, quick cat, like Lou Costello or Jerry Lewis. Only later, when we'd become hosts on MTV, did I start feeling confident about our longevity as a team. To try and get focused, we started recording during the graveyard shift, from midnight until the sun came up. We were laying down some things I liked, even if the creative process got jammed up at times.

With the audio project, I was really trying to take the writing of the “Reality Check” column to the next level; I started incorporating Objective and philosophical perspectives on hip-hop culture. So we put in a lot of studio time and finally finished what we thought was a good amount of material for the CD entitled “Run Nigga Run!” Paul and his people listened to what we gave them and it was

apparent that they weren't knocked out by our efforts. But for a first shot, I thought it was damned good material.

During the recording process, a former *Source* editor named Dream Hampton, who was now the Editor-In-Chief of *RapPages* magazine, *The Source's* West Coast competition, came to our hotel room. Over a few laughs and some cheap wine, she made me an offer: bring my column to *RapPages* and she'd pay me about \$1,500 more a month. Buc and I had known that this was what Dream had really come to see us about, but I enjoyed her pitch and respected her aggressive approach. I sincerely thanked her for the offer and told her I'd get back to her. After she left the hotel I called Dave Mays at *The Source* in New York and told him about Dream's offer. Within minutes Dave agreed that as soon as I got back to New York we'd draw up a new deal memo. I renegotiated with *The Source* and got close to \$3,000 a month to do the column. It was good money, but even upon re-signing I was eager to see what else I could do with the Star & Buc Wild name.

As for the PMP venture, its fate hinged on a couple of factors. When we got back to New York, the whole frontier of rap music had changed. Tupac and Biggie were now gone. They were pillars of the culture and their deaths deeply affected the hip-hop industry. Paul meanwhile, was facing distribution issues with his label. He had wanted us to work on the material some more, but in the interim, he'd lost his deal with BMG. So he gave me a contractual release and there wasn't a lot more he could do at that point. I learned from the recording experience in California that Buc and I needed more chemistry. We were nowhere near the side-splitting vaudeville routines of Abbott & Costello, and we lacked the smoothness of the Sidney Poitier and Bill Cosby films. I'm talking about the mind-boggling, gut-wrenching, slapstick humor

that didn't need profanity or sexual filth to lure you in. I knew that those guys were sharp and talented, but I didn't realize until years later that they were also innovators. I knew that Buc and I had a long way to go, and I'm still not quite sure if we're there yet, but I've always liked the challenge. It was exciting for me to try and see if I could take what was slowly becoming a brand name upstream. I wanted to discover just what I was made of.

This period also allowed me to start building my framework for Objective Hate—its synthesis, premise, and application. I made notes and experimented with different outlines and idioms that had nothing to do with hate. In fact, I was trying to construct something I was not even living. This narrow path, of course, led me to a dead end with a hollow missile. The direction of my life at this point in time was not extracting the very fruit of my existence: philosophy. Sure, I had catch phrases, rehearsed for a quick romp in the sack with Ivy League cokeheads, and I could mimic Locke, Hobbes and Schopenhauer to get a pat on the back from pill-popping grad students, but I needed more. I yearned to know whether I was an overgrown child in need of attitude adjustment, or a stagnant fool with an incurable disposition. I started to build and from that day forward would no longer be a parrot for others. I slowly organized what I was not only able to understand, but what I felt I could be the conductor of: Hate. This world of detestation blossomed at my feet not because I was being held back by society, but because I was researching the landscape and I was able to recognize those around me who were repulsed by my arrogant yet productive manner.

I first needed to know if I was admired, respected, feared, tolerated, adored, or loathed by those in my inner circle. I became a dispenser of philosophical questioning and put greater demands on the people in my unit. As far as I could remember I had always been

the boss, but now I needed to confirm what exactly qualified me for that role. After learning about myself through the eyes of others, I was amazed at the levels of doubt and hatred directed toward me. Somehow widespread low standards had clouded my judgment and allowed me to believe that I had a slew of friends. This was a great awakening for me, and soon my frame-work for Objective Hate began coming together like a jigsaw puzzle. For some, this back-door approach will not stand as legitimate nor be digested as whole. That is why it's important to stress that this subliminal thread of hate in all men, including myself, could only be reached and understood via an unbiased form of reasoning - Objectivism. While Rand's integrated system, covered every major branch of philosophy, my grand equation was waiting for me down the road, through the woods and nesting in a mind field covered in Chinese barbed wire. Even still, I was motivated like Luther Burbank (agricultural pioneer) and determined like a Harlem crack-whore on a Saturday night.

I now had the appetite to create, produce and live without restriction and or interference. My thoughts were mine alone and my goals needed no co-signers. Also, what I didn't fully grasp at first about the beautiful place where I grew-up (Scotch Plains) would now become one of my biggest motivating factors. In addition, I now declared that I left an awesome town to come to a place not because it was so-much better, but rather because I was fully equipped for the fight.



Kindergarten - 1969.



My brother Guy with a rare smile -- Catholic School.





My father William L. Torain in The US Navy - 1944.





Shackamaxon Elementry School - third grade. Please note the Evel Knievel haircut by special request



Terrill Middle School: my focus was smoking cigarettes



Ninth grade where I was claiming to be Foster Sylvers second cousin.



Jr. Raiders (#10) I won the league MVP - most touchdowns.





Sheik and I on a Tuesday night in Times Square, NY - 1983



Times Square, NY - 1984



New York City - 1985



Martha's Vineyard Island - Oak Bluffs (1987)







Martha's Vineyard Island - Gay Head/Aquinnah (1987)



With Alex Lefeson and Geddy Lee from RUSH (1989)

## City Limits

### THE CULTURE SCENE

# Sex, rap drive growth of new mag for teens

By NICK CHARLES

Day News Staff Reporter

Troi (Star) Torain promotes himself as the "Hugh Hefner of hip hop."

And the cornerstone of his wannabe Playboy empire is Around The Way Connections, a salacious urban teen magazine featuring a "Ghetto Princess" centerfold and saturated with smutty language, spicy wit and saucy personals:

Name: Tamara

Age: 15

Sign: Cancer

Home: Baldwin, NY

Hobbies: Shopping & reading

Looking for: A real good toe-sucking, leg-tickin' bald head kid.

Name: Little Louie

Age: 17

Sign: Libra

Home: Bronx

Hobbies: Getting paid

Looking for: A gangster bitch.

Started with \$300 in January 1993, and published every two months by Torain — who prefers to be called Star — the magazine has bred a weekly local cable program of the same name, a soon-to-be released film, "Ghetto Princess" (Rated B for But-ter) and a since-canceled radio show.

Slickly produced, the magazine includes one-page interviews and profiles of rap performers and television celebrities. Comic actor Martin Lawrence as Sheneneh, his intrusive female neighbor on his Fox television series, graces the most recent cover. It also includes regular columns on music and lifestyles and contributions from teenage funnyman Bue Wild (Star's younger brother).

It is also a rap music marketer's dream, chock-full of advertising from major record companies pushing rap to urban audiences.

"It's a direct voice to the high-school-age, inner city kids that we want to reach," said Albee Ragusa, director of Rap Marketing at Tommy Boy Music.

Among the other labels that pay up to \$1,000 for a full-page, color ad are Select Street Records, Scotti Bros. Records and Giant Records.

Before the magazine got to newsstands, Star offered high-schoolers a way to make money by selling it to their friends and keeping the profits. All he asked in return were names and addresses to build a database of future subscribers.

He maintains he now has a list of 17,643 names that continues to grow.

In recent months, the magazine — which has an estimated readership of over 50,000 and has sold on newsstands for \$2.50 since June — has brought Star coveted free publicity and a measure of notoriety.

He's appeared on Rolanda Watts' talk show to rap about teen sex and is scheduled to be a guest on an upcom-

ing "Geraldo," when he will speak on a similar topic.

Along with the attention has come acute criticism, particularly from parents and youth organizations — directed not so much at Star, a charming 28-year-old with dollar signs in his eyes, as at the magazine itself.

"I want them to be shocked," said Star of his adult detractors.

Older heads are definitely shocked and outraged.

"I think it's terrible. It's just not a healthy magazine in this day and age," said Marjorie Seon of the Youth Service Coalition in Brooklyn. "The magazine was sent to our office and I thought I was picking up Hustler (an adult magazine) or something. I realize there are things on television that our kids shouldn't be seeing, but that's no excuse for having something like this."

While Seon's response is common, others, such as Richard Green, chief executive of the Crown Heights Youth Collective, are willing to turn a blind eye to some of the more frank sexual commentary and drug culture lingo and focus on what good the magazine can do.

"It's very raw and provocative, but it has an audience and you have to reach these young people on the highways and byways, and Around The Way Connections comes on like a highway or a byway," said Greene, who contributed a piece on New York City's new truancy policy to an issue.

Added Green, "If I stick my head under the pillow, it won't go away. And it's gaining momentum."

Star, who worked in the mailroom at MTV and later as a promotions director for several record companies, defends his product as a sort of E-mail for urban kids.

"It's like an interactive youth dictionary," said Star, sitting in his offices in Crown Heights, dressed in the latest Karl Kani baggy gear.

Deborah Charles, 15, who got a copy from Star on one of his giveaway trips to downtown Brooklyn, echoes the sentiments of many of the mag's young readers.

"It's, like, realistic," she said. "Some of it is to the extreme, but that's the way some people may talk to their friends. I read it because it's funny and he [Star] has to be original so he can make money."

Star makes no bones about why he started the magazine: "I believe in the capitalistic flavor of this country."

Yet he does admit that some of the personals — anyone can send one in, but you have to be a subscriber to respond to one — and the messages they send can be disturbing.

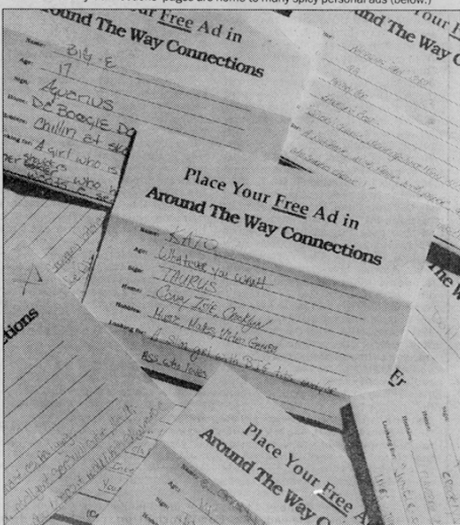
But he said he offers the magazine and its contents as a guideline, not as authority.

"I'm not saying it's right or wrong. It might be the way to go, or not," Star said.



JOE DOMARIA

MEGA MAG in the making is what Troi (Star) Torain (above) hopes he's running. His Around The Way Connections' pages are home to many spicy personal ads (below.)







Around The Way Magazine -- Promo Van (1995)



GHETTO PRINCESS: ODRICA -- ATW Magazine (1997)  
Photo: John Ricard





Manhattan Neighborhood Network Cable TV Show - 1999



MTV Networks "Beat Suite" (2000)

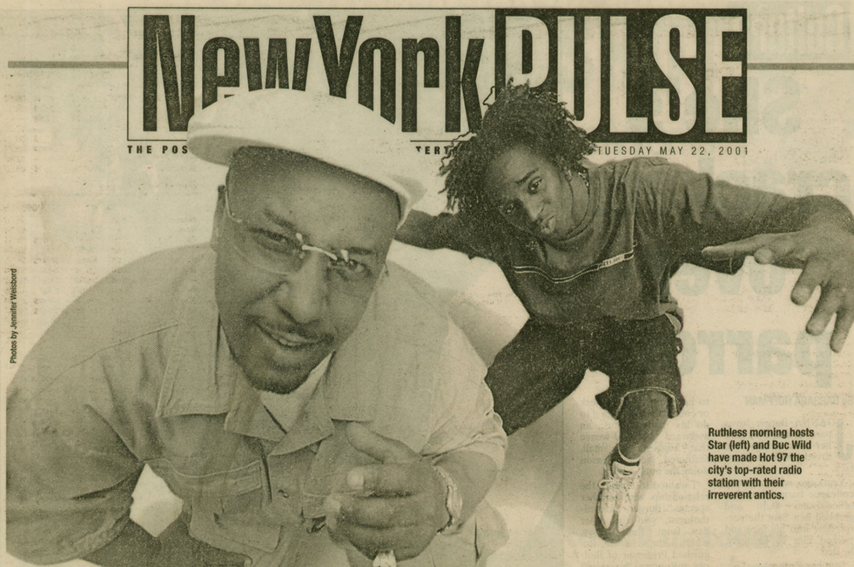


"Beat Suite" team: Tim Murphy, Dave Strevins, Arthur Jones, DJ Skribble, Marvin Whitest, Rob Niebling and Matt Capone.



Hot 97: Subway Ad Campaign -- 2001





Photos by Jennifer Weisbord

Ruthless morning hosts Star (left) and Buc Wild have made Hot 97 the city's top-rated radio station with their irreverent antics.

# Nasty as they wanna be

## No holds barred for hip-hot radio duo Star and Buc Wild

By R.K. BYERS

GOING up to the Hot 97 headquarters is like visiting any anonymous corporate office. You're buzzed in and met by a man dressed as if he would be the person who, if worst came to worst, would be escorting you out.

Down the hall, in a studio on the right, are the reasons you're here: Star and Buc Wild, two men from Brooklyn whose outrageous morning show, "Star & Buc Wild Morning Show Featuring Miss Jones" has made Hot 97 the city's No. 1 station.

Star is 37-year-old Troy Torain, who calls himself "The Evil Emperor of Hate" — an ironic twist on the hip-hop persona of the "hater," the embittered, jealous guy who's always watching from the sidelines and never gets his.

Nobody — famous or anonymous, hip-hop or otherwise — escapes Star's venom. During a recent studio visit, he:

- Called R&B singer Ginuwine "The Ultimate Cupcake."
- Suggested one caller sounds like a "dirty sp—" and another a "nappy-headed n—."
- Called "Politically Incorrect"

host Bill Maher a "racist" and "half a f—."

"A lot of people on the so-called conscious side of the hip-hop community call Star the antichrist," says David Blanks, the show's 28-year-old head writer, better known as DX-21.

Complaints pour into the Greenwich Village studios — about racism, profanity and the general tastelessness that pervades the show, but seems to lose its edge as it becomes routine.

It may have shocked audiences when Star first offered himself as a sugar daddy for 15-year-old girls, now it's part of his shtick.

At least people are calling — and listening. Since their March 2000 debut, Star and Buc Wild's share of the coveted 18- to 34-year-old audience has grown from 8.7 to 12.4, within striking distance of Howard Stern's 12.8 share.

"I dislike the complaints that I get," says program director Tracy Ciochery.

