

Memphis Rap in the 1990s

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Memphis has long been recognized for its influential role in the development of African American musical styles, most notably blues and soul. Alan Lomax, author of *The Land Where the Blues Began*, refers to Memphis' Beale Street as "the home of the blues" in the South.¹ Soul music originating from Memphis' "premier soul venue, Stax," was known for its hybrid music that blended rhythm and blues, black gospel, and white southern rock together, according to Beverly Bond and Janann Sherman in their book *Memphis in Black and White*.² In fact, Memphis' "greatest cultural legacy" is its music, which is a product of African Americans who left other places only to find poverty and divisiveness in Memphis.³ The large number of African Americans in Memphis has played an important part in the stylistic qualities of the music produced in Memphis.

The most recent major manifestation of African American music is rap, and Memphis has created its own style of rap music. Especially between the years 1993 and 1997, Memphis rap developed characteristics that differentiate it from the rap of other cities. Memphis rap incorporated the trends seen nationally in rap musical styles and textual themes while still maintaining its distinctive Memphis style. Like the main factor that shaped Memphis blues and soul, Memphis rap in the 1990s exhibited distinctive characteristics because of the African American presence and experience in Memphis.

Memphis rap has been nationally recognized since the 1990s and the rap industry

¹ Alan Lomax, *The Land Where the Blues Began* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 4.

² Beverly G. Bond and Janann Sherman, *Memphis in Black and White* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), 148.

³ *Ibid.*, 7.

in Memphis has increased since then, which follows with the general increase in rap production and popularity. Rap music's national popularity has increased greatly since rap's beginnings in New York in the 1970s. This trend can be seen in two ways. First, Billboard music charts show an increase in chart ratings for rap music.⁴ Second, large commercial company involvement supports the rise of rap music into mainstream popular music. For example, one of the largest companies in the world, the Sony Corporation, has a music division devoted to rap music.⁵ This illustrates that mainstream companies are interested in this once-obscure music genre. Mainstream company involvement also testifies to the lucrative popularity of rap music. Commercial involvement has changed rap music because large companies transformed rap music from an underground music that protested against the dominant music and culture of the United States into a musical style with mass appeal. Nonetheless, although rap has been affected by the involvement of large music studios, many of the stylistic qualities of rap music nationally and in Memphis maintain the characteristics of the African and African American musical styles rap arose from.

One of rap's oldest musical influences can be traced back to the verbal fluency exhibited by West African griots.⁶ Simply put, griots are "wordsmiths," whose primary function is to create verbal art, with music production as a closely related, secondary activity, according to Thomas Hale, author of *Griots and Griottes: Masters of Words and*

⁴ Jim Sernoe, "'Now We're on the Top, Top of the Pops': The Performance of 'Non-Mainstream' Music on *Billboard's* Albums Charts," *Popular Music and Society* 28/5 (2005): 639-62.

⁵ Lynette Holloway, "Company News; Sony Music Creates Division to Lift Sales," *New York Times*, April 30, 2003.

⁶ David Toop, "Rap," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., 29 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), 20: 828-31.

Music.⁷ Hale notes that other scholars refer to griots as “praise-singers” because praise-singing is the clearest audible manifestation of their profession, although it is not griots’ only function.⁸ Griots fulfill roles as genealogists, historians, advisers, spokespeople, musicians, composers, and warriors.⁹ The different social roles performed by griots are significant in the study of rap because of the different social roles modern rappers adopt and their different arenas of social influence. Further, griots are trained informally, from father to son in the form of apprenticeship, although other educational sources include other griots, musical recordings, television and media, and traveling.¹⁰ This aspect of griot training is also similar to the ways rappers learn their musical craft. The use of ‘praise-singer’ to refer to griots occurs because the human voice is their primary instrument, another characteristic griots share with rappers.¹¹ Although blues music has been linked with griots through similar musical scoring characteristics such as voice timbre, tuning systems, singing styles, voice texture, and accompaniment rhythm, connections between rap music and West African griots are less apparent.¹² Even so, David Toop argues that contemporary rappers have roots in the griot tradition, and Hale asserts that many musicians note the similarity in the narrative features between the art of griots and rap.¹³

Contemporary rap predecessors that show how African musical influences surface in rap are militant black poetry collectives and soul raps. The poetry

⁷ Thomas A. Hale, *Griots and Griottes: Masters of Words and Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 2, 17.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 19, 22, 24, 31, 36, 37, 45.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 172, 183.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 164.

¹² *Ibid.*, 329; For more information on the stylistic similarities between griot music and blues, see Paul Oliver, *Savannah Syncopators: African Retentions in the Blues*. New York: Stein and Day, 1970 or Sam Charters, *The Roots of the Blues: An African Search*. New York: Putnam, 1981.

¹³ For more information about the connections between the work of griots and rappers, see David Toop, *Rap Attack 2: African Rap to Global Hip Hop*. London: Serpent’s Tail, 1991; Hale, 329.

collectives arose in Los Angeles and New York during the late 1960s and early 1970s.¹⁴

The poetry collectives combined poems with jazz music or African-style percussion. The Watts Prophets, from Watts, Los Angeles, gained a local following by creating poetic call-and-response chants.¹⁵ The Last Poets were a group of militant storytellers from Harlem, New York, whose poetry was accompanied by conga drum rhythms.¹⁶

According to Tricia Rose, The Last Poets' 1973 *Hustler's Convention* is an obvious predecessor to gangsta rap's thematic preference for violence, drugs, and sex, and the primary difference between poetry collectives and rap is the importance of danceable beats in rap and its greater musical complexity.¹⁷ Poetry collectives exhibited African-style percussion combined with 'toasts,' a bragging, boastful form of oral storytelling that is often explicitly political and aggressive.¹⁸ The oral storytelling characteristic of African griots and poetry collectives also surfaces in soul raps.