"I dislike the problems that it causes with listeners, with advertisers, stuff like that. But you know what? At the end of the day, you've got to break a few eggs to make an omelet."

And Star says he's just being

When he decided to develop the column into a cable access show called "Universal Player Haters," he realized he did not look like the Buc Wild of his creation — a young, sexy, streetwise troublemaker.

"I was a little too old to try to pass myself off as eye candy for young girls," he says.

So he recruited his younger stepbrother, Timothy Joseph, barely a teen when he adopted the Buc Wild moniker.

Now 19, he likes to recall the strange, accidental way he met his older stepbrother: It was in Crown Heights, where he says he'd occasionally rob an arcade owned by

real. "Usually in the arena of hip-hop, everybody is so phony," he explains.

"Hey, that's my man, that's my peeps, that's my cousin." But such is not the case. We're not all peeps and cousins and fun. There's so much jealousy in the world of hip-hop, so much bulls—."

He has had run-ins with personalities including Sean "Puffy" Combs, singer Jill Scott, comics Eddie Griffin and Shawn Wayans and community organizer Conrad

Muhammad, who calls Star "a knockoff of Howard Stern."

Though that comparison is often made — even among those on the show — Star and Buc Wild like to think of themselves more as a Hollywood-bound Abbott and Costello duo — only this time, the fat guy (Star) is the smart one.

Son of an Italian mother and black father (also Buc Wild's dad), Star wasn't always Star. He started out in the music business, then began writing a hip-hop column called "Reality Check" under the alias "Buc Wild."

When he decided to develop the column into a cable access show called "Universal Player Haters," he realized he did not look like the Buc Wild of his creation — a young, sexy, streetwise troublemaker.

"I was a little too old to try to pass myself off as eye candy for young girls," he says.

So he recruited his younger stepbrother, Timothy Joseph, barely a teen when he adopted the Buc Wild moniker.

Now 19, he likes to recall the strange, accidental way he met his older stepbrother. It was in Crown Heights, where he says he'd occasionally rob an arcade owned by

Torain. One day, while walking with his mother, he was surprised to see her greet the arcade owner on the street and asked how she knew him.

"That's your brother," she explained.

"Ma, I be stealing from him," confessed the conflicted kid.

The quieter and skinnier of the two, Buc Wild seems to be on a short leash — this is clearly Star's show.

"My stepbrother — sometimes he's cool, sometimes he ain't. Most of the time, he be trying to choke me," Buc Wild says.

And then, of course, there's Miss Jones. Sitting in the studio's far corner in a Fendi suit, she's the "Robin Quivers" character, who's supposed to "hold it down" for the females, or whatever group is being attacked that she has some empathy towards. It's tough.

"Everybody can't get uplifted every day," Miss Jones says of the burden. The 28-year-old former R&B singer born Tanika Jones is a holdover from the station's previous morning regime, featuring Big Sister Lova and Kurt Flixt.

"Sometimes I get dragged into the hate," she says. "I have a lot of relationships that Star and Buc don't give a damn about."

New York Post: Tuesday May 22nd (2001)



# TW Tuesday

Back on air after Hot 97 suspension, now...

## Aaliyah DJ is bad news for the Jews

By JOHN MAINELLI

**H**OT 97 DJ "Star" returned from suspension yesterday — and promptly created a brand new controversy by ranting about what he called "big Jew business."

The high-rated DJ, aka Troi Torain, was suspended two weeks ago for mocking the death of singer Aaliyah in a plane crash.

He was mum on Aaliyah yesterday but, instead, railed about Jews in the music industry. Hollywood, telephone companies, and his own radio station.

"This show is dedicated to people who will soon realize that hip-hop was, is, and always will be a big Jew business," Torain said, and you Negroes better realize that."

The DJ repeated the comment several times.

**"We're in seek of an agent — a Jew agent because this is a big Jew business"**

during the four-hour wake-up show he does with his half-brother, Buc Wild (Timothy Joseph).

He also told listeners — frequently — that he and his brother are looking for "a Jew agent" to get them into movies.

"We're in seek [sic] of an agent — a Jew agent," Torain said, "because this is big Jew business."

Torain, whose fast-rising show ranked fourth in the latest Arbitron ratings, announced a new listener phone number "to handle all of your death threats, your love, your concerns."

"We had to get a big Jew voice-mail provider," he said.

The DJ's motives for his rants weren't made clear, although it appeared they might have had something to do with the executives at Emmis, the owners of Hot 97 (97.1 FM) who suspended him.

"This is a big Jew business [and] I've been cutting down these Jews at Hot 97," he said. "I got a big-ass bonus check last week. These are beautiful people."

The Anti-Defamation League released a statement yesterday blasting Torain's comments.

"We are appalled by the unwarranted and offensive stereotypical statements about Jews made by Troi Torain," the ADL said.

Torain's blatant disregard for taste and decency has been shown before [by the Aaliyah pranks], the statement continued. "Offensive language such as this should not be tolerated and should be condemned."

Torain, station manager Judy Ellis and program director Tracy Cloberty didn't return repeated calls.

New York Post, Tuesday, September 11, 2001 nypost.com

New York Post: Tuesday September 11, 2001

## Hip-Hop Transforms Radio As Stations Seek Ad Dollars



By LYNETTE HOLLOWAY

A year ago, WWPR-FM (105.1) was one of New York City's leading rhythm and blues stations, offering listeners a range of oldies from Diana Ross and the Supremes to the Spinners to Earth Wind and Fire, the music of the baby boom generation.

But in March, the station, one of 1,200 stations owned by Clear Channel Communications, abruptly altered its format to hip-hop, offering edgier tones of artists like Nas, Cam'ron and Ja Rule and, in the process, showing how the appetite for R. & B. oldies has dwindled with the rise of a younger generation.

WWPR is not alone in making the switch. In Baton Rouge, La., WJNH-FM (107.3) changed formats from R. & B. oldies to hip-hop and contemporary R. & B. a year ago. In Chicago, WPWX-FM (92.3) also left its R. & B. oldies format for hip-hop last year. The shifts are largely propelled by economics. Hip-hop has great appeal among a group of listeners that advertisers increasingly covet: People between the ages of 18 and 34 who have demonstrated significant spending power on disposable items like liquor, soda, cellphones and electronics.

"Young people rule right now," said Taft Harris, general manager of WPWX, one of 38 stations owned by Crawford Broadcasting. "They have great spending power. They can't go out and buy big homes like older groups, but they can match them pound for pound on clothing, electronics and liquor purchases."

Today, 150 stations around the nation play mostly hip-hop and contemporary R. & B., said Sean Ross, group editor of Airplay Monitor magazine. Nine years ago, six were using that format, according to research by Mr. Ross and Tony Sanders, a senior analyst at Duncan's American Radio, another trade publication.

Sharply defined hip-hop stations began to

Photographs by Angel Franco/The New York Times

Faces from the battle of two New York radio stations: Star, above, at WQHT; and, top left, at WWPR, Ed Lover, in foreground, and Dr. Dre, Lisa G. and Curt Plint.

Continued on Page 7

NY Times: Business Day Section -- Monday July 22nd (2002)



oneone

# Shooting Star



Hot 97 morning deejay Star listens to one of his sidekicks while broadcasting his drive-time show from the station's New York studio.

JOHN MUNSON/THE STAR-LEDGER

'Hot 97' DJ  
happy to have  
a few (nasty)  
things to say

BY CARRIE STETLER  
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

**N**EW YORK — No wonder Star doesn't feel like hanging around the office today.

The caustic host of the "The Morning Show With Star and Bucwild" on Hot 97, New York's hip-hop station, is used to death threats. He's been harassed by a female stalker (whose calls he returned on the air).

So when it's time to meet a reporter in front of the station's Greenwich Village office, he's in a hurry to do the interview somewhere else. "There's a lot of crazy people, and with things like the Biggie shooting (the rapper Notorious B.I.G., who was gunned down in 1997), you never know," explains Star, who grew up in Scotch Plains under his "government name," Troi Torain.

Three days later, there's a celeb-studded shootout outside the Hot 97 building between members of Lil' Kim's entourage and the camp of rapper Capone, half of the duo CNN (Capone-N-Noreaga). A friend of Capone's was wounded, and there's talk that the violence was provoked by Kim's feud with the rapper Foxy Brown, who dissed her on CNN's last album.

Star's response? Kim's flunkies were falling down on the job.

"She hired them as so-called thugs, (but) the truth is, if you shot at someone 22 times and you only shoot one of them in the back, and it's not even the guys you want to shoot, some people have to be fired," cracks Star.

Not for nothing is Star — who calls himself a "lifelong hater" — compared to Howard Stern, the only Metropolitan morning DJ to eclipse his popularity among 18- to 34-year-olds, according to Arbitron's fall survey. (Hot 97 is the area's number two radio station, behind Lite FM).

Since "Star and Bucwild" premiered in its 6-to-10 a.m. weekday time slot last year, its R-rated, hostility-filled humor (skits like "The Pimp Who Stole Christmas") has also found a following of 12- to 18-year-olds.

This is why Star and Bucwild (his half-brother and largely silent partner) bill themselves as "the wrong teen idols." It may also be why the show airs a periodic alert: "Warning: Explicit Negroes," and why Star's upcoming book is titled "Raise Your Own (expletive) Kids."

Like Stern, Star touts his skill at [ See STAR, Page 25 ]

New Jersey Star-Ledger August 14th (2002)



Power 104.1 Hartford Connecticut -- 2004





Weather: Scattered T-storms. 66/52      **SPORTS ★ FINAL**      Saturday, May 13, 2006

# DAILY NEWS

50¢      NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER      nydailynews.com

**EXCLUSIVE**  
**WTC CROSS**  
**GETS A HOME**  
 SEE PAGE 4



**FBI GUYS RAID**  
**CIA BIG'S DIGS**  
 SEE PAGE 7



Troi Torain, aka Star, in custody yesterday. His radio rant got him canned from WWPR-Power-105.1 FM.

## FALLEN STAR

**Hip-hop shock jock arrested for twisted on-air threats**      **PAGE 5**

NYTIL SECURESCN2



100.3 The Beat: Philadelphia, PA (2011)



City Hall with Mayor Michael Nutter: Philadelphia, PA -- July (2011)



## Chapter Eight

### Nothing less than Equal

SAY WHAT YOU MEAN KID AND MEAN WHAT YOU SAY. ACT LIKE YOU KNOW PUNK, AND WATCH HOW YOU PLAY. DON'T POINT THAT NINE SON WHEN KIDS KNOW YOU'RE SHOOK. PLEASE RUN YOUR DOUGH MISS, CAUSE THIS HERE'S A JOOK.

---

Moving has never been something I've hesitated to do, so it shouldn't be a surprise that I soon left Brooklyn and moved to Staten Island. With Nat selling the building I was staying in and the local police considering me a person of interest, I'd had my share of ghetto fame and decided to pack up my truck and get in the wind. Nat had another piece of property in Staten Island and asked if I

wanted to hold that house down until he could sell it. I didn't have any history in Staten Island, but I figured that since I had twisted out every other borough, why not spread my wings onto Wu-Tang soil? Crown Heights had been the inspiration for the "Reality Check" column, but this was a new day, and I needed new surroundings.

While making camp in Staten Island, I exchanged frequent calls with my friend Adario. We'd ring each other's alarms and build about corporate power moves. We'd give each other kicks in the ass, calling each other up at six in the morning: "Hey, dude, you're not sleeping, are you? The white man's out there conquering the fucking world—how dare you sleep, nigga? How dare you try and rest when Wall Street is on fire and white women are in need of a good plowing?" This is the kind of shit we'd hit each other with every so often, just to help one another stay on top of his game. Often we'd motivate each other by doing something we called "making a cold call," which involved calling any high-profile businessperson we thought might be a good target for a deal. We'd attempt to get him or her on the phone, using nothing but telephone trickery: fake voices, acting ability, overall hustle. I'd boldly put in a personal cold call to someone like Larry Flint, publisher of *Hustler* magazine, and see what I could make happen.

This cold-call technique actually worked more often than not—and in 1999 it landed Buc and I on television. One of the first things I did when I got back from Hollywood was purchase Abbott & Costello movies. They took me back to the days when I was kid and ideas were racing through my head. I schemed about getting Buc and I in front of a camera to develop some sort of onscreen chemistry. I started to think about public-access television, and I made calls to all the borough outlets. It didn't take long, just a few

really good calls, until I managed to skirt the process and get us an on-air slot in Manhattan.

Once we got on, I used the old Joe Franklin formula: you have just one camera and the focus is you. Franklin was a master of radio and television dialogue back in the '60s and '70s, and he was a staple on channel nine while I was growing up. Buc and I had never experienced that kind of visual pressure. I didn't want to play any music videos and I didn't want any guests; I just wanted to cut the lights on, get a bottle of gin, promote Star & Buc Wild, and spit the hate. Our time slot was Monday nights at midnight, on channel 57. It was a half-hour rollercoaster ride of unchained venom. There were times when I called the show "Universal Player Haters," and at other times we just had "Star & Buc Wild" on the screen. The first three episodes weren't that good but I was determined to be heard.

Buc, meanwhile, was scared shitless. He didn't know what to say, and he didn't know what to do with himself, physically speaking. I soon got pissed off with his performance because I didn't think he was putting forth enough effort. But after the fourth show I realized that he wasn't the kind of go-getter I've always been. So I tried to slow down and understand that if I was going to make this work I'd have to be a little more patient with him. I had always been a solo act, but there I was with somebody who was the total opposite of me: a slacker. I actually had to give him pep talks before each show. We attacked everybody: Busta Rhymes, Mary J. Blige, the New York Jets, Hulk Hogan, Patrick Ewing—anyone who was famous at the time. No one was safe. We'd take live calls and I showed people how to take stabs at the celebrities we were talking about. Sometimes they'd call in to take stabs at us. This was *our* Vaudeville.

We finally got it together and the rhythm of the show grew stronger. We'd sit in front of the camera with several bottles of

liquor, two six-packs of beer, Italian sausages, bread, and Kraft extra-sharp cheddar cheese. We'd relax and rock the camera. A phone number was constantly onscreen, encouraging viewers to scourge back at us.

There would be no greater period of evolution for my stance of Objective Hate. A person can say and claim almost anything in this world, but to solidify a foundation one must open one's doors and welcome all who come to joust. This path was extremely beneficial to me because it gave flight to my vision, while sharpening my tongue. This show, with its no-shout-out policy, would lubricate the engine of Objective Hate for years to come. What made it truly different was the fact that I was constructing a blueprint and was conscious of it at the same time. Buc's perception of everything was off balance, but he was trying, so I started to let up on him. Soon I realized that he could never become the Jerry Lewis that I'd hoped for, so I started promoting him as the new Timothy Leary. I encouraged him to smoke marijuana onscreen and tell people to, "Turn on, tune in, and drop out."

The recording of these shows was as important to me as their content. After each show I reviewed the tapes and searched for new ways to present ourselves as the most ego-driven, boisterous assholes on the planet. On the outside I'm sure it looked as if we were just wilding out, but the reality was that behind the liquor I had a table full of notes, listing topics I needed to discuss. I was constantly trying to antagonize people, to get their honest reactions to my theories about Hatred. This platform for my surveys would also be my classroom, in which I gave free lessons in Objective Hate. Over time there have been those who've toyed with the term "Objective Hate," in cute and fashionable presentations, but the essence of my philosophy did not evolve from sorority dances, fraternity clubs or

highbrow homosexual dinner parties. Being from a small town in New Jersey, I knew to expect Caucasians to naturally reveal their inner hate. What I wasn't anticipating was black people in large numbers being downright upset at the mere fact of two guys of color daring to say anything negative about rappers, R&B singers, and athletes. It seemed that the hard dick that Howard Stern had been giving the urban communities—not in the mouth but in the ass—for over a decade would always be acceptable, but anything countercultural from a person of color was simply unheard of. While working at MTV I had listened to Howard Stern in the morning, as I sorted mail, but it didn't take me long to figure out that he was just a one-trick pony and probably the type of kid I used to bully back in school. At times he was amusing and he often reminded me of the suburbs I grew up in, but for the most part I couldn't relate to his style of white-boy griping. No matter which way the knife came down, he still had the complexion for the protection. There's an old joke: what's more deadly than a loaded hand gun? Answer: a confident, outspoken man of color. I knew that all too well, from my adolescent days. Even Buc would sometimes say to me, after we'd recorded a show, "Wow, Star, did you *have* to say those things?" Yes, it was colored folks, by far, who had the biggest problem with me during this journey in blackness. Not one to worry about racial consequences, though, I just kept the pedal to the floor and dished out the Hate.

Our Monday night rant session became therapy for a lot of people, who simply tuned in at the suggestion of a friend. Without knowing, they were also allowing me to work out the kinks of what would become the Star & Buc Wild money machine. I was successful at not only initiating hatefully toned topics, but giving callers their own shine in the mix. This was public access television,

which meant there were no commercial breaks and no advertisers. I actually paid \$125 a week for the broadcast studio and live feed to MNN (Manhattan Neighborhood Network). Because of this early installment of our radical efforts and developing style I was motivated to try and take the budding brand mainstream.

Transcripts from Star & Buc Wild cable show - 1998/99

STAR: Good evening, Star & Buc Wild Show - who's on the line? CALLER: Hey, it's Mike from Midtown—can I give me a shout out? STAR: Hey Mike, go fuck yourself, you greasy piece of Dego shit. You and your slut sister, who smells like Cannolies. (click)

STAR: Good evening, Star & Buc Wild Show - who's on the line? CALLER: Hey, it's Hector from 103rd Street. What is this show about? STAR: Hey, Hector I'm glad you called. Tell me something—when you kiss your crack-smoking wife in the mouth, what does a Nigger's cock taste like? (click)

STAR: Good evening, Star & Buc Wild Show - who's on the line? CALLER: Ay, yo, this is D from Harlem. Why y'all niggas trying to diss people? STAR: Hey, Curtis, thanks for checkin' in, but can you call me during business hours with regard to all parole matters? (click).

STAR: Good evening, Star & Buc Wild Show - who's on the line? CALLER: Hi, this is Kima from Uptown. Do you guys have a rap album out or something? STAR: Hey, Kima, listen to me carefully, you little nappy-headed heffa. The only thing

I ever rapped in my life was a sandwich. Now take your dumb ass to bed so you can get up in time to go get your stomach pumped at the clinic (click).

STAR: Good evening, Star & Buc Wild Show - who's on the line? CALLER: Yo, fuck, who's on the line, son, y'all niggas is mad corny and that's my word! STAR: Holy shit, Dante, is that you? I thought you were doing three-to-six in the penitentiary! Does this now mean I gotta stop fucking your baby's mother in the ass on Wednesdays? (click).

This was the formula and tone of the show, every Monday night. We didn't tell jokes or make friends with anybody. Buc usually just laughed and delivered an occasional "fuck you" to a caller, but when he got real high off the weed he would start making serious death threats and reckless allegations. To me this was just normal Suburban conversation. Growing up in Scotch Plains, if a kid's parents couldn't afford to buy him a new hockey stick, moped or Honda dirt bike, you dumped on his mother, father, sister, and religion. Around the fourth episode I started to let the callers vent back at us, in hopes that they now understood our flow and style. *Whaaaaaam* -- they were ready!!

STAR: Good evening, Star & Buc Wild Show - who's on the line? CALLER: Yo, Star, this is Gino. You fucking Run DMC reject—tell your little Chia Pet Nigger brother Buc Wild to get a haircut and stop wearing bootleg jerseys on TV. (click).

STAR: Good evening, Star & Buc Wild Show - who's on the line? CALLER: Hey, Star, this is Sal, you half-breed degen-

erate, how's it going? Listen, can you do me a favor and tell all the black bitches from Harlem, if they're gonna abort their babies at home, please stop throwing the fetus in the trash on my truck routes. (click).

STAR: Good evening, Star & Buc Wild Show - who's on the line? CALLER: Hey, Star, what up, Nigga? Yo, tell that cracker Sal never mind the black shorties in Harlem. I wanna let the married white bitches from Long Island know that I don't need no more pussy and wedding rings for my coke—I need cash, now. (click).

Not only did the viewers now get it, they started fiending for it, to the point where people were calling the broadcasting station at all hours of the day, looking for Star & Buc Wild so they could vent.

During this time Adario called me one morning and told me about a real train wreck I had to hear -- the Hot 97 morning show. Usually I listened to news radio in the morning, but at Adario's suggestion I tuned in to hear what sort of Amos-n'-Andy double-dutch Nigger shit was being fed to the masses. As predicted, it sounded like a New Orleans funeral on a hot, sunny day. Ed Lover, a good guy and a hip-hop legend, was the host of this Negro version of "Hee Haw." Adario dared me to make a cold call to the station's program director to see if I could get a meeting to discuss a facelift for the show. It was a dare that would later turn into a real Six-Flags nigger adventure.

I called Tracy Cloherty's office (Program Director) and said it was Star & Buc Wild from *The Source* Magazine. Not surprisingly, she took the call, and I proceeded to ask her if she needed a writer for the station's morning show. I figured this might be the way to



infiltrate this big media vehicle and get the line “radio show writer” on my resume. I really had no respect for Hot 97. I remember when Tupac and Biggie were murdered, and I tuned into that shoe-shine station and all the DJ’s were on the air crying crocodile tears. These were the same fools who sat there when Tupac and Biggie were spitting that hot shit, playing those bang-bang-shoot-’em-up, nigga-die-slow anthems.

Tracy gave me a meeting a few days later. When I arrived 20 minutes early I was informed by the receptionist that Tracy had left for the day -- I took it in stride. I called the next day and she said she’d forgotten about the meeting and invited me back the following day. I came in with five pages of my skits and ideas for Ed’s morning show. Tracy was impressed with my work and I was impressed with her breasts. She then told me, “I can find something for you, but we have no budget.” I smiled because I was familiar with that slick corporate answer. It meant, “We can pimp you, but all we’ll give you is some nigger pennies. Whatever you can hustle up on the outside is your business.”

I still had a lot of shit popping back in Brooklyn: selling guns, weed and fake Rolex watches, running an arcade, and trying to decide whether to keep publishing *Around The Way* magazine. At the time I was tricking off on a high school girl from Queens named Lyneece. She told me that if they offered me the job at the radio station I should take it, so she could come visit me after school and meet famous people. Her sexy hypnotic eyes and Adario’s instigation convinced me to take a job making \$200 a week at that big ghetto blaster. Everyday I’d get up around four in the morning, get down to the station and start writing. I spent a lot of time on the computer creating my own brand of humor. After I was done, I dropped the material off for Ed and his team and kept it moving. I

never really hung out in the studio. I kept socializing to a minimum. I was 35 years old and I had seen enough corporate nonsense. Plus, I had perceived tension in the air because my position was one that I'd created, so there was a little unease about my coming in to write for that show. But my reputation was solid, thanks to my writing in *The Source* and my own magazine. They knew what I was capable of, so we dealt with each other in a professional fashion.

I never mentioned to anyone at the radio station that Buc and I were doing the cable show. But they eventually found out, because the show generated so much buzz in the streets, and viewers began to call the radio station, mentioning it. At that point, we had an estimated viewership of around 75,000 every Monday night. A few months later, as our cable buzz got hotter, I got a call from Rod Aissa, the Director of Talent Relations for MTV. The folks there had seen the show, which had only been on the air for about five months. The prospect of taking the show to MTV seemed like a homecoming of sorts, since I had spent some of my most formative corporate years in MTV's mailroom. Still, I went into the initial meeting with MTV open to any format change. I've always prided myself on being sociable but also on knowing what to avoid saying in a high-level meeting. A lot of times knowing what not to say has gotten me in the door. Having resurrected myself from that hard fucking reality check back at Virgin Records made it nice to go into that meeting, as if I were looking forward to my day in court.

We came in to MTV to talk to them about hosting a show called "The Beat Suite." They told us they had been considering a few top rappers for the gig, but were interested in us, as well, because we were writers. Buc was in rare form during that meeting. There are times when he can really put the cap on a situation. I really wanted to do this deal because it targeted the young demographic

that we were trying to capture. For me, it would be a real challenge to write for a cable giant that at the time was on the verge of being cutting-edge. I had typed up some skits, show dedications, and on-air bumper ideas, to show them that we had direction for a show. Ultimately, this played an important factor in their decision. They told me that they wanted to do an hour-long show, five days a week, and they wanted some good ideas, in addition to being cable personalities. The next day, I went to Hot 97 and asked Tracy if she might have a weekend overnight slot available on the station for me to do a “Star & Buc Wild Show.” Her immediate response was, “I have nothing”—a quick shutdown. I’m sure a lot of people got at her about that kind of thing, but I was on a high, coming out of that MTV meeting, and there was nothing anyone could say to shake my confidence. So I took the “no” in stride and said, “Cool.”

Two weeks later, I was home in the afternoon during business hours with my steady girlfriend Daisy, whom I’d been shacking up with. I was lying in bed with her when I got the phone call from MTV, and I immediately got up out-of-bed and stood up. Rod got on the phone and said, “We wanna go with you guys -- are you excited?” I said, “Hell, yeah, I’m excited.” I called Buc ten minutes later (told him the news), and his response was far more laid back: “Oh, word?” It wasn’t really a big deal to him at the time. I, on the other hand, was ecstatic, but I went down to Hot 97 the next day and said nothing about it to anyone. They eventually found out two days later, because a couple of people there had been gunning for the same position and were keeping tabs on the outcome. I remember calmly telling Tracy that I had gotten the show, that Buc and I would be heading down to the Bahamas and I would be quitting my position as a writer for the morning show. She congratulated me and suggested that I not quit and instead take a leave of

absence. I agreed, but in my mind I was ready to keep it moving once again.

This was the countdown to takeoff. Not that I wasn't already successful in my mind, but with this new opportunity, I was determined to open numerous gates to the stratosphere. I can only imagine that when some people stumble into the spotlight they quickly become disenchanted, because their initial perception of notoriety was a silly Xanadu. But ever since I was a kid, I was ready to ejaculate on the face of the world, and that day was now in my sight. I realized that my efforts had paid off, and Buc and I were officially in the big leagues. Although ready for the ride, I still wasn't sure just where I wanted this new franchise to land. Having already experienced the business side of show business, I was only interested in quick financial rewards.

This new mental hybrid felt good on a few levels. I was now able to not just see ahead of me, but around the corner, as well. In my personal world I was becoming philosophically stronger but this wasn't the time or the place to try to introduce anything intelligent into the commercially driven world of media. My position on most matters concerning hip-hop and rap music would for now have to be suppressed. Knowing how to play the game is one thing; actually being on the field is a whole different head. The immaculate bully techniques that I had perfected over the years would also have to be swept under the rug for a little while. Sherry, who educated me in Bryant Park back in the late '80s, always emphasized to me that there was nothing wrong with playing possum until you were sure of yourself. Not only was I still building my philosophy during this time, I knew that Hot 97 was not the place to reveal it.

## Chapter Nine

### The Balance of Pride

IT IS WHAT IT IS, OR MAYBE IT NEVER WAS.  
BUT SOMEHOW IT USED TO BE, BUT THEN ONLY JUST  
BECAUSE. WAS IT A BURNING LIGHT OR WAS IT A  
LITTLE FAME? MAYBE YOU'VE HEARD OF ME, OR  
MAYBE IT'S ALL THE SAME.

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The production staff at MTV moved quickly. One minute we were talking about how to build the show and two days later Buc and I were flying down to the filthy Bahamas to shoot it. I was hyped about this new gig, but I really wasn't interested in the tropics or the heat. I figured I could find some island wench to pass the time with and make things more comfortable. Each day the temperature hit the 100-degree mark, but at times it felt like 115 and was almost

unbearable. We sucked up the heat, located some imported whores from Miami, and started grinding out the shows.

MTV's big gun at the time, Carson Daly, was real cool with us upon our first meeting, even though his style was totally different from ours. I had Ananda Lewis pegged for one of those snotty, stuck-up girls I grew up with, who always seemed to stay clear of me, but she turned out to be a real down-to-earth sweetheart. The scent of her body also kept me fully erect in that sweltering heat. After a couple of weeks, the producers decided they wanted to bring us back to New York and have us shoot the show in a hotel, to create the illusion that we were still in the Bahamas. I was glad we were heading back to the States, because I felt I needed to stay on top of things, in the hopes of getting new publicity -- besides, the heat was really starting to get to me.

We started shooting the show in the Double Tree hotel on Broadway and 46th Street. We would tape five shows in one day, changing outfits every time, and I'd have to write five shows in one week to make sure we had enough to talk about in front of the camera. The pay was weak -- \$1,000 dollars each per week but having access through that platform was a rush. For six months I was totally focused on MTV, watching it the way I did back in the '80s, to see how Buc and I could grow within their structure. But MTV was changing and so was their format. They were programming more shows and playing fewer videos.

Hip-hop was also creeping on a come up, and I just wasn't interested in promoting videos that glorified the slums. Hell, I wasn't originally from the 'hood, so I really didn't give a fuck about ribs, rims, or Rolexes. After our initial six-month stint, the MTV brass reviewed our time slot and picked up our option for another six months. What they planned then was to restructure the show into

a half-hour format and put us on after MTV Jams, the network's R&B show, hosted by singer Tyrese. I stayed in touch with Tracy, not because I cared about Hot 97, but because she reminded me of the loudmouth white girls I grew up with in Jersey—even if she was wrapped up in all that flashy nigger shit. She was cute, too. We never hung out, and I wasn't trying to push up on her or anything like that, but I had been dating prom queens for the last seven years so it was kind of cool to talk to someone close to my age who knew the lyrics to Rush songs.