The spoken soul raps of soul musicians Isaac Hayes and Barry White influenced rap's development and show the importance of oral tradition in rap music.¹⁹ Soul raps were first made popular by Hayes' successful *Hot Buttered Soul*, which was recorded in 1969 for Stax.²⁰ The album featured an eighteen-minute rap on "By The Time I Get to Phoenix" that was "a hypnotic and compelling story," again emphasizing the importance of oral storytelling in African and African American music.²¹ Along with Hayes, Barry White growled romantic epics, and singer Millie Jackson included monologues in her

¹⁴ Toop, "Rap," 828.

¹⁵ Nelson George, *Hip Hop America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 133.

¹⁶ Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 55.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 195.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁹ Toop, "Rap," 828.

²⁰ David Toop, *The Rap Attack* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 51.

²¹ Toop, *Rap Attack*, 51.

1974 album *Caught Up*. Raps surfacing in the “gospel-drenched melodramas of deep soul” that characterized soul raps of the 1970s suggested the impending development of rap in African American music and continued the storytelling aspect of African American music. Because soul is such an important musical style in Memphis, Stax’s Isaac Hayes involvement with the creation of soul raps shows how Memphis and rap would be linked as the rap’s musical style developed more fully in the United States.

Rap music is a predominantly African American musical style that first became prominent in the late 1970s in New York.²² Rap is characterized by its semi-spoken rhymes articulated over a rhythmic musical backing.²³ The rhythmic backing is often (or completely) composed of audio samples of pre-existing recordings that are assembled together. The recorded samples can be musical, in the case of sampled songs, or non-musical, in the case of news reports, telephone conversations, or other sound effects. The DJ assembles the samples in a process known as ‘sampling,’ embellishing the original recordings with other DJ mixing techniques.²⁴ Sampling, a form of appropriation, is the historical source from which hip hop music originates and the practice of sampling lies at the center of rap music and DJ technique.²⁵ Sampling plays an integral role in the aesthetic characteristics of rap music and the message a DJ tries to convey with his music.²⁶ Therefore, sampling used for rhythmic effect also serves a narrative function because the samples taken from other music and the world indicate the DJ’s personal experiences and express his history.

²² Toop, “Rap,” 828.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 829.

²⁵ Richard Shusterman, “The Fine Art of Rap,” *New Literary History* 22/3 (Summer 1991), 614.

²⁶ Ibid., 614.

The rap style that developed in New York hip hop culture was distinctly different from the rap predecessors already mentioned because of its style of integration of words with music, which was focused on danceable beats in a way that griot music, militant poetry, and soul raps were not.²⁷ Rap music first gained national popularity through the Sugarhill Gang's 1979 single "Rapper's Delight." Rap during the 1980s involved even more new techniques of DJ mixing, the trend that began in the 1970s and was developed further. One of the most significant of these new DJ techniques, developed by DJ Grandmaster Flash, was 'scratch-mixing'—moving the discs backwards and forwards under the stylus while switching between two turntables.²⁸ Other rhythmic characteristics of rap created in the 1980s and in the years that followed included delayed downbeats, and extended rests, or 'breaks.' In the Bronx especially, the break was "the important part of the record" as the part where the drums take over.²⁹ Furthermore, prominent bass guitar instrumentation that characterized the early rap distinguished rap from rap's precursors.

The prominent bass guitar scoring that characterized early rap highlights its relationship with funk music. Derived from a jazz style known as "hard-bop," funk was characterized by heavy drum beats, eighth or sixteenth notes played on the hi-hat, and bass lines with dark timbres.³⁰ Through its blending of rhythm and blues and soul music, funk music encouraged dancing and its texts include 'party' themes as well as political and social commentary and relationships.³¹ Funk music's influence on early rap surfaced

²⁷ Toop, "Rap," 829.

²⁸ "Hip-Hop," *The Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 3rd ed., 8 vols., ed. Colin Larkin (New York: Muze, 1998), 4: 2540-41.

²⁹ Toop, *Rap Attack*, 31.

³⁰ Portia K. Maultsby, "Funk," in *African American Music: An Introduction*, ed. Mellonee V. Burnim and Portia K. Maultsby (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 294.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 293.

musically in rap records and socially in the hip hop culture that arose alongside New York rap in the 1980s. For example, rap became more fully developed by the sampling techniques employed by Jamaican-born DJ Kool Herc (Clive Campbell). In the Bronx, DJ Kool Herc used sampling techniques to play the percussion sections of funk songs, which were very popular at the time.³² DJ Kool Herc's Jamaican heritage and his use of funk recordings as samples in early rap set a cultural and musical example that rappers followed for the next three decades. Rap musical characteristics that began developing in the 1970s, such as the use of sampling funk songs, are apparent in the work of later popular MCs who in turn influenced rap in the 1980s and 1990s.