After being back in New York for six days, I heard from Tracy, who said she was thinking about giving me a show on Sunday nights from 1 to 2 in the morning. It was clear that our MTV fame had made her take a second look at Star & Buc Wild, and I agreed. Our first show on Hot 97 was a one-hour live show in which we took phone calls and talked shit. The "Beat Suite" show was going fine and Buc was really into the whole visual thing at this point. But a high-powered network like MTV isn't going to place itself completely at the mercy of someone like me, so they had a lady from the standards department monitor our show for hot spots. There were a couple of things that they considered a little raw for the mainstream. For instance, they didn't like for me to hold a cigar in my hand while I hosted the show, or for Buc to say "blood-claat" too often. Meanwhile, Tom Green, who also had a show on the network at the time, had a piece of dog crap on his microphone while conducting interviews. Still, we kept grinding. I didn't need to be raw all the time, and I really wanted to challenge myself to write things that could be funny the way Abbott & Costello were funny without having to be provocative.

Because of our MTV work, the Star & Buc Wild name started picking up some real steam. Tracy gave me a call and told me she

might be letting Ed Lover go. He had been there for years and the ratings were way down. She asked me if I would be interested in doing a pre-morning show five days a week, from 5 to 6. She explained that this would be a test to see if I could be creative enough, on a consistent basis, to maybe one day take over the prime-time morning slot -- I said yes. I was anxious to get radio experience under my belt, even if I was still more into the MTV gig. After doing the Sunday night show for three months, Buc Wild, Adario (aka Doc Strange), DX-21, and I started to grind the mics on a pre-morning show. My main objective was to bring news to the forefront of so-called urban radio and to include some harsh- reality potshots at the biggest celebrities. There was already another morning show in place, which maintained the same ratings as Ed Lover's team, but they weren't doing anything but hambone routines and passing around the cornbread. I made it known around the station that I was gunning for that top morning slot and I didn't give a fuck about cutting someone's throat in order to get it.

Hot Dirty Seven's old plantation methods worked for a lot of years, and the fact that they were the only radio station in the Tri-State whose format was 98-percent rap music gave them the leverage to keep their employees and artists in check. I've always been a confident and outspoken person who goes against the grain, not because I can't follow protocol but because I know what works best for me. After five months of the pre-morning show, I got an offer from Judy Ellis, General Manager of Emmis Communications, to do the actual morning show. It was punk money—\$125,000 a year—but it was more than MTV was dishing out. After consulting a few friends I decided that in the long run the radio world would be a better move than MTV, so I grabbed the opportunity. Within weeks of hosting the show on Hot 97, I caught wind that bets were



being taken by employees at the station over how long Buc and I would last. This was, of course, a result of complaisant workers on the plantation who didn't want things stirred up. I socialized little and reinforced our game plan to Buc: "Avoid becoming friends with anybody." As far as the rap artists were concerned, that was the easy part: just don't go to their parties and stay away from their video shoots. That would get in the way of the *Hate*.

Hot 97 would become a positive and a negative for me. Buc and I were seen on MTV and getting very little pay, while this new radio gig was a payday that put me right in the eye of the tornado. There were times when I'd laugh at myself in the mirror before I went to work, saying shit like, "Hey, buddy, do we play their game today or do we make them bend over?" I was not in love with the hip-hop culture and I surely hated 90% of the ignorance that spewed from its mouth. Working at Hot 97, the world of rap started to affect my daily life and outlook. If I said to some one, "I'm going to make a film," they would automatically say, "A rap film?" If I said I was going to a concert, they'd say, "A rap concert?" I was being lumped into the mix because of the color of my skin. That ghetto shit I used to watch on PBS back in Scotch Plains was slowly becoming my reality, and those people's fight had become my fight.

During the first year at Hot 97 I introduced Objective Hate in small rations to my listeners, because I knew that for the last five years, they had been pacified with a slap-happy coon fest. Coon fests go back to the days of slavery, and you can still see them today in most rap videos. What I did every day on Hot 97 was speak what I perceived to be the truth. I looked outside my window, turned on my television, and consumed it all. After I digested it, I spit it back out in a mutated way that only small groups could make sense of. Those who didnt get it, for whatever reason found it

to be funny. I guess that's the real secret to being funny: not *trying* to be funny at all. Real life is fucking hysterical, so you don't really have to embellish a whole lot. You can just put the reality of the world out there, naked for all to see, and say, "Look at this shit right here!" Because I wasn't a fan of the station I had no interest in preserving any of their common waste. I wasn't even interested in interviewing rappers; I just wanted to crack the mic so people could watch the pistol smoke.

Going back and forth between the MTV and Hot 97, it was clear that I needed to move back to lower Manhattan again. I was done with the 'hood, and decided to get an apartment in a swank building down on Avenue A in the East Village. I really liked the place (Red Square) because of its view of the World Trade Center.

At this point, though, I started to get agitated with the MTV situation. The format of the show had changed and we'd evolved into standard VJs, just introducing videos. I didn't want to bell-hop around but I understood the network's position. They were there to promote their engine, not to make anyone a star. It was hard to get a clear answer about what they were trying to do. I understood that they had their own designs, but I had to make sure I kept the Star & Buc Wild thing moving forward at full speed.

I was frustrated. Hip-hop culture and rap music had become top shelf in the industry over the last six years, but all of the station's DJs were ghetto celebrities, not mainstream names. Hell, it wasn't like MTV, where the shows were taped. Radio offered the power of the mic, so what was stopping them? I may have heard Funkmaster Flex's show on Hot 97 a half a dozen times, while riding in other people's cars, but since I hadn't played the promotion game in over five years, I had no interest in hot rap records. When I surfaced to host my morning show on that big garbage can, Flex and I had a

quick clash but soon developed an even quicker understanding and respect for one another. He was a great DJ and one hell of a businessman. Later on, when a new rap station—Power 105.1—entered the marketplace, Flex’s ratings were challenged. He showed me a lot of respect one day in the hallway, after a meeting about my show’s effect on the ratings war. I thought that was big of him.

Angie Martinez was also a fellow co-worker who was a really nice, sweet person, but I just wasn’t interested in anything she had to say. There was a little too much giggling and boot-licking on her show for my taste. As silly as her show was, she balanced out what I was feeding the masses five days a week. Excessively bubbly and probably a decent lay, Angie had a real ghetto-princess aura.

It’s not that I hated Hot 97; I just couldn’t raise the flag for it. I was determined to cut through the sugar-shack shuffling with quickness. In my mind this was the plantation, and soon I started witnessing things: Jay-Z, Mary J. Blige and Sisco’s songs being taken off the air unless they cow-towed to corporate demands. They wouldn’t let Master P in the building for a couple of years because of some alleged threat that one of his friends had made to a station employee. I guess if I had been some rap fanatic or groupie DJ, looking for a few crumbs and scraps, I would have cared a little more, but I was there to promote Star & Buc Wild, period.

Back at MTV, the shows started to feel stale. Certain guests we were having on the show, like Lil’ Zane, made me rethink our direction. I found myself giving this cornball motherfucker a soul-brother hug on camera, and I remember looking at Buc as if to say, “What the fuck are we doing?” We were haters on public access and now we were bell-hoppin’ like the negroes on BET. I started feeling that the radio show could be a special platform for my business. I began feeling that we weren’t going to progress quickly enough on MTV.

I started talking to my 20-year-old girlfriend Daisy about everything. As young as she was, she understood my drive and vision. It's beautiful when you have someone to back you up and tell you, "Hey, baby, you're not crazy." One night, on the balcony of my new apartment overlooking the Twin Towers, I told Daisy that I was thinking about leaving MTV. My plan was to stick it out for a year and then go to California in pursuit of making films. She agreed. As crazy as it sounds, that was a powerful moment for me. Here I had this 20-year-old girl who's right at the heart of the hip-hop generation, and rather than being impressed with the fact that her boyfriend was on TV, she said to go for it.

Three weeks later, Buc and I left MTV. The scheduled guest for our last day was Ice Cube, and he was two hours late. We had been up since four that morning and we were exhausted. Sitting in the dressing room it just hit me: "I'm done here!" I turned to Buc and said, "Hey, man, I'm ready to raise the fuck up. What about you?" Buc smiled and said, "Let's do it." So we walked out of the dressing room and went to the center of the filming area, where there were about fifteen people. I announced to everyone, "Hey, people, thank you, thank you, thank you. It's been real, but we're gonna be moving on now." It was that simple. There was no argument; I told the producer that we'd simply had enough. During our grand finale Ice Cube showed up late with a frown on his face, and we just walked past him in the hallway and said nothing.

Inside it hurt to leave the sexy video monster that in the '80s had me strung out like a junkie, but MTV had changed and I didn't care for its new facelift. I missed Adam & The Ants, The Cure, Whitesnake, Modern English, The Fixx, Iron Maiden, The Jam, Prince, The Clash, and my main man on the trigger, J.J. Jackson. Yes, that era was long gone, and yes, time waits for no one, but I just

wasn't willing to leave behind the songs of my youth for redundant growls of ballin and flossin bullshit.

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What exactly is Hate? Hate is intense hostility and aversion. If you ask proud bottom dwellers in the hood, hate represents someone or a group who wants to prevent you from getting your shine on. There's hatred of homosexuals, based on the belief that they have low moral standards, or sometimes based on a hidden desire of self-indulgence. There's subliminal hate, which can be harbored by those who pretend to be your closest friends but want nothing more than to see your downfall. There's hatred between people that can, after getting to know one's points of view or character, actually reformulate itself into grand respect and admiration. There's also righteous hate, which promotes the exclusion from or the acceptance of a herd. There's class hate, gender hate, and social hate—the list goes on and on. Although some would like to believe that man is advancing toward a divine pinnacle, conceptually he can never evade the beams that, sadly, support him.

Everyone hates someone, something, some condition, some perspective or some fair decision, but ultimately it's the respect of another human being that establishes one's true character and intellect. The only true mental vindication in life is respect. This form of hate is often confused with the overused cliché of love, but love is itself always confused with celebration of the flesh. There's hate of a situation, with the desire to uplift those drowning in the sea of despair. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, former leader of The Nation Of Islam, used that form of hate to replenish the low self-esteem of the American Negro during a time of great need in African American history. I'm not a Muslim, but some of the teach-

ings of this messenger to the black man cannot be denied. There are those, black and white, who would like to dismiss the Honorable Elijah Muhammad as nothing more than a cult leader, but in reality he has done more for the state of black America than Oprah Winfrey, Spike Lee, Martin Luther King, Jr., Michael Eric Dyson, and Harry Belafonte all put together.

From time to time people will make the statement that it's easy to hate but hard to love. Here's my response to them. The vulnerable, reckless, and sometimes self-damaging position of love gets stumbled upon every day. "Love" was once described in our dictionaries as sexual intercourse. Fortunately man has evolved away from this barbaric mind state. Although hate is an antonym for love, the fully embraced concept of being romantic or having intense feelings walks a fine line of selflessness. Love is so misconstrued that without knowing what constitutes feelings of desire and need, how can one truly claim to admire another? True love develops only through a process of understanding and honor. As for hate, sadly we all exercise it daily, without realizing that it's sewn into our subconscious as a morally false and righteous way of thinking, making the act itself almost undetectable. To educate, inform, and enlighten by way of Objective Hate is the hardest task to undertake. Remember, the key word is *Objective*: without rational reasoning, all bets are off. The study of hatred itself can be easily explored, consumed, and revealed, but it's often confused with idolizing or used for amusement purposes.

Hate is a strong word, and overdosing on reckless hate can prevent someone from reaching his or her full potential. I'm not a psychologist but I do believe that hate, like all other human emotions, helps us grow. And let's be clear with regard to the term "Hate." Just like the founding fathers of America, I decided to exploit something for

my own selfish benefit. The fact that I am of color and have decided to speak out with no concern for damnation often shocks people and leads them to the assumption that I'm "just an angry black man." But let's dig deep. I have true admiration for my friends and their achievements, but am I wrong to not be concerned about mental vampires? I have prosperous relationships with women, but am I non-committal because I choose not to grandstand at the altar? Although I'm motivated by my own selfish reality, does that mean I view the metaphysically given as having no purpose? I see the world as a beautiful place, and mankind as intelligent yet barbaric creatures intent on their own self-destruction. Somewhere in the middle I pause, and I find small pleasures to occupy my time. One might wonder, am I happy? Well, what is the meaning of being happy? Overwhelmed? In a state of vulnerability? If that's the case then every time you sit on the toilet and relieve yourself you're happy. I live to be in control of my judgments and actions.

\*Foot note: Objective Hate would be baseless if it sought shelter via the race card. Like all men I make hateful statements but if one views me as a black man rather than simply a man, then I have been judged wrongly.

## Chapter Ten Enigma Codes

A KILLING IN THE ALLEY, A LYNCHING IN THE FIELD,  
A SCRATCHING ON THE SURFACE, A QUESTION OF  
SURREAL. A SHACKLE FOR THE WEARY, A THEATER  
FOR THE MIND, A MEASURE OF PERCEPTION AND A  
HATER FOR THE TIME.

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1. **Nigger** - This word has an interesting history. Once upon a time it was merely used to describe someone's character: lazy, ignorant, and unmotivated. But over the centuries, it's become a racial slur, and now, most tragically, a term of endearment for many blacks: "My nigga," or "Niggas around my way." Growing up, I didn't



really pay attention to the word. It simply did not define me in any significant way. But today the word has become so prevalent, you hear it at least once a week. That number increases tenfold if you happen to work in the entertainment world, as I do.

My feelings on the word have shifted, for various reasons, over time. But particular experiences have helped solidify my feelings about the term. I remember going to see the film *Any Given Sunday*, directed by Oliver Stone. The idea for the film was good, and it starred LL Cool J and one my favorite actors, Al Pacino. Most of the film centers on the trials and tribulations of a white coach (Pacino) who tries to guide an upstart black quarterback (Jamie Foxx) toward winning the championship. The film is chock full of images of men of color running up and down the field, like runaway slaves. One shot, in the locker room, shows the white female owner walking through a crowd of her players as they stand there, naked in the locker room, their cocks hanging out. I guess Stone was really trying to push some racial-taboo buttons with this film. I was generally enjoying the acting—until Oliver Stone presented a montage set to a track by DMX in which the chorus is nothing but the word “niggaaaaa.” As the song plays, the black football players are shown practicing, working out, and running game plays on the field. It reminded me of a scene from *Roots* in which the slaves are in the cotton field, but here, instead of old negro spirituals about a better world, we were hearing a chant of “nigga.” It was as if the white coach was working his slaves out, and the slaves enjoyed it so much that they were chanting their own destruction and degradation. I didn’t go to see this film in a theater in the ’hood; I was right in the middle of Manhattan, and the feeling I had during that sequence was pure anger, mixed with embarrassment for the black man—DMX—who put the song together. If you are not engaged

in satire, and if you are a forward-thinking individual, what would possess you to construct a song in which the chorus is a silly chant of “niggaaaaaa,” over and over again.

I had the same feeling another time, when I walked into a club and heard a Jay-Z record with an almost identical chorus: “niggaaaaa!” Maybe it’s just that the white man has enslaved black minds so perfectly that today, even though we know the word does nothing but hurt the social fiber of the black world, we continue to wallow in its use. I don’t agree with the oft-stated notion—by black folks, of course—that using the word means taking some of the power out of it and reclaiming something. What are you reclaiming? The grand old days of the South, when your ancestors had to worry about getting strung up on trees and burned alive if they looked at a white woman the wrong way? It’s pure ignorance and it shows a lack of thinking about the long run. The future, after all, is the last thing your average young black rapper is thinking about. So, since most young black boys and girls now look to rappers for social guidance, we have a situation in which the blind lead the blind. I guess I’ve realized that someone like Stone has his own racial context, a context that is so inadvertently steeped in the history of America, Stone doesn’t even know when he is or isn’t making a racist or racially insensitive statement.

For the record, I started the J-Lo controversy on Hot 97. Listening to the song “I’m Real,” featuring Ja Rule, I heard Jennifer Lopez say, “I tell them niggas ‘mind they biz’ but they don’t hear me, though.” When I pointed it out to the listening audience, the response was mixed, but most were in favor of stamping her ghetto passport. Most people of color will always take that foot up the ass from some non-colored person and choose to sweep it under the rug. This may have been a survival tactic from back in the days of slavery—but

this was the twenty-first century. For a couple of months as I did my radio show, I felt the need to keep the issue on the table. With a large platform comes a small shred of responsibility, and I found this point to be worthy of my rants. Mentally dead Negroes excused Jennifer Lopez and her pathetic outcry about being from the block. But the five percent of us who are conscious know that her actions had damaging repercussions on young children of color. Lopez, who appeals primarily to young Latino and white kids, gave her audience a green light to use and manipulate that racial slur at will. Boldly Caucasian hustlers of the ghetto, the Quentin Tarantinos of the world, will claim that growing up around blacks in the 'hood gives them license to use the word. Sorry, folks, but being colored is not a state of mind. It's not about whether Lopez had the right to profit and grow as an artist, but prior to this stunt she was a proud, positive promoter of Puerto-Rican pride. If Whitney Houston had recorded a track called "Hangin' With my Spic Friends," what would Lopez's reaction be? Besides, when people wave their ethnic pride in your face so boldly, they should stand accountable for the slightest infringement upon the historical value of others.

**2. His–Story** - The American Negro is one of the most creative creatures on the planet. He's given birth to the blues, rock n' roll, jazz, and hip-hop, just to name a few. Over the centuries he and his offspring have been victim to countless acts of hatred. From his horrid beginnings he has had to adapt, improvise, and dehumanize himself, all for the sake of survival. But survival at what cost? Thanks to fluctuating economic trade and the cost of the Civil War, the American Negro was set free, like a dog needed to attack the other side in a street battle.

Using shameful reasoning, people of color continue to gain jobs and opportunities in this country under the insulting umbrella of affirmative action. Unfortunately, the man of color did not achieve his freedom in the U.S. by way of bloodshed, and that is one of the biggest reasons why to this day he is not respected. The reality of racism in America has become one of the most beautifully motivating factors of my adult life. Because of that reality, I must be on guard, I must collect my thoughts, I must be awake when the world is asleep, and I must be in defense mode at all times.

When a man of color speaks of pain and torment in America he is often told to let it go, as if his doctrine is invalid. The realization of this fact would become essential to my process of defying the codes I spoke about earlier. I believe that the American Negro should be a martyr for distress. His ongoing Holocaust by far is the most dramatic of them all, and shows little chance of recoil. Just as the Jew can forgive but teaches his young to never forget, I feel that the suffering of the American Negro needs more promotion from within its own community. This necessity for growth is becoming a great burden to the American Negro, as he yearns for trinkets and the biggest plate of fixins.

Aside from himself, the colored man's worst enemy is the scatter-brained, non-solution liberal. The liberal's efforts are merely a ploy to keep people of color at the mercy of whites. Rap music and hip-hop culture are full of these types. A premise of the liberal's hustle is the notion that the Negro is uninformed and needs to be enlightened by mental breast-feeding. I don't hate liberals for being conniving and deceptive; in fact, I admire their agenda. Had I been an Englishman back in the day, I probably would have been one of the first to suggest colonizing the West Indies. FYI: Objectivism doesn't advocate alliances to groups based on color, but being that

I have been the victim of cowardly racial hate, I feel obligated to offer my two-cents for today's new Negro leaders. Just for fun, let's explore the world of a Nigger lover. If a person of non-color has relations with a person of color, is he or she a Nigger lover? Well, based on some American Negroes' glorification of Ebonics, I guess the answer would be yes. A term used by whites to deter intermingling with the black race, its true meaning runs deeper. True Nigger lovers, who can also be of color, aspire to intertwine with beings of lower standards out of sheer delight and self-hate. They are often confused and self destructive, and they carry an inner rage toward those who want to excel and live well. Unless you are cut from a prejudice cloth yourself, you should not be overly bothered by their mass presence.

It's the culture-hustling Nigger lover who poses the biggest threat to the young and impressionable. Not always but usually white, more than often crafty and coy, culture-hustling Nigger lovers—unlike the J-Los and liberal pessimists of the world—tend to be outspoken about racial issues but hide and distort their own ethnicities. These missionary thugs also rely heavily on the financial fabrication of one or both parents, so that the charade wont be spoiled. My philosophy (Objective Hate) does not condemn culture-hustling Nigger lovers who use their intellect for capital advancement (I'm a capitalist myself) but one should try to take notice of them and occasionally question their motives and intentions.

**3. Hate** - There are many styles, forms, and incarnations of this natural instinct. A dissertation might require some drawn-out, impressive foreplay on words to explain its origins. But this is not a how-to manual, nor are its pages constructed to be compared to

primitive assumptions or speculative delusions of grandeur. Here and now the most significant, damaging form of hate to detect is still the father of them all: pure hate. Its foundation lies on a twisted ideology, and the sad belief in a righteous premise. Although self-hatred ranks high on the list of psychological defeats, its widespread promotion, which is reversible, by the way, often finds itself in a wrestling match with individual self-definition.

There are many examples of hatred in today's world. Although films, music, and suspect art may play a great part in the moral influence on a weak mind, hate can be sullen and ineffective until acted upon. Something as simple as someone holding a door for you can be a form of passive hate: (1) The door has been held for you so that you would not be in a position to walk behind them; (2) The door was held in order to see your response and to possibly confirm that you are of savage breeding; (3) The door was held for you in the hopes that you can be enlightened and civilized. Only ten percent of the time is a door held open for you out of genuine motives.

Since the dawn of life, hate has primarily been expressed through acts of greed and brute theft. Through the annals of time it's been manifested in torturous beliefs, mystical practices, racial segregation, and philosophical notions. Today's hateful agendas are tricky, but when carefully observed -- very transparent. If it is known that you are a Jew and people of the Christian faith are persistent in inviting you to their house of worship, then those people regard your faith as inaccurate. If a person claims to respect your intellect but suggests a trip to a psychic, that person has already declared your potential to be limited.

More examples of hate are these days passed off in slick, humorous, and clever displays. Nonetheless they are just as deadly as

those performed in the Paleolithic days. For examples, tune into any episode of “Friends,” “The Cosby Show,” or “Seinfeld.” One would assume that the classic show “All in The Family” would personify this view, but in fact it was one of the few programs in the history of television that had a reasonable outlook on the innocence of hate. Archie Bunker was ignorant and flawed, yes, but not to the degree of extreme virtues, as were the presumptuous educated idiots on the other shows. In addition, when revealed in displays of casual banter, hate can be one of the most uplifting stimulants known to man. With the understanding of history’s moral contingencies, one should expect that race, economic, gender, and class-based hate will always find a price tag amongst the greedy.

There have been many notable periods in the history of hate. Although each of these centuries was a stepping-stone to modern society, the great minds of those times were often viewed as evil and looked upon as heretics. The Copernican Revolution was monumental to the development of man’s thought process, but the struggle to enlighten others by way of logic and reason often meant paying a price with one’s life, or imprisonment. Hatred of those who dare to think outside the box is more than a pastime; it’s a deep-rooted emotion that boils with all intention of banishing the slightest intrusion. One of the most encouraged perspectives in society today involves discrediting the man of color from any position of rational thought or freethinking. Occasionally a crab escapes from the barrel and finds its way to independence. But the sprint alone is sure to be categorized as a dash of contradictions and loathing, rather than hateful interpretations of the crowd. Unlike the young, cynical textbook masturbators of the world, I have acquired knowledge and wisdom through my travels, which gives me a firm grip and a much more clairvoyant sense of the world.



**4. The Black Armageddon** – There are many levels to be concerned with in regard to this visible reality. I'd like to present one from a surrogate tribal position. The multicultural cesspool that, in the eyes of black Bible thumpers, would seem to be a good thing could actually be the undoing of the American Negro's already slow progress. For the same reasons white liberal females enjoy fornicating abroad with third-world bucks who pose no social or economical threat, the American Negro needs to now guard the plantation more vigilantly than ever. With the rise of outsourcing and our acceptance of foreign crimes of passion, Negro issues will, in the eyes of the American government, become less of a concern and more of a burden.

While a large number of black males now use homosexuality as a way to advance and be deemed non-threatening, in-house armchair revolutionaries are importing new versions of Emma Goldman to be used in the not-so-distant future. This high-wire act with no net will actually be the greatest challenge that the American Negro has faced on this soil. Not only will his schools be threatened with social extinction, but his lack of "do for self" commitment will leave him high and dry, ripe for the pruning and ready for the plucking.

Right after September 11, 2001, Arab business owners in urban areas of the U.S. made a conscious effort to address American Negroes as "my brother." Up until that point, if you even touched a magazine on the Arab shop owner's rack to check its price you were told, "Please don't touch." Whereas white shop owners once upon a time gave Negro families store credit to help make it until payday, now the Negro gets no credit from the Arab corner store and no chance of packing bags at the local Korean market. Just as pertinent, the destructive hip-hop culture not only offers no olive branch to its feuding members, but has no agenda of concern to the

national majority. Although hip-hop has created many jobs and new opportunities for young Negroes, its long-term effects are starting to show the same foreclosure results as Harlem Brownstones.

Oddly enough, the embracing and guarding of America's home front cannot be a joint Negro effort. Usually the theme of separatism spawns from different variations of fear and ignorance, but in this case not only has the man of color earned his right to make risky choices for his preservation, but he must now detach, disconnect, divide, and split from ghetto vampires, just for the sake of his own improvement.

You don't have to be an advocate of violence in order to conceive of this concept. The mere fact that I'm pondering the idea here should be proof enough that black unity is a thing of the past. Gone are the Dick Gregorys and Stokely Carmichaels, only to be replaced by the shucking of MC New Nigga Sha and the We Get High Crew. Lost in translation are the memories of Angela Davis and Theresa Graves; they're now replaced by BET's Friday Night Freak Bitches. This one you can't pin on the teachers; they're just the recipients of this slum-glorifying torch. At one point in history a Negro would have fought you over a pig foot and a bottle of beer, but now he wants to blow your brains out for a joy ride in your new BMW. There are probably a million books you could reference and shake a stick at in regard to racism and slavery, but what's least talked about are the elements of black self hatred, combined with a lust for the new-nigga agenda.

A buddy of mine once made a comment to me about Africans killing each other in their country because the white man once gave them guns. Without even knowing the depths of this dumb statement, he was implying that the Negro's mind is akin to that of a child: incapable of knowing right from wrong. But the reality is

that even the most isolated rain-forest savage has a system of values and a comprehension of morals. These facts being evident, it would appear that today's man of color is running out of excuses for his quagmire, here in America.

If I were a Christian, I'd offer you a verse from the Good Book to aid you in your discomfort. But since I am a non-believer, I can only point to the concrete evidence of man's evil actions. Although the man of color is not the only one guilty of hating within his race, he does seem more inclined to overplay his role, through showboating and self-degrading antics. The Caucasian man, on the other hand, expresses his racial hatred by way of mutilation and interbreeding.

The much-needed Black Armageddon could do wonders for health care, community outreach programs, and the unemployment rate. It could even greatly enhance scholastic skills. One thing's for certain: if someone told the President of the United States that five million Negroes wanted to face off with each other and settle some differences, I'm sure he would say, "It's a free country. Let them handle their business." The long-overdue Black Armageddon would not be open to the national press or local news, because it would lack someone to honor or give an award to. The Black Armageddon would offer no red-carpet walk or live performances by the latest rap or R&B sensations. The Black Armageddon would not scream the call of atonement to lure in the mindless and downtrodden, but would instead be promoted as the new salvation, with all intentions to separate. The Black Armageddon would open its doors to hecklers, heretics, and homosexuals, and be billed as the most radically aggressive mission of enlightenment. The Black Armageddon, though subject to fallout and possible fatigue, could not be perceived as anything but progressive and constructive.

Wait a minute—you didn't think I was talking about a *physical* Black Armageddon, did you? No, no, no. Imagine that, a modern-day Negro who'd actually stand up and fight for a cause without getting a paycheck for it. No, I'm talking about a forum in which men of color would gather and be obligated to conceptualize, rationalize, and produce valid solutions for his so-called brothers in the struggle. A forum in which the weak would willingly submit themselves to a five-day Nigga Detox Program. A convention in which no tithes are collected and no double-breasted suits would be permitted. A gathering in which morals and reason, instead of religion, would be promoted as the basis of raising children. An expose' in which rehabilitation is not a mercy chant of hope but a constant theme of conditioning. It must also be said that this Black Armageddon needs no support or involvement from nosy white folks who feel the need to lend a helping hand. And there's just one more thing: none of the speakers at this Black Armageddon could be actors, ministers, athletes, or entertainers.

\*Foot note: When served a heaping portion of chocolate-thunder lust, the white American liberal female can be the most dedicated, sexually psychotic, fun-loving superho on the planet.

## Chapter Eleven Generation Hate

CAPTIVATE THE MOMENT AND BURN THE HANDS  
OF TIME. PUSH ME TO THE WATER AND WATCH ME  
DRAW THE LINE. PUMP IT THROUGH YOUR WINDOW  
AND TELL YOU HIT THE DECK. IF I RULED THE  
WORLD, I'D MAKE THEM SUCK THE TECH.