LL Cool J (James Todd Smith) was a popular rapper from Queens whose music exemplified the characteristics of rap music developed in the 1980s.³³ His first album that was also the breakthrough record for Def Jam Recordings, *Radio*, was released in 1985, and his fourth album *Mama Said Knock You Out* was released in 1990 by the same company.³⁴ The album features syncopated bass guitar instrumentation similar to guitar instrumentation in funk music. Examples of funk-style bass guitar rhythms and notes are heard in "Mr. Good Bar," "Jingling Baby (remixed but still jingling)," and "Around The Way Girl." "Eat Em Up L Chill" highlights the unexpected breaks in the rhythm that were indicative of New York early rap while "To Da Break of Dawn" contains good examples of suspended downbeats. Rhythmic patterns that draw on the syncopation of bass guitar rhythms in funk music and also the manipulation of record breaks in Bronx rap show how the rap music DJs and rappers created consciously referred back to

³² Toop, "Rap," 829.

³³ Alex Ogg and David Upshal, *The Hip Hop Years: A History of Rap* (New York: Fromm International, 1999), 87.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 87; LL Cool J, *Mama Said Knock You Out*, Def Jam 314 523 477-2.

previous developments in rap to create a musical embodiment of rap history. In fact, the blending of different music styles into a seamless composition was the subject DJs were most concerned about, showing the importance of collaboration in rap. The texts of early rap also exemplify the themes common in the texts of rap's precursors, showing the blending of older textual themes with new musical developments.

Similar to the 'party' themes of funk music, the texts of early rap were primarily boastful and playful in tone and characterized by rhyming couplets. For example, the Sugarhill Gang's single "Rapper's Delight" begins with the whimsical phrase, "I said a hip hop, the hippie the hippie to the hip hip hop," showing the playful tone assumed in early rap. *Mama Said Knock You Out* exhibits the light attitudes and competitiveness of rappers as well. Through his texts, LL acts the part of the hip hop MC perfectly with his boasts about his rapping prowess. He claims, "over the competition, I'm towerin,'" in "Mama Said Knock You Out," exemplifying his MC pride. The playful nature of early rap is heard in "Eat Em Up L Chill" as he mocks, "your rhymes are cheesy, you found 'em in a mouse trap." In another example from "Eat Em Up L Chill," he states, "MCs are dumb, I catch 'em in a dragnet, / you're not complete, I'm battlin' a fragment. / So creative and witty and outstandin', / and I be demandin' that you're abandoned," which embodies the boastful and playful attitudes and rhymed couplets of early rap. The texts of early rap portray the importance of verbal prowess in rap, and rap's predecessors and also highlight the hip hop culture surrounding rap music that was a "peculiarly New York phenomenon."³⁵

The competitive yet carefree text in early rap was also manifested in the hip hop culture that developed at the same time as rap music. Rap created new outlets for African

³⁵ Toop, *Rap Attack*, 22.

American popular expression through hip hop culture. In addition to rap music—which was the primary manifestation of hip hop—black urban culture expressed itself through graffiti and break dancing.³⁶ Graffiti artwork and new styles of dancing exemplified the “explosion of creativity which took as much joy in outraging authorities as it did in its own expression” that characterizes hip hop.³⁷ The developments in graffiti and dancing also highlighted the competitive attitude that lied at the heart of hip hop culture, thus explaining why verbal power and dexterity along with DJ skills of appropriation embodied the competitive nature of rap.³⁸ Hip hop culture also showed how sampling occurred in the culture as well as the music in order to combine different influences together and expand the rap genre.

LL Cool J’s album *Mama Said Knock You Out* illustrates how funk bass lines and MC boasting became standard characteristics of rap during the 1980s. Although funk samples and prideful raps remained characteristics of rap music through the 1990s, musical samples and texts used in late 1980s rap foreshadowed the new social attitudes emerging to replace hip hop culture. By 1985, rappers emerged to take the place of the original artists and gave rap a harder, minimalistic sound.³⁹

As early as the lyrics to Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five’s 1982 album *The Message*, a new agenda set a tone of realism for rap that culminated in the 1990s with gangsta rap.⁴⁰ The pattern of group rapping popularized by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five in earlier hip hop music was replicated by N.W.A., a gangsta rap group whose lyrics captured the “regional specificity of spatial, ethnic, temperate, and

³⁶ “Hip-Hop,” 2540.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2541.

³⁸ Toop, *Rap Attack*, 145.

³⁹ Toop, “Rap,” 829.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

psychological facets of black marginality” in Los Angeles.⁴¹ The model for gangsta rap began to form with N.W.A., and rap’s textual focus on the struggles of urban life continued into the 1990s. The rap style gained widespread public attention because of its obscene lyrics portraying profanity, misogyny, and tales of gang activity.

Following the precedent set by N.W.A., gangsta rap was further popularized during the 1990s by rappers Snoop Doggy Dog (Calvin Broadus), Ice-T (Tracy Marrow), Tupac Shakur, and Dr. Dre (Andre Young), in his work with N.W.A. and as a solo artist. From the late-1980s to the mid-1990s, particularly in the years 1989 to 1992, gangsta rap became the dominate style of rap. Musically, gangsta rap featured samples and funk bass guitar patterns similar to early rap. Stylistically, gangsta rap created on the West Coast channeled East Coast rap through the use of funk bass guitar lines and record scratch-mixing. Considered the definitive gangsta rap album, Dr. Dre’s *The Chronic* provides the most prominent example of gangsta rap.⁴² Released in 1992 after Dr. Dre’s departure from N.W.A., *The Chronic* was released by Death Row Records.⁴³

The Chronic was clearly modeled after precedent of early rap because of its inclusion of musical elements used by the soul and funk artists of the 1970s. Specifically, the bass guitar melodies and rhythms on the album are very similar to 1970s funk bass guitar lines. The “slow, bass-heavy grooves” based on samples from Isaac Hayes and George Clinton became the basis of gangsta rap music defined by Dr. Dre’s *The Chronic*.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Rose, *Black Noise*, 11.

⁴² Toop, “Rap,” 831.

⁴³ Dr. Dre, *The Chronic*, Death Row Records DRR 63000-2.

⁴⁴ Toop, “Gangsta [gangster] rap,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., 29 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), 9: 513-14.

On the album, funk bass guitar lines are strongly emphasized, and accent the first beat of every measure or every other measure in an ostinato pattern that creates a syncopated rhythmic effect that is either direct or implied by rests in the music.⁴⁵ The funky bass lines and their origins are readily apparent from the samples used on *The Chronic*; in addition to songs by Hayes' "Do Your Thing," Dre sampled "Mothership Connection" and "P-Funk (Wants to Get Funked Up)" by George Clinton. Other than the influence of funk, another feature common to gangsta rap and East Coast rap is the snare drum and bass drum accompaniment. Also, the use of blues scales in "The Day the Niggaz Took Over" shows the musical influence of the blues on the gangsta rap style. Based on his perspective growing up in Compton, Los Angeles, California, Dr. Dre's texts focus on gang violence and drugs, as 'chronic' immediately implies because it is a slang term for marijuana.

Gangsta rap is defined by its textual content as a "style of rap whose texts emphasized the violence of street life."⁴⁶ Rap group N.W.A., an abbreviation for 'Niggas With Attitude,' exemplified the 'harder' textual themes rap music began to explore as the 1990s approached.⁴⁷ The group was composed of four core members from Compton, Los Angeles: Eazy-E (Eric Wright), Ice Cube (O'Shea Jackson), Dr. Dre (Andre Young), and MC Ren (Lorenzo Patterson). N.W.A.'s texts described the social injustices faced by African Americans and Dr. Dre follows the example set by the group. Furthermore, textual elements of *The Chronic* laid the groundwork for the violent themes that Memphis gangsta rappers in the 1990s exhibit.

⁴⁵ David Brackett, "Funk," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., 29 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), 9: 348-50.

⁴⁶ Toop, "Gangsta [gangster] rap," 513.

⁴⁷ Toop, "Rap," 830.

The violent texts of *The Chronic* have a social message about urban crime. For example, Dr. Dre threatens that “in the end they D-E-A-D, I never did time on a murder yet” in “A Nigga Witta Gun.” In a more reflective mood, Dre remembers in “Lil’ Ghetto Boy,” “I fell to the ground, with blood on my hands, I didn't understand how a nigga so young could bust a cap, I used to be the same way back.” Gangsta rap focused textually on crime and the underbelly of urban life and the culture gangsta rap arose out of shows how West Coast gangsta rap, like early rap on the East Coast, tells the story of a place and the experiences of its people.

The social tensions explored and exacerbated by N.W.A.’s texts and other gangsta rap were realized in actual events as the 1990s progressed. Unlike hip hop, which expressed its culture through new styles of dancing and artwork, gangsta rap publicized the problems of urban life through text and real events. The evolution of gangsta rap, which contained “provoking calls for restraint from within and without the hip hop community” even prompted censorship from sources such as Tipper Gore’s Parents’ Music Resource Centre because of its profane, obscene, violent, and drug-centered subject matter.⁴⁸ Gang violence in particular received the bulk of negative public attention due to an East Coast and West Coast gang rivalry that led to the violent shootings of gangsta rappers Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G. (Christopher Wallace). Gangsta rap influenced later rappers by being aggressively expressive about urban life experiences. Gangsta rap’s musical characteristics, texts, and cultural repercussions were integrated into ‘dirty’ rap that portrayed the experiences of another group of disadvantaged African Americans.

⁴⁸ Toop, “Rap,” 831.

During the mid-1990s, rap music changed from its early rap beginnings and hip hop culture on the East Coast and its shift into gangsta rap and culture on the West Coast. This change can be seen in rap's identification with the South and Southeast region of the United States. The southern region of the United States that encompasses cities Atlanta, Memphis, Miami, and Houston, is known as the 'Dirty South' because of the particular style of rap music that has originated from those cities. During the second half of the 1990s, music executives and southern rappers "promoted the Dirty South as a new type of rap music."⁴⁹ As a 'new type' of rap music, Dirty South rap blended older rap styles with southern music like blues and gospel, accents, and textual themes together in order to reflect the musical influences and historical events that affected the area in the rap music of the South. Rap's expansion into the southern United States added new influences, such as gospel, to rap, thus continuing the practices of aural storytelling through musical appropriation and oral storytelling through similar textual themes.

Atlanta is recognized as the place of origin of the new trend in rap music because of successful albums by Atlanta rap groups, such as OutKast and Goodie Mob. As rap groups' record sales and Grammy awards testify, Atlanta was the rap capitol of the South.⁵⁰ Also testifying to—and likely the reason for—Atlanta's success, LaFace Records, one of the country's largest producers of mass-market rap, is located in Atlanta.⁵¹ Southern rap was the result of the studio's location in Atlanta because of the use of southern themes, culture, and musical influences in rap music produced in the Dirty—and proud of it—South.

⁴⁹ Darren E. Grem, "'The South Got Something to Say': Atlanta's Dirty South and the Southernization of Hip-Hop America," *Southern Cultures* 12/4 (Winter 2006): 55-73.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 58.