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Just because you don't have respect for something or someone doesn't mean you shouldn't approach it with caution. Hot 97 was that something. As wicked as it was, it had the young savages in the Tri-State area in a headlock. Fred Buggs, aka Buggsy, whose radio presence is well documented, was one of the few people I socialized with at Emmis Communications. We'd speak often about the new generation of wanna-be gangsters and hos, and he would

inform me about the politics of radio. Although my reasons for being there were strictly capitalistic, I played the protocol game and entertained my fellow employees with light conversation and Kool-Aid smiles. The mere fact that I had infiltrated this corporation based on a dare from my friend Adario would become a real laughing matter to he and I. Adario, who spent five years as Editor-In-Chief of *The Source* magazine and then left to pursue filmmaking, would now call me for hip-hop progress updates.

Because of the fact that I had come so far from pimping bitches on the streets of 11th Avenue, I was not trying to sink back into a mental state of bottom dwelling. To me that's what hip-hop's bling-bling era was mainly about, and I just couldn't relive those years. When I first cracked the mic on the Star & Buc Wild Morning Show, I felt a little uncomfortable. Not because I wasn't up to the task, but because in some small way I felt I had betrayed my teenage heroes, Bernard Edwards and Nile Rodgers. Yes, over the years Chic had benefited from all the rap sampling, but I was still angry about that "Rapper's Delight" shit, and I felt as if I had become part of the conspiracy.

This log of my time at Hot 97 is not a list of dramatic events, celebrity encounters, and inside gossip. Rap-world lunacy does not define me, nor does it motivate me to any thought-provoking heights. But for those of you who are curious about this particular journey, I'll try to accommodate. People often wonder whether I am the same person in life as I am on the radio. Well, first let me take you deeper into the bowels of my hatred. My objective reality and my system of reasoning does not support accepting success as a fluke, or making excuses for achievements of the mind. Considering the sick, growing ideologies of racism and greed here in America, how could I afford to pretend or put forth a misrepresentation of

myself? Even the Buc Wild character that I created was true to form and outspoken for its time.

Being a proud creature of habit and a relentless solo act, Hot 97 would become the biggest victim of my bullying -- total conquest at any cost. In that battle for power I would take no prisoners and offer no truce. I had concluded from the start that Tracy, nice girl that she was, couldn't program a VCR on a Friday night. But as with any war, you have to win over those you need to join you in battle. I needed to know who would without question co-sign my venom. So I started by verbally abusing upper Management, to see who would really ride with me and become part of my upcoming mutiny.

Judy Ellis was General Manager of Emmis Communications. I actually liked that gutsy, tough lady. She reminded me of the mothers whose daughters I dated back in Scotch Plains, who could recognize that I was a good kid with no good in me. We bumped heads a few times but when it came time to ante up, she always went into that big vault and never came back empty handed. I made a point of smiling whenever we spoke.

Tracy Cloherty was VP of Programming. My relationship with this alluring, tobacco-breath chick had its ups and downs. Although she knew that my methods, unorthodox as they were, brought her the biggest morning ratings she ever claimed, she hated the fact that she was losing power to a rogue outsider. Tracy also had an explosive, vicious streak that was childlike and unprofessional. It would be too easy for me to say that she was a racist, because she was actually a Nigger Lover of a rare variety. My business manager at the time, Wyatt Cheek, informed me that once when he was pressing Ellis for more money, Cloherty actually frowned and walked out of the meeting. That would be the sole reason I distanced myself from her. When someone tries to stop you from earning what you



rightfully deserve, that person has proven to be unworthy of your respect. I couldn't blame her for being a student of in-house corporate training, but make no mistake, my agenda has never involved compromise.

At the risk of sounding totally insane, I cannot credit myself enough for raising the flat stock of Hot 97 and pushing the limits of realism in the number one market. When I'm approached by people today who are trying to get into the field of leaches and scum (radio), although they may be sheep for the slaughter, I do try to offer sound advice. Yes, everyone wants recognition in life but the real question is, are you qualified to have it? Some find acclaim in competition, some strive only for the moment, some live for the thrill of a battle, while others sign on for a silly fantasyland.

Either way, I'm thankful to those who find merit in my execution on the microphone. Having always been loud and out-spoken like my father, I guess it just comes naturally - not to be confused with a gift. With the rise of real power (not to be confused with meaningless fame) one can only expect an abrupt end or total annihilation. No stranger to street logic, I was prepared and eager for one of the two. During my time at Hot 97, my personal life was starting to suffer. My new schedule, combined with my grueling work ethic, made it hard for me to have the type of relationships I'd had in the past. And because of the fact that I was developing my philosophy, women in various social scenes often assumed that I was vicious, mean, and unapproachable. Not one to backtrack and look up old girlfriends, I simply kept working. Trying to convince someone on a date that you're in the media but not of the media-mind can sometimes be a futile effort. With my work being my highest value, I paused at times and found small pleasures of fun with some of the female guests who came to my show.

**Eve Jeffers aka Eve** - With the right approach this could be wifey, but you could never cheat on her or there would be no forgiveness -- beautiful and sincere.

**Faith Evans aka Faith** - You would have to devote a lot of attention to this Queen. She's been scorned, but it would be well worth the cause -- shy and sexy.

**Mya Harrison aka Mya** - The sex would probably be dyn-o-mite, but not enough to justify a trip to the nearest jeweler - cute and pleasant.

**LisaRaye McCoy** – An exotic empress and the type of woman you could share your dreams with. But be careful, she knows the difference between a man and a boy -- classy and elegant.

**Amerie Rogers aka Amerie** – What you see is what you get, and what you'd get would be an exceptional woman well worth giving your heart and money to - honest and inspiring.

**Ashanti Douglas aka Ashanti** – The grand prize with an electric smile. Young and intriguing, but if you're not game-tight she could break you in half -- dangerous and pretty.

**Inga Marchand aka Foxy Brown** – I'm sure under all the ignorant outbursts and low-grade behavior, she's got some really good qualities. I just couldn't find any -- too much work.

**Kimberly Jones aka Lil' Kim** – The total package. The sex and friendship is probably awesome but be prepared for mood swings and endless backtalk -- trustworthy and loving.

**Jill Scott** – After hours of pampering, committing and devotion, you'd still find yourself going to the store at 2am for ice cream and sugar wafers -- self-absorbed and ungrateful.

**Cynthia Loving aka Lil' Mo** – A cute bundle of excitement and a good businesswoman. If you could accept the fact that there's no taming this type, you could find yourself as a well-kept man -- jovial and genuine.

**Heather Headley** – Wars were once fought over worldly women like this. She has a glowing smile, the hands of a goddess, and the presence of Eva Peron -- breathtaking and captivating.

**Lori Rambough aka Sommore** - This up-front and personal diva has a radiant smile and the aura that makes a man fall in love. Fun-filled but not to be toyed with - sexy and romantic.

**Katrina Taylor aka Trina** – If you got sent to the penitentiary for five years I'm sure she'd be faithful. But if you betrayed her she would probably whoop your sister and mama's ass - seductive and serious.

**India Simpson aka India.Arie** – This diamond in the rough has a keen sense for a weak man. Culturally proud and focused but probably the type that likes to be choked before reaching a climax – witty and spontaneous.

My destiny to possess real power was already being implemented and Hot 97's fate to be man handled was like a slow-moving, undetected cancer finding its way through the body. The effects of our fallout would later prove just how powerful and dominant I really was. In any dictatorship, gang, religion, or democracy, the greatest power is influence. Money, often referred to as the root of all evil, is merely a tool that consummates acts of sex, violence, betrayal and or labor. Realizing my position and power would also be a rude awakening to the fact that I was right in the middle of the most proud-to-be-ignorant generation. Unlike members of Jack Kerouac's Beat Generation, who were for the most part trying to define themselves, today's hoodlums are nothing more than tattooed, materialistic extremists. I'm not concerned with others claiming they coined the term "Generation Hate" before I did, because I'm not trying to be labeled as the father of its plague. When rock n' roll music grew up in the '50s, it drove a wedge between teens and parents, but over the years the term "classic rock" would protect the dignity of those who pioneered it. When hip-hop music arrived in the late '70s, fewer than eight years passed before the label "old-school rap" was introduced to the consumer. This terminology established one of the biggest, fastest turnover rates in music marketing history. Suddenly it wasn't cool to be a part of your older brother or father's history anymore. No, you had to have the latest sneakers, gold chains, or gold teeth and your sex appeal was enhanced by a beeper or cell phone. Out with Mike Douglas; in with Jerry Springer. Motherfuck Olivia Newton John; how about some Girls Gone Wild? Generation Hate is millions of kids in America, white and black, who want a shortcut to the luxuries of life, doing little or no work to get there. Every loser with a degree suddenly feels qualified to write a 2,000-page novel about

foreign policy and the crimes of the American government. This new phenomenon spawns raging lunatics disguised as social intellectuals.

With the arrival of the “Morton Downey Jr. Show” in 1987 (loud, rude, and reckless) the rumblings of Generation Hate were officially set in motion, and then solidified in 1988 by the tragic death of Jean-Michel Basquiat -- a glowing matador on the fringe of greatness. As bottled water and physical fitness became the national trend, no one felt compelled to replace or even repair the screen door in the back of the house. Hip-hop culture latched on to this stockpile of bullshit and quickly traded in its golden age of conscious enlightenment for Mafia surnames and shiny sets of baller rims. This is generation hate, the standard of foolishness, hosted by Lindsay Lohan and DJ Who Gives a Fuck. The setting where fast food isn’t fast enough and a black homo thug or a poor white slob will show you their raw ass on the internet and classify it as art.

Russell Simmons, whom I like as a person, was only one beacon of hope during the birth of Generation Hate, in spite of the fact that he dresses like a 15 year old. But not even his success has been enough to prolong the inevitable. With the emergence of rappers N.W.A. and the installment of soundscan, (digital tracking) the playing field of modern music shifted. This is not to say that hip-hop culture is solely responsible for generation hate, but it has inadvertently played a major role in warranting its rise. Thanks to its blind-leading-the-blind, overexposed packaging and promotion, the daughters of Rock & Roll fans all across the country are no longer deprived of a stiff black cock on a Friday night.

Still in its early stages, the hate scene is picking up new recruits every minute of the hour. Hackers/bloggers have replaced writers; the Internet has challenged mystique and poets are no longer trust-fund babies but rather desktop publishers with a keen sense

of advertising. This whirlwind, chaotic effect has not only cut the umbilical cord of imagination, but its price tag is dropping faster than a bargain blowout at Macy's. For those who ask what's the difference between an objective hater and a pupil of generation hate. For one, the reckless pupil, unconcerned with being objective, can tell you all about today's headlines, the hottest clubs, the newest drug, the latest craze, the bitchin' songs and their glory days over spring break. The Objective Hater, who may have stumbled in the swamp a few times, can draw you a map of real success: the deadliest drugs, the darkest alleys, the dirtiest tricks, and the difference between revolution and anarchy.

But generation hate really stands the best chance of prevailing. Aside from endless semi-celebrities without perks, generation hate has produced a new brand of social pedigree. Unlike the modernist of the past, who extracted from pop culture and pornography, today's disciples of doom dine on skewed information, lies, and havoc in multiple forms. On the outside it would appear that mass media has heightened our commitment to socially advancing, but in fact our pursuit for thrill-kills has spawned more disingenuous collective behavior. Also, in our present state of misguided free-for-all, everything from young boys in briefs to underage girls on the runways of Milan is now considered to be in vogue.

People often confuse being objective with being contemptuous. Let me help you distinguish. To be contemptuous is to feel or express contempt, and contempt is the state of mind of one who despises. To be Objective is to treat or deal with facts without distortion of personal feelings or prejudices. Being objective has nothing to do with mockery or ridicule, nor does it coincide with the falsified mysticism of the mentally vulnerable. So with the authenticity of Hate and the acceptance of these two realities, I've got more faith



in the arrival of Darth Vader than the second coming of Jesus. While the business of religion is masqueraded as uplifting and is constantly revised, citing claims of important insights overlooked, the business of hate presents the most graphic and convincing line through mazes of so-called Biblical prophecies. The business of hate is the no-frills version of faith, minus the comedy routines and self-degrading traditions. It's a college course without the air conditioning and the Ivy-League sarcasm. The business of hate is the cold, sharp whisper that there is no art of the deal, only survival of the fittest and the process of elimination. What I don't want you to take from this emporium on my life and philosophy is the notion that Objective Hate is some form of therapeutic pastime. For me it's the most rational mind-frame to have in our era of confusion, dumbing down and mediocrity.

While some would like to believe that religion gave man his sense of calm and poise, its important to know that true peace and harmony derives from conceptual integrations, coherent objectives, and absolute conclusions. In addition, there must be traditions of hate in the struggles of progressive formations. If there weren't, we'd still be in the Paleolithic Era. Rather than waste time on multiple Gods, human sacrifices and hallucinogenic rituals, let me just say that bright colors, signs of separatism and monuments of suffering will always make meager minds question their sense of reality. Important to understanding the paralysis of hateful intentions is the constant defining of ethical behavior. With all claims of enlightenment, or in my case awareness, a philosophy must present a manner of critique and a system of solutions.

To say that one strives to be an individual is the starting point from which objective viewpoints often materialize. Subjective rambling is just a shallow defense, possessing no real advantage or

gain. My journey, rugged as it was, not only prepared me but also armed me for this proud day of declaration. My system of choices, though not always good, has supplemented my early weak focus and now assisted my stance of qualified boasting. Furthermore, it's the posture of ego that's often confused with the admission of the recklessly inspired. And the gloating of one's self holds no candle to the mass theme of divine torture. Religion, the self-chosen bastard child of hate, is passed off as an act of piety and simplicity, under the delusion of being a debtor to a mystical force. Its real objective is a global zombie order for humanity.

Before I forget, I would like to shed light on my gripes with and stabs at America, the beautiful. In the same breath of cutting her down, I fully assume the role of her lover, friend, pimp, and now father figure. I cuddle her when she's lost, I kick her when she's down, and I protect her when she's sleeping. I also ignore her whorish behavior and I excuse her discreet abortions. Our relationship is a bond like none other.

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We'll come back to hate later, but for the most part my radio experience and re-immersion in the hip-hop jungle was just what I needed. And this corporate dance, with its share of suspensions and shouting matches with management, could only sharpen my teeth for my next big bite out of life.