OutKast and Goodie Mob exemplify Dirty South rap through their musical references to other southern African American music and their texts that narrate the life experiences of African Americans living in the South during the post-Civil War era. OutKast's 1994 album *southernplayalisticadillacmuzik* was released by Atlanta's LaFace Records.⁵² OutKast consists of Big Boi (Antwan Patton) and Andre 3000 (Andre Benjamin). The album uses African American musical characteristics from jazz, funk, and gospel music to create a southern version of rap that tells the story of African American musical heritage. Jazz musical references begin the album, as a jazz radio DJ speaks on a radio sample that comprises "Peaches (Intro)." Another example of jazz music is the use of a jazzy saxophone melisma in "Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik." Funk music bass guitar rhythms are most apparent in "Funky Ride" as Andre 3000 sings, "let me take you on a funky ride" over a syncopated, two-measure bass guitar line. Additionally, OutKast uses gospel music in the melodic theme of "Myintrotoletuknow." OutKast's musical influences permeate their rap and show the continuation of blending styles in rap music.

Goodie Mob's *Soul Food* was produced by LaFace records in 1995.⁵³ Goodie Mob consists of Cee-Lo (Thomas Callaway), Khujo (Willie Knighton, Jr.), T-Mo (Robert Barnett), and Big Gipp (Cameron Gipp). The album was an important step in the creation of a southern version of rap music and the popularization of the Dirty South rap style.

Musical characteristics that refer to African American culture and the South show how Goodie Mob creates a southern variation of rap. The choir on "Free" and "Guess Who" evoke harmonies similar to those of gospel music. Also, the vocal harmonies are

⁵² OutKast, *southernplayalisticadillacmuzik*, LaFace Records 73008-26010-2.

⁵³ Goodie Mob, *Soul Food*, LaFace Records 73008-26018-2.

very spiritual-like in “Cell Therapy.” The harmonica on “Sesame Street” reminds listeners of the blues. Along with the soul food alluded to by the title, soul music is also heard on the album. Soul music is referenced through “O.M.N.I.” with a scratchy guitar sound characteristic of Stax soul musician Isaac Hayes’ *Shaft* theme song. Also, *Soul Food* incorporates natural sounds that evoke the rustic atmosphere of the South that the African American musical references support. There are crickets chirping in background on “Fighting” and bullfrogs croaking in “The Coming” that manifest the rural environment of the South. The musical characteristics that embody southern life featured on OutKast and Goodie Mob’s respective debut albums reinforce the textual references to African American experiences in the South.

The textual subjects of OutKast’s *southernplayalisticadillacmuzik* refer to historical social injustice through slavery that was unique to African American experiences in the South. Textual references to social uplift are heard in the chorus of “Git Up, Git Out” when the words “Nigga, you need to git up, git out and git somethin’ / Don’t let the days of your life pass by” are sung. Other textual characteristics of *southernplayalisticadillacmuzik* are references to southern food, such as in “Ain’t No Thang,” as the chorus states, “Ain’t no thang but a chicken wang.” Goodie Mob’s texts also contain elements that are identifiably southern. They focus on African American styles of musical harmony and textual references to slavery.

There are numerous textual examples that refer to the historical plight between African Americans and the South in *Soul Food*. The album opens with a song called “Free,” where a spiritual vocalist sings “Lord it’s so hard, living this way, a constant struggle each and every day . . . Devil you gotta let me and my people go.” The slave

trade is mentioned explicitly on “Fighting,” and the continued effects of slavery are seen in the struggle that African Americans are still “fighting for our spirit and mind,” which “The Day After” mentions as well because of “all these years of struggling.” Finally, “Cee-Lo” is entirely devoted to a monologue about slavery and oppression, while “The Day After” recalls “all these years of struggling.”

Like OutKast’s *southernplayalisticadillacmuzik*, Goodie Mob’s *Soul Food* refers textually to southern cultural aspects other than the history of slavery. The title of the album evokes the traditional southern food associated with the South. The title track “Soul Food” mentions “soul food chicken,” “rice and gravy,” “grits,” “hot wings,” and a “heaping helping of fried chicken, macaroni and cheese and collard greens.” Southern culture is also included textually through references to southern religion and spirituality, shown in prayers. The prayers in “Free” and “Serenity Prayer” portray religion in the South. Goodie Mob incorporates Southern gospel and spirituals into its music, in both musical and textual ways.

Atlanta rap groups OutKast and Goodie Mob represent the epitome of southern hip hop culture in their musical and thematic focus on southern experiences that tell a heroic tale. The experiences of African Americans in the South are glorified and worn as a badge of honor instead of shame. Southern African American religion, traditions, history, weather, and foods are all mentioned through music and text to celebrate the experience of Southern African Americans. In promoting southern culture through rap music, instruments and food references manifest the experience of southern African Americans in order to elevate the experience of southern blacks in a positive, non-threatening way. Like the oral traditions that conveyed African and African American

experiences before and after them, southern rappers from Atlanta appropriated rap style and textual themes from others and elaborated on them, blending them seamlessly and powerfully.

Unlike OutKast and Goodie Mob's southern rap albums, Memphis rappers did not transition to the southern style of rap promoted by the Dirty South. Although located in the southern region of the United States, Memphis rappers primarily focused on textual themes present in West Coast gangsta rap, while developing a very distinctive discordant musical style. The discordant harmonies and unsettling text of Memphis rap portrays another version of southern experience than the rap of OutKast or Goodie Mob. During the years 1993 to 1997, Memphis musicians developed a new kind of rap that was characterized by harmonic dissonance and criminal and occult-referencing texts.

In Memphis, many well-known rappers were not involved with mainstream record labels until later in their careers. Memphis rappers created music that garnered local recognition that eventually led to national music recognition and representation. The distinctive style from Memphis later attracted large studios to notice the local success Memphis rappers attained. Because they did not sign with major recording labels until later in their careers, Memphis' most influential rappers created music that was noticeably lo-fi (low fidelity) at the beginning of their careers. Low fidelity adds unwanted harmonic distortion to recordings, which causes lo-fi recordings to sound less accurate than high fidelity recordings. Ironically, for Memphis rappers, the lo-fi quality was beneficial because that quality became an identifiable feature of Memphis rap in the 1990s. The lo-fi quality actually helped emphasize the tonal haziness and distorted

melodic and textual quality that Memphis rappers seemed to encourage by releasing super-slowed down and manipulated versions of their songs, known as ‘screwed’ versions.⁵⁴ The identifiable production quality sound of early Memphis rap resonates with Memphis’ historical ties to its famous recording studios, Sun Records and Stax Records. The sound quality of early Memphis rap connects it with the signature music from Memphis’ successful recording studios and past influential musical developments.

Like Memphis’ musical successes in the blues and soul music, Memphis rap has been recognized for its distinctive style, texts, and portrayal of southern culture in a city rich in African American history. Eightball & MJG (Premro Smith and Marlon Jermaine Goodwin), natives of Memphis, Tennessee, neighborhood Orange Mound, became the first Memphis rappers to become major musical influences on the city and the South. Their first album *Comin’ Out Hard* was released in 1993 by Suave Records, a small independent record label in Houston.⁵⁵

Comin’ Out Hard contains musical characteristics that are similar to gangsta rap albums produced during the early to mid-1990s, especially the work of West Coast rappers Dr. Dre and Tupac Shakur.⁵⁶ The slow, bass-heavy grooves indicating funk’s musical influence on *The Chronic* are heard in *Comin’ Out Hard*, especially songs “9 Millameta Boys,” which begins and ends with a solo, syncopated bass line with an emphasized, delayed downbeat, and “Pimps In The House,” which ends with a solo bass

⁵⁴ Three 6 Mafia’s song “Big Bigness (Screwed)” on *Mystic Stylez* (1995) is one example.

⁵⁵ Eightball & MJG, *Comin’ Out Hard*, Suave Records SR-0001.

⁵⁶ Eightball & MJG recorded *Comin’ Out Hard* in Houston, Texas, for independent record label Suave Records. Although recorded in Houston, Eightball & MJG are usually considered Memphis rappers due to their childhoods in Memphis, where they met in seventh grade, their raps containing references to Memphis, and their maintenance of homes in Memphis after the years of success that followed *Comin’ Out Hard*. Eightball & MJG engineered, mastered, mixed, produced, and were production coordinators for the album, along with Fresh and T-Money (Tyrone J. Elsie). The executive producers were James Ensley and Tony Draper.

line.⁵⁷ *Comin' Out Hard* also features a hi-hat rhythmic syncopation that is similar to the style of drum effects used in funk and gangsta rap. This feature is especially prominent during sections of “Armed Robbery” and “Mr. Big,” in which the snare becomes very loud and is the only instrument played. The reliance on hi-hat drum and bass guitar shows other region’s musical influences on gangsta rap produced by Memphians.

Although similar to gangsta rap in some respects, Eightball & MJG set themselves and their music apart from previous gangsta rap because of their use of synthesizer instrumentation, and the music samples selected. All nine songs on *Comin' Out Hard* are performed by male voice with instrumentation provided primarily by snare drum, bass drum, and bass guitar combined with a keyboard synthesizer. The synthesizer is used to sound like a variety of instruments. It mimics a piano in “Comin' Out Hard” and “Pimps.” In “Intro,” it produces an ethereal, foggy, wind pipe effect reminiscent of a flute. In addition to these instruments, the synthesizer mimics percussion instruments, adding rhythmic variation to the snare drum and bass drum beat patterns that repeat throughout each song. Rhythm sticks are used in “9 Little Millameta Boys” and “Pimps In The House” while “Pimps” features cymbals, “Nigga’s Like Us” contains a tambourine, and “Mr. Big” uses the sound of an acoustic guitar. In *Comin' Out Hard*, the synthesizer creates variation in the melodic range and timbre of the songs through the production of repetitive melodies that center around a central, repeated tone. The rhythms played by the synthesizer are predictable ostinatos, repeating consistently throughout each verse.

The verses are delivered in a distinctive way as well through different vocal techniques and rhythmic patterns. The male voice is usually monotonous when speaking,

⁵⁷ Toop, “Gangsta [gangster] rap,” 514.

as in “Pimps,” and chanting, as in the chorus of “Mr. Big.” The rapping rhythms of both Eightball & MJG alternate between a regular, predictable syllabic stressing pattern and a few moments of limited syncopation that appear in “Armed Robbery,” “Pimps,” and “Pimps In The House.” With the exception of extremely quick sections of “Armed Robbery” and “Pimps,” respectively, the rap textual delivery speed is faster than the songs’ tempos but not extremely fast at about 90-96 beats per minute. Human-produced percussive effects are provided by handclaps on “Intro” and “9 Little Millameta Boys,” and humming and human beatboxing—using one’s mouth, lips, tongue, and voice to create percussion effects—on “The First Episode.” The instrumentation of the music is enhanced by the use of sampling and other electronic special effects. The snare, bass, and vocal lines function together to create a homophonic texture with predominantly predictable rhythmic patterns in a strophic form.