After the Aaliyah situation at Hot 97, those who were harboring envy and animosity toward me finally came out of the closet. The Kool-Aid smiles in the hallway were replaced with shoulder shrugs and astonished looks. Rumor also had it that one of the primary on-air personalities at the station even went so far as to counsel

Aaliyah's mother to put pressure on the advertisers of my show, in the hopes of getting me fired. Others spoke softly in my presence, with the look of whipped puppy dogs. They all had hate in their blood but not pure hate -- the hate of a child who gets stripped of a toy or teased with a favorite food. The type of hate that's powerless and not well thought out. The inept hate that implies passion and can easily be pacified with a treat, a prize or some smooth talk.

The day I came back on the airwaves, I got right back to business. I told my audience, "It's gonna take more than a bunch of salty Negroes up in Harlem to get me up off this big Jew engine." That was one of the code names I used for Hot 97 -- I made a real impact with that comment. The next day, the *New York Post* did a half-page story on me headlined, "Aaliyah DJ is Bad News for the Jews." At this time my ratings were just bubbling up under Howard Stern's. Everyone in New York City (hell, across the country) was waiting to see what I was going to say upon my return. But I have to be clear: for me there was no storm; this was what I wanted and what hip-hop needed. I knew what I had to do to resurrect that Titanic they were calling a radio station, and guess what? It worked. The *Post* story came out on September 11, 2001, and the Jewish Defense League was gearing up to come at me. At that point I felt good about the tremor. Everything was on and poppin'. Then, early in the morning, the world stood still, and my whole hell-up-in-Harlem/JDL-versus-Star-&-Buc-Wild campaign would be temporarily postponed.

Months later, to commemorate the passing of Betty Shabazz, I played sound effects of fire burning and a woman screaming. But the station was giving away brand-new PlayStation 2 games that day, thereby sidetracking the audience, who'd overlook the antics of the repeat offender.

This sloppy station had gotten stale and become beaten at its own game -- not by a competitor, but from the inside. I started to notice other DJs attempting to be more cutting edge and opinionated, as I was. Gunshots were now the norm on other shows also. That was fine with me; imitation has always been the greatest form of flattery. But what did it all mean? I wasn't necessarily trying to plant a field, nor was I trying to become the Alan Freed of rap radio. I was just a hired gun, a journeyman receiving blood money. This was too easy. It's not that the game of radio was weak; I was just *that* different.

The bling-bling, chicken-and-waffles world was so full of shit, I expected my guests to give me attitude and possibly a fight before being interviewed. Not giving a damn about anybody's CD sales, I laid down the law quickly: "Turn off all cell phones and pagers before entering the studio." If an artist had a problem with that, he or she was told to keep it moving. This policy had to be enforced on a number of occasions, and my ratings weren't built on guests or music, something I often reminded people of. I usually carried a .380 glock with two clips to work every day. This was, of course, in case some rap savage got out of hand and wanted to eat a dirt sandwich. I never had any physical confrontations at the station but I did try to pick a few fights with people behind the scenes, just to test the waters.

After two years of plowing through the mud I started to feel as if I was ready to transcend the boundaries of hip-hop radio. There's no greater motivator than pressure, and thanks to the redundant daily grind of doing a radio show, I welcomed that pressure and delegated it evenly. There were days I sounded like a left-wing, '60s-era radical, but there were times when I'd lay it down like a right-wing, no-nonsense conservative with a vengeance. The end result was greatness.

As selfish as it sounds, I can't recall anything at Hot 97 that meant more to me than the time I had Alex Lifeson and Geddy Lee from Rush on one of my shows, and Nile Rodgers from Chic on another. I got to sit and talk with the fellas who'd made such a huge impact on my life. The Rush meeting came about when I called Gary Gorman, head of New York radio promotion for Atlantic Records, looking for a promo spot from the band. But when the idea went around Atlantic and they heard that I was playing cuts from their new CD, "Vapor Trails," on the station, it turned into a full-fledged visit. I was tense all morning and found it hard to concentrate. I gave the Tri-State my usual brand of venom and tongue-lashings. I really didn't give a fuck about what the audience thought. This was going to be something great for me. Not closure, but just a way to say thanks, for all the years of great music and direction. These were the guys whose voice, sound, and lyrical efforts had somehow helped me find my way through barbaric teen years. They kept me focused through my aggressive twenties, and helped me define my prosperous thirties.

When Geddy Lee and Alex Lifeson arrived at my show, I immediately spoke about their new music and complimented them on their longevity. Neil Pert, their drummer and primary lyricist, would not be attending any interviews during this new tour. He'd lost his wife and daughter a few years back and I'm sure he didn't want to address that issue in every city they stopped in. Geddy, Alex, and I spoke about a variety of things, especially the changing times. I reminded them about their great performances at Radio City Music Hall back during the "Signals" tour, and the fact that I was there for four of those shows. After five minutes I think they totally forgot that they'd come to a hip-hop station and felt very comfortable with the interview. I played several cuts from the Rush catalogue and then a song called "Still," from Geddy's solo album, "My Favorite

Headache.” I was pleased with the way things turned out, and I’m sure Alex and Geddy were as well.

My interview with Nile Rodgers from CHIC, was also very fulfilling. He hung out with me on the show for over two hours and exceeded all my expectations, as far as his brilliance and poise. Bernard Edwards from CHIC had passed away in 1996 from pneumonia, but hearing Nile refer to him with a smile on his face made it all good for me. From that point on I was done with the plantation that was Hot 97. It felt like a cheap prostitute that I had used to get what I wanted, and now it was time to move on.

While so many people can claim to be educated, very few would want the task of defining the axioms of hate or accepting the title “Hater” for the sake of enlightenment. Although hard for some to understand, there was no better route I could have taken to expand my philosophy than the one that led me through the anus of the biggest rap radio station in America. As much as I hated and needed to touch the fire of hip-hop culture, I became satisfied with the unparalleled tongue-lashings I’d served them for three years.

At this time Tim and I started drifting apart. In most groups or teams that reach a certain level of success, there’s always someone who becomes lazy and non-productive. I didn’t fault him for it; hell, he was from the ’hood and probably never expected to get that far in life. I tried to encourage him a few more times but in the end, I just summed it up as: “The fame game is not for everyone.” At this point, I was ready to take a different bite out of entertainment and I was excited about what I could produce for myself. I stuck around the factory a little longer and continued to amaze the machine, but with the departure of Judy Ellis, the warlord who co-signed my hate, it all became too mundane. I was John Dillinger doing a stick-up in the year 2003, but Hot 97 had no more cash - only a Debit card.



In retrospect, up-rooting from that hip-hop institution was the best thing for my creative process and alternative legacy.

Had I not parted ways from Hot 97 in May of 2003, I would now be a branded man who shot his load in one vagina as opposed to sampling the many fruits that life has to offer. Besides, although I allowed station employees and hired help to assist my journey, the brand was just two guys (Star & Buc Wild) who shared a fucked up industry out-look and a anti hero policy. I also had a small but efficient staff who were grossly underpaid in comparison to the pop and rock stations in the number one market. At times it was hard to demand more from them in meetings when I myself was trying to back up the truck.

In addition, not only does the urban world of spectators have no loyalty to its trend setters but their even quicker to dismiss you when its time for them to grow up. Having announced on-air during my first morning show in March of 2000 “friend to non of ya” I felt no obligation to the audience, Emmis management or its benefactors. Moreover, at this point in my life, Rand’s philosophy (Objectivism) was beating me over my head via the ultimate wake-up call.

\*Foot Note: Although I’m fond of the incomparable James Baldwin, I’ll probably be viewed as the Norman Mailer of generation hate, because of my rogue style and unforgiving outspokenness. I make this statement not with any desire for literary acceptance but knowing that America always needs to categorize its Negroes.

## Chapter Twelve

### The Price Of Air

NOW THEY KNOW MY GAIN AT THE SMALL COST OF  
FREEDOM. NOW THEY KNOW MY FACE LIKE A TOP  
NEWS DEBATE. NOW THEY KNOW MY VOICE LIKE AN  
OLD VICTROLA, NOW THEY KNOW MY NAME IN THE  
BIG HALLS OF STATE.

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After one more internal battle that led to my suspension for ten months and being fully paid by Emmis Communications through March, 2004, I geared up for yet another corporate-radio ride. My Clear Channel contract began at the height of the FCC shakedowns. Was R&B chipmunk Janet Jackson to blame for the heightened state of paranoia that would be ushered into America? Yes and no. Janet (Ms. Jackson if your nasty) most certainly pulled

the trigger that brought on the government goons, but the timing of this cataclysmic event was already set in motion the day George W. Bush took office. I'm not a Bush basher (I actually respect his gangster) but the way he became President in 2000 - the recount fiasco in Florida - stirred up a doubting-thomas attitude across the nation. And let's not get it twisted: Bill Clinton was not the savior that democrats try to make him out to be either. I could rip him and Hillary apart with my eyes closed, but I've got more important issues to tackle.

Tim and I hadn't spoken in over four months. He was caught up in rock-star syndrome and became overly rebellious towards me for no apparent reason. He'd disappear for days, not return phone calls and make child-like excuses to avoid important business meetings. Even though he squandered his money on clothes, parties and bullshit, I'd always seen to it that he was paid directly by MTV and Emmis Communications. Star & Buc Wild was my creation, yes, but I wanted Tim to learn to manage his own finances, and not have to look to me for every penny on the plate. But with Tim's horrendous track record—absences, tardiness, a pay deduction on his record with Emmis—I wasn't sure what to do with him. I was tired of coaching him and overlooking his disrespect for the Star & Buc Wild brand. He had a three-year-old daughter at the time and I was sympathetic, but at the risk of losing more ground, I considered going solo or replacing him and moving forward.

After spending nine months off the radio airwaves and living primarily in Pennsylvania, I re-lubricated my engine of hate and was now ready to present my philosophy to the masses.

This time around, with Clear Channel Broadcasting backing me, the money was right and I found myself ready for another shot at greatness. Power 104.1 in Hartford, Connecticut, would be the

first stop on my continuing journey, and it would also be my most significant point of rebirth. The inspiring town of Hartford, with its warm historical feel, proved just what I needed. I had decided to leave Tim behind and rename the show “Star in the Morning,” but on last-moment notice Tim convinced me that he’d grown up and was a reliable business partner. I took Tim on his word again and we set off in the hopes of recreating the magic.

At this point I was not the same hater whom people had gotten a small dose of back at Hot 97. To be clear, I was still the same grunt from Scotch Plains, but this time around I was looking for head-on collisions with listeners and all who dared to question my unveiling of Objective Hate. I purchased laptops for the entire team and made it mandatory for them to watch certain news programs, sitcoms, and reality shows. I had a definite plan of execution and I needed to intensify our viewing habits as a unit. This was also election year, and I wanted to sharpen my knives on the lunacy of John Kerry, his out-of-control wife and the “Vote or Die” nonsense. I supported George Bush to the fullest, not because I thought he was a great speaker and certainly not because I thought Iraq had anything to do with the Twin Towers going down, but because I felt that for where we were as a country, he was the best mystified killer for the job. Besides, in the words of the beautiful Ann Coulter, isn’t oil worth fighting for?

The passing of my father at this time was actually more inspiring to me than I had imagined. He was a major part of my life and when my brother Guy called to inform me of my dad’s end, I was floored but at the same time overcome with determination. Now, more than ever, I had a reason to grab the bull by the horns.

WILLIAM L. TORAIN  
12/7/1928 – 9/13/2004

United States Navy, 1943 – 1946 (Honorable discharge)  
United States Naval Reserves, 1946 - 1961  
Int. Union of Bricklayers & Allied Craftsman, Local No. 10  
Disabled American Veteran – Northern Valley Chapter # 32  
Bricklayers Masons Int. Union of America, Local No. 13  
Somerville, NJ, A.B. Cooper Masons Lodge No. 69  
DAV - Commanders Club (Silver Leader)

As a young boy I paid close attention to the confidence of this man. He was intelligent, talkative, patient, and supportive. I never asked him why, how, or what if; for some reason I always thought that he knew. I used his tools to fix my bikes and I ate from his plate to gain an ounce of power. I used his cologne when I was trying to find the beat and I borrowed his style when I felt a surge of aggression. He was the law in my house, the man who always woke at dawn, and he is my everlasting king, whose words are hard as steel. His volume is one to cherish and his legacy I do preserve. Others have loved, served, respected, and hated him, but none would he inspire more than me.

Hartford was magical and fulfilling. I educated my new support team and after a solid year, it was time to head home to New York City to let the audience feel the wrath once again. I was now equipped with what I considered to be the ultimate journey. Miguel (producer) had creative freedom, Buc appeared to be clean sober, Crossover Negro Reese (conservative news man) was itching to bash liberals and DX-21 (writer and literary genius) would soon rejoin the squad. But my most prized possession would be a loud and

beautiful spark plug named White Trash Helene. I'd handpicked Helene over 900 people, realizing that her appetite for the grind would be impeccable.

We spent our first three months on New York's Power 105.1 getting reacquainted with the landscape. To my liking and approval, the audience was feeling the show's new political/philosophical drive. Management, however, now seemed to have a problem with its intellectual focus and diverse music, which had worked so well at Hot 97. With the departure of Howard Stern to satellite radio, I expected Clear Channel's cannon to bust on my behalf. That day never came, though, and I found myself building a fragile national network. It appeared that the Clear Channel machine was content with my being just another cog in the wheel. Although frustrated, I was not surprised. Howard Stern's replacement, on a competitive station for a quick couple of months, was former Van Halen front man David Lee Roth. I liked Roth in the late '70s and respected him in the '80s, but his day was over and Clear Channel sat back and watched his downward spiral without lifting a finger. I realized I could be going nowhere, fast, and simply duplicating the same impact that was already apparent back at Hot 97. I sucked it up and plowed forward.

We were popping on all cylinders for eight months and I was dishing out the most vile tongue-lashings a man of color had ever done on terrestrial radio. Also, while breaking philosophical cinder-blocks over listener's heads, DX21 was spitting out "The New Nigger Chronicles" and making people cringe during their morning coffee. Meanwhile, Reese was bashing democrats so hard he would literally shake at times. Buc Wild rejoined the team shortly, then relapse again while White Trash Helene kept the excitement and fun in the room at all times.



Soon the radio market would make a major shift: The Arbitron ratings system was revamped in order to help Hispanic stations, allowing for and creating more spending for diverse ad revenue. It was, in other words, affirmative action. I found myself treading water. While beating Hot 97's morning team in every ratings book, Clear Channel was getting what it wanted without making good on a promise made to me upon the signing of my contract. Clear Channel's New York manager, Tom Poleman, who'd previously sat in front of me a like a child with a new toy was now an apologetic whipping boy who offered to start coming around the station and spend more quality time with me. I was insulted, to say the least.

I went through the motions and attempted to complete my agreement with Clear Channel by giving them what they wanted. A hip-hop Nigger war, carefully crafted and chock full of my specialty -- racial slurs. I got down for the get down like a drug dealer putting in work on the boulevard. The only problem was that rap music is full of tough-talking studio gangsters and kids who think that wearing jewelry makes them a thug. I zoned in on a cream puff on Hot 97's morning show: DJ Envy. He was nothing more than a local herb who delivered entertainment news and gossip.

After verbally whipping him in public, Envy quickly punked-out, and would hide from the attention while his wife high-tailed it to the authorities screaming bloody murder. Two days passed before a New York City Councilman grandstanded on television and claimed that I had crossed a line in radio entertainment. Lights, camera, action -- it was on. After being arrested on bogus charges, I was getting the mainstream press that I yearned for as a boy back in Scotch Plains. I had a real fancy lawyer, Benjamin Brafman, who upon meeting me at the 1st precinct said "Diddy says hello and is here to help if needed." After realizing their snap-judgment error

and acknowledging that I had committed no crime, all charges were indeed dropped by the DA's office. After a week's worth of press and misquotes from my show audio, I finally made the cover of the NY Daily News - Saturday edition. Now arrogantly refreshed by a new level of recognition, I felt like Troi Torain had finally arrived in New York City. Shortly thereafter DJ Envy began his campaign of lying to friends and industry associates that he was compensated with a large amount money from me over his public humiliation. Truth is, I never gave Rashawn Casey aka DJ Envy, his family nor Clear Channel a dime for that Hip-Hop blowout. The media that latched on to Reshawns soul-mate Gina Casey and her deformed eye made it an almost impossible battle to fight in my defense. Having built an empire on standing erect and spitting venom like a dragon, I wasn't about to start kowtowing to the public, nor was I going to apologize to the peanut gallery.

From time to time, I would be told that DJ Envy was still sore about the radio explosion in 06' and would make slick comments on-air to try and save face or establish street credibility that no one believed he ever had. For the record, I hold no grudge against DJ Envy or his cowardly cries. If anything he has given more fuel to the ultimate bad boy. Since then and still to this day, street wolves offer to slap fire out of Envy's ass for me but I quickly bring their offers to a halt. I always tell them Id prefer to leave him out there always having to explain why he didnt step to me as a man. Years later my lawsuit against Clear Channel would be thrown out of court and all of their counter claims against me would be dropped. To finalize the matter, I never signed any documents, made no offers and never agreed to anything with DJ Envy, Clear Channel or the Casey family – I just gave them all my ass to kiss!

## Chapter Thirteen

### Limitless

I'LL MEET YOU ON THE MOUTAIN, BUT DON'T FORGET  
THE HAZE; WE'LL SMOKE IT LIKE A CHIMNEY, WITH  
KIDS WHO BURN FOR DAYS. A VICIOUS INNUENDO, A  
VOYAGE THROUGH THE SUN, RELENTLESS IN THE  
TAKING AND A WAR WITHOUT A GUN.

Objective Hate is not just a counter-stance to altruism and organized religion. It's a rational perspective that can only be achieved through hard trials and logical conclusions. In fact, it's in-your-face confidence, which is not to be confused with a passive-aggressive agenda. Objective Hate has an air of arrogance but a factual foundation in science and laws of human nature -- It's independent thinking. It's the willingness to learn but also the excitement

of exploring and the reasoning of your own potential. It's an inner channel to the most violent theatrics of mankind, but also the ability to recognize and enjoy true beauty in its least extravagant display. It's a commitment to moral structure without the crutch of witchcraft or a swindling preacher man. Objective Hate is the slow, hard process of mind sex, without a professor within arms reach to give you a quick pull-quote and a pat on the ass. It's mental non-restrictive freedom, which is not to be confused with a non-productive temperament.

While most teenagers enter universities seeking meaning and self worth, Objective Hate acknowledges the rules of the game but often presents a new path of learning. Most companies and corporations today rely on the enthusiasm of young laptop bangers, but in the business world of nails and daggers, going beyond the speed limit is not always what it takes to get the job done. On the slaughter field of corporate mergers and takeovers, the Objective Hater doesn't whine about the doors of the business world not letting him in. He creates; he trades; he extinguishes the inner grunt that has been nourished by society; he employs the power of finesse. Where condescending conservative mummies turn their heads in disgust, the Objective Hater absorbs all of man's flaws and emphasizes the fact that he is the true minority because of his chosen path: freethinking.

There are those who have long claimed that hating is unhealthy and time consuming, and to a certain extent they're right. Selective hate is an ignorant position that is often incubated by an inferiority complex. I consider my life meaningful; therefore, I make it hard for someone to be able to claim that he or she is my friend. The word "friend" is itself widely overused and taken for granted. If you don't educate someone about your expectations for a real friend, you will always find yourself surrounded by leeches. On the other hand, one

has to ask: are you worth being a friend to? What do you offer that's not material? Can you actually guide or motivate someone—give them something beyond lunch, a shopping spree, a night of dinner, dancing, and drugging, or an occasional trip to the movies? Are you really a people person, or are you just a covert fraud and a trendy parasite? Do you know the face of a real friend, or do you confuse it with the smile of an associate, the gesture of an acquaintance, or the misconception of an enemy? Do you realize that enemies usually have similar interests, drives and goals, and if forces ever joined, that they could actually become the most inspiring comrades?

I don't claim to be a model citizen, but what I do declare is my position in this dog-eat-dog rat race. I want it all, and there's no better place for me to be then right here in the beautiful kill-or-be-killed U.S.A. While socialist warts scream to rally communities against capitalism, the American Negro should be the first to scream in its defense. Yes, it's that evil-sounding word that was one of the main components at the start of this nation, and it will also be our biggest savior and history lesson, as well. Often confused with reckless consumerism, capitalism gave rise to the Madam C.J. Walkers and Michael Jordans of the Negro race. Always feared for its misuse in boardroom games of greed, capitalism gives the most destructive human being a chance to be rehabilitated two, three and four times in life. Frequently abused by organized religion and Bible-hustling pedophiles, capitalism provides government-subsidized housing and grants to the inspired leaders of tomorrow. Wrongfully perceived as wicked and insensitive, capitalism allows Israel and other countries to make leaping advances and become the powerful nations they deserve to be. Thanks to new FCC decency laws, the finger of blame gets pointed at capitalism, when in fact the problem is nothing more than the abandonment of fresh ideas and the accep-

tance of mindless collective values. Just as guilty are those who misrepresent the phrase “freedom of speech” and blame capitalism for the sake of animalistic gain.

I could go on about capitalism, but unlike the door-to-door Bible salesmen of yesterday, I’m not here to offer you the Catholic honor plan. Just as important to mention and even though I’m sometimes at odds with its policies and punishments, I feel the need to express my highest approval for America and its guiding principals. If I didn’t I would be no better than the third-world waste that flocks here daily, waving their flags of oppression and corruption while begging for shelter and hand-outs. For the record, I fully support America’s military, scientific research and its space programs. While other nations find temporary satisfaction in parades of whoremongers and drunkards, America’s rich culture of free-thinking enables the brightest minds to conceive the possibilities of cryogenics, string theories, and the big-bang.

By now you probably feel as if you’ve been beaten over the head by endless self loathing and narcissism, but I can’t leave you without screaming into the wind one last time. Other than being objective, hateful, and rational in my approach, there’s really no shortcut that I can prescribe. Some people go through their entire existence never questioning why the earth is round, why the sun is hot, or how we got here. Some choose blinders and promote the unknown in order to be all-powerful. Others bow their heads in shame and darkness instead of raising it toward the light.

One of the most overstated phrases is “children are the future,” but when you assist and allow a child’s mind to grow, why then does it become such a priority to harness, condemn, and destroy it for thinking outside of the box? Why has it become big business, fear and domination with no end in sight? These are the real questions

I asked myself once upon a time. Fortunately, I was able to shake off the yoke.

So this study of Objective Hate has been necessary, not just so that you can touch the flames of my fire, but because it allowed me to put my thoughts in perspective as I proceed forward. I'm sure this journal is one of many that you will come across in your lifetime, but will you put this one on the shelf next to the others, or, because of its unfamiliar tone, will you hide it from the collective haters of the world?

Just as it was back in 1969, when people argued that the Apollo Eleven Lunar Module never landed on the moon, collective hate continues to downplay the achievements of man, his mind and his quest for the keys to our constantly expanding galaxy. This hateful form of bacteria is odorless and tasteless, but more importantly, it's contagious. Unlike evangelist healers, I don't pretend to foresee the future, but based upon the spirit of collective hate, I can only imagine that when reproductive cloning and the fusing of embryos is perfected, we will once again see the rise of unimaginable wars.

Just in case you've got one eyebrow raised while chomping on a carrot stick, let me add this. For centuries religion has used the fallacy of folklore as one of its biggest selling points and mind stabilization drugs. The source of shame from these contrived teachings is the emphasis of man's corrupt nature. While constant squabbling over truthful interpretations of so-called divine incite will always fascinate the mentally vacant, man's denial of himself and his flaws will continue to generate the wheels of deception.



## Epilogue

Today's fast-paced, fast-food, give-me-give-me, I-look-better-than-you attitude is no different from the era of devious brutes and facetious whores. The only difference now is that mankind has the ability to change his physical appearance, and our reliance on technology over reason. I'm a firm believer that not everything new is better. Even though I use technology daily, I try to resist its presence whenever possible. This is not a form of paranoia, but rather an allegiance to natural living and creativity. I'm sure generation hate will consider this form of thinking archaic, but I would rather return to the dust from which I came having known the true impact of William Shakespeare as opposed to believing Missy Elliott had a fiber of talent in her body. There's an old saying: "Some people know the price of everything but the value of nothing." Well I value my journey, my insight, and the wisdom that I've acquired.

As I become more recognizable by way of my philosophy, I don't seek pseudo-intellectual slaps on the back. My cold, piercing views are meant to repel the fakes, the frauds and the phonies. Through the recognition of self and the hard trials of Objectivism, my awakening into full manhood must be credited to Rand's bitter mental whip. It has motivated me to blast through cold iron walls, but it must also be noted that a misconstrued ego and the swagger of pride can be costly.

For some, my form of boasting can only be summed up as ignorant, misguided or with stereotypical rim-shots. How else could they denounce my grand knowledge and supreme position? Long ago I adopted that negative term "Hater," knowing it would put me below the radar until I felt ready to surface. Woody Allen, one of my favorite directors, has pimped neuroticism for over a century; it's nothing more than his clocking device for his hate and financial gain. Can it really be one big ball of magic, or is it simply the process of science, ethics and consciousness? Was man truly inspired to enlighten others, or is he the biggest whoremonger, who once upon a time embellished his hate and forged his own destiny?

And what of my existence? Am I to be mentally tortured and forever humbled in a temporary shell? Will my countless acts of love go unnoticed because I choose not to lift my voice and sing out-loud? Will tears and prayers really be sufficient before I gasp for my last breath?

In the most unattractive philosophical terms, let me say that action speaks louder than words, and those actions, those repercussions, and my analysis to the understanding of those acts have led me to the basis of my philosophy. While most will consider Objective Hate unworthy of true philosophical recognition. In response I say that all stabilizing forms of faith are based on trust,

without verification. I've simply cut out the middle-man and opened my eyes. In addition, let's be clear, Objective Hate (still developing) is pro-man with an erratic heartbeat in the chest of a ten-year-old. More than just a philosophy of rational self-interest, Objective Hate goes to the edge of one's objective reality (metaphysics) and presents the alarming hurtful truth. Cunning yet deadly, Objective Hate promotes reason and logic while denouncing racism and the supernatural. Vicious and unwavering, Objective Hate cuts deep to the bone via the proper principles of morality.

Furthermore, the act of doing good or evil is a moral choice, based upon one's ethics and parameters. One of the most comical statements I've encountered, since coming forward with my philosophy of Objective Hate, is, "I used to be like you, but now I'm more open and caring as a person." This is merely an announcement that one's mind has surrendered to one of many forms of altruism. Manifestation from a destructive and prejudice mind-state is progress, yes, but to truly appreciate the flaws of mankind is the most comforting and self-enlightening position.

To simply state man's immoral nature with no resolve would be a lackluster effort that any group of web-rats could pass off as truth. But embracing and understanding the mechanics of mental poverty is the irreversible path that I continuously plow.

One of the biggest misconceptions about Objective Hate will be that I am defining myself via hatred or existentialism. Nothing could be further from the truth. This old, miscalculated emotion has always been avoided and now more than ever simply needs clarification. Rand herself briefly touched on the topic of hate in *The Age of Envy*. I'm sure she could have gone into deeper water but didn't feel a need to dissect the negative. As I've already stated, my younger days consisted of no real adversity, so why would I bring

forth a sound bite from the underworld? What do I have to gain and why do I feel the need to emphasize man's dirty little secret?

The answer is simple: objective reasoning. Just as some American Negroes claim to be benefiting from a legacy of suffering, why should it not also be stated that they are still suffering from mismanagement of the incompetent? If man chooses to acknowledge the undersized part of his nature as hateful, not evil, he allows himself to truly blossom and be defined as a total man. I once had a conversation back in 1991 with a beautiful bar-stool slut who asked if I thought Ayn Rand would have supported my "twisted vomit." At that time I was more interested in her inner thighs, so I had not even considered that question. During most of the '80s, while I was absorbing Objectivism, I never felt the need to openly declare or even explain my position.

But for those now in need of this hypothetical but necessary resolve, I say that an orphan child will always have doubts, moods of uncertainty, and blurred vision. But depending on those feelings, one can also stand erect and guard the gates of heritage like no other.

As I continue down my road of challenges and fulfilling adventures, I must let it be known that my trials are now bigger than that of being lumped into the soup, or living under the gun of racism. Harsh words, yes, and even harsher is the now non-restricted businessman who has no more fear of the beyond. Not a crackpot Jim Jones and certainly not an out-of-control Colin Ferguson, but a home-grown product faced with the ongoing pot shots that David Koresh and his Branch Davidians only got an appetizer of.

After centuries of dirt kicking and every form of slander imaginable, let it be known: I'm here for the big shootout. I strive to be rational but as my homeland plays favorites with imported profound

bullshit, it's eye for eye and tooth for tooth. Make no mistake, I'm still the same bully from the suburbs of New Jersey, easily smitten by a pretty face, but now the stakes are much higher and there's no bell for recess. Through this minefield called life and based on my measure of success, I will always pursue my self-interest by trusting my very own instincts and by embracing what most men are ashamed of -- their ego. I pride myself on being an individual, in tune with philosophy and the reality of hate. In addition, I've concluded that today's Objectivist must risk everything for all or nothing. He or she is obligated to take on the mobs of insanity for the good of mankind. I must go now; a new adventure is calling.

\*Special acknowledgement to my beautiful hometown of Scotch Plains New Jersey. Your golden memories gave me strength when I was weak, focus when I was lost and power for the ultimate ride.

Coming soon - Objective Hate: The Paradox.