In addition to the sparse instrumentation, which contains only four main instruments combined selectively with sounds created by the synthesizer and other percussive effects, *Comin’ Out Hard* features a fair amount of sampling and electronic sound effects that show the rappers’ influences and also convey the story they want to tell. In “Armed Robbery,” the synthesizer mimics a flute to play the theme from the television show “Mission Impossible.” “9 Little Millameta Boys” contains an excerpt from a vocal recording of a crime scene including the phrase “Is there a doctor in the house” following the sound of a gunshot. “The First Episode” contains a recording of dialogue between a mother and son from Martin Scorsese’s 1990 film *Goodfellas* about the Italian mafia in Brooklyn, New York. “Armed Robbery” features an authoritative male voice stating, “A time when the only way to uphold justice was to break the law,”

sampled from the 1991 film *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* directed by Kevin Reynolds. The television, crime scene, and movie references excerpted in samples in the music identify Eightball & MJG with their gangsta rap predecessors just as the soul-inspired samples identify them with the history of African American music. Also, “9 Little Millameta Boys,” “Comin’ Out Hard,” and “Pimps In The House” use the sound of a gunshot to add emphasis to violent texts. In addition to the funk music influences heard in the songs, soul music plays an important role in the musical composition of *Comin’ Out Hard*.

Soul music surfaces in the samples of *Comin’ Out Hard* to provide a musical reference to Memphis’ earlier contribution to soul music. In addition to the connection with Dr. Dre’s sampling of Isaac Hayes’ Stax song “Do Your Thing,” the ‘down-home’ style of soul associated with southern music created by the Stax and Atlantic recording companies is heard in the lilting, melismatic style of sample singers used on the album.⁵⁸ As already mentioned, “The First Episode” features emotional female humming reminiscent of a Southern church service because of the gospel sound of the humming. Additionally, “Comin’ Out Hard” features a small choir of men and women singing a soulful, swelling “Oh” in four-part harmony. Further, a sampled brass horn section reminiscent of the Memphis Horns that were so prominent on Stax soul recordings is heard in the choruses of “9 Millameta Boys” and “Comin’ Out Hard.” The incorporation of soul music into *Comin’ Out Hard* is significant because of Memphis’ influence on soul music through music recording studio Stax and Eightball & MJG’s life experiences in Memphis.

⁵⁸ David Brackett, “Soul music,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., 29 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie. (London: Macmillan, 2001), 23: 757-59.

The most distinctive aspect of *Comin' Out Hard* is the use of an extremely slowed-down voice speaking during “Intro” and to a lesser degree in “Nigga’s Like Us.” Slowing the tempos accomplished three goals. First, the slowed tempos forced listeners to concentrate on the slowed words in order to understand them, which allowed the rappers a position of dominance and establishes their authority. Second, as a result of the voice manipulation, the voices became much deeper, adding a menacing characteristic to the threat-spewing voice that barely resembles a human voice. Third, the slower voices and slow tempos mimicked the drug-induced haze often mentioned in rap. As primarily performers of a somewhat-southernized gangsta rap, Eightball & MJG utilized electronic equipment to create an almost inhumanly powerful identity.

Eightball & MJG’s efforts on *Comin' Out Hard* created an album that sold more than a million copies during the years 1993 to 1995 despite very little radio airplay.⁵⁹ After the success of their first two albums, Suave House CEO Tony Draper was able to land Eightball & MJG a lucrative contract with Universal Records that allowed them to create albums with the financial backing to get national airplay and recognition. Eventually, these rappers became influential figures who were able to start their own music labels, 8 Ways Entertainment and M.J.G. Muzik, respectively.

Three 6 Mafia was the next major rap group to emerge into Memphis’ local music scene. Another Memphis rap staple, Three 6 Mafia, composed of core founding members Juicy J. (Jordan Houston) and D.J. Paul (Paul Beauregard), were locally notorious because of their unique style of Memphis gangsta rap. They recorded their first two albums in Memphis and later earned a lucrative contract with Warner Music Group in

⁵⁹ Tony Green, “The Dirty South,” in *The Vibe History of Hip Hop*, ed. Alan Light (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999), 271.

2004, attesting to their talent and their business savvy in promoting their particular narration of southern experience through both music style and text. Furthermore, Three 6 Mafia won an Academy Award for Original Song in *Hustle & Flow* (2005), directed by native Memphian Craig Brewer. “It’s Hard Out Here for a Pimp” was a song from the soundtrack to the film that portrays a struggling Memphis rapper who eventually earns local success in a manner similar to Three 6 Mafia’s and other Memphis rappers’ biographies.

Three 6 Mafia’s first album, *Mystic Stylez*, was released in 1995 by Prophet Entertainment.⁶⁰ The album included rappers Juicy J., D.J. Paul, Lord Infamous (Ricky Dunigan), La Chat (Chastity Daniels), Koopsta Knicca (Robert Cooper), Crunchy Black (Darnell Carlton), Gangsta Boo (Lola Mitchell), Project Pat (Patrick Houston), Playa Fly (Ibn Young), and Kingpin Skinny Pimp (Derrick Hill).⁶¹ *Mystic Stylez* is the first album by a group of Memphis rappers who became major successful mainstream musicians due to the group’s distinctive style that gained local notoriety.

The first song on *Mystic Stylez*, “Da Beginning,” alerts listeners that the album is not going to be a standard gangsta rap album in the style of West Coast rappers or even Memphis gangsta rappers Eightball & MJG. Rather, the laugh that erupts from the male speaker amidst the circular minor melody of the synthesizer that embodies occult textual themes and repetitive, dissonant synthesizer fill melodies. The funk bass lines evident in other gangsta rap have all but disappeared, replaced by nonfunctional bass synthesizer

⁶⁰ Three-6 Mafia, *Mystic Stylez*, Prophet Entertainment PCD 4401.

⁶¹ The makeup of the group’s core members was not solidified until their follow-up album, 1997’s *The End*, which makes it difficult to determine the specific musical and lyrical credits to *Mystic Stylez*. However, the rappers featured on the album are all Memphis rappers and therefore the album is a Memphis creation.

chord progressions. The eerie synthesizer timbres and dissonant harmonies on *Mystic Stylez* are developed further in Three 6 Mafia's next album.

Three 6 Mafia's second album, *The End* was released in 1997 by Prophet Entertainment and continues the pattern of musical characteristics started with their first album.⁶² This is significant because the album was released after OutKast's and Goodie Mob's influential albums that began to define the 'Dirty South.' Instead of changing into the developing style of southern rap, Memphis rappers stayed loyal to their musical style. The rappers featured on the album are Gangsta Boo, Juicy J., Crunchy Black, D.J. Paul, Koopsta Knicca, and Lord Infamous.⁶³ *The End*'s main instrumentation is provided by drum kit, synthesizer, and male voice that exhibits incessant rapping and extreme rhythmic complexity. The non-harmonic function of a very low bass synthesizer is the primary bass line of the songs, and the synthesizer melodies remain dissonant and eerie.

The samples on *The End* are significant because they show that crime themes were still influencing Three 6 Mafia two years after their debut album and after the release of OutKast's and Goodie Mob's Dirty South albums. The first song on the album, "Our Arrival," begins with dialogue from the 1996 film *Independence Day*, a film about extraterrestrial invasion, which alludes to the ethereal subjects Three 6 Mafia emphasizes textually as well. "Stomp" features samples from the theme song to the television show "Unsolved Mysteries" which dealt with mysterious crimes and unexplainable events. *The End* also includes samples from N.W.A.'s 1991 album *Efil4zaggin* in the song "Always Into Somethin,'" showing a connection with another distinctive and influential gangsta rap group. One example of a soul reference occurs when Three 6 Mafia samples Stax

⁶² Three 6 Mafia, *The End*, Prophet Entertainment PEC-4405.

⁶³ The album also has songs with guest rappers: "Money flow" featuring Memphis' Kill Klan Kane, "Last Man Standing," featuring M-Child and Gangsta Blac, and "Body Parts" with Project Pat.

musician Johnny Taylor's song "Good Love" in their song "Good Stuff." The cultural situation described by Memphis rappers differed from rappers in other parts of the country because they were located in the South yet did not have the popular music support of a large recording company like LaFace.

Memphis rap of the 1990s exhibits textual characteristics that are more similar to West Coast gangsta rap, showing gangsta rap's influence on Memphis rap. Memphis rap features appropriations profanity, gang themes, and adds extreme dissonance and satanic textual themes. The texts of Eightball & MJG's lyrics provide another way to link gangsta rap musical characteristics with Memphis cultural influences. One example appears in "Pimps," as Eightball states, "see I'm from Tennessee, with curls and gold teeth." Another example of regional cultural trends appears in "Comin' Out Hard," in which Eightball declaims he was "born in the Mound, down, deep in the South," and reiterates the "the brothers with the curls and gold teeth in they mouth and the Chevrolet impalas." Furthermore, Eightball & MJG's "9 Millameta Boys" admonishes, "it's best you try to beg for your life to stay alive, 'cause tricks . . . get blown away." The ever-present theme of crime in gangsta rap is manifested through musical effects such as recorded gunshots in *Comin' Out Hard* as well as text that proclaims the rappers' Memphis roots.

The most distinctive characteristic of Memphis rap is the occult message presented by Three 6 Mafia. The group's first album portrays the textual references that set Memphis rap of the 1990s apart from early rap, gangsta rap, and southern rap. Satanic references are a common characteristic of *Mystic Stylez*, and they are the most obvious

textual indicators of Memphis-produced rap.⁶⁴ In “Break Da Law ’95,” DJ Paul claims “the devil sent me.” “Mystic Styles” is more explicit as Playa Fly recalls “memories . . . as them demons dance” and states the “devil’s in me.” Koopsta Knicca sings about “mystic styles of the ancient mutilations, torture chambers filled with corpses in my basement. / Feel the wrath of the fuckin’ devil nation, Three 6 Mafia creation of Satan.” Gangsta Boo contributes to the textual references to evil by referring to herself as the “devil’s daughter” in “Mystic Styles.” *The End* promoted the same elements of crime and the occult as Three 6 Mafia’s debut album. “Destruction Terror” features Lord Infamous talking about the “darkness of the solar system, malice murderers of many men,” while Koopsta Knicca raps that he is “itchin’ for a killin’” in “Gotcha Shakin.” “Body Parts” contains Lord Infamous’ statement that someone is “too evil though, we gonna give you to the devil.” Three 6 Mafia’s satanic references exemplify the way Memphis rappers expanded the theme of violence in gangsta rap to include the evil power of the occult.

Through the use of satanic references, extreme profanity, and original production effects like using slow motion heavily, Memphis rap was unique in the 1990s because it did not succumb to the rising national popularity of southern rap promoted by Atlanta. Rap albums by Eightball & MJG and Three 6 Mafia had the greatest musical influence on Memphis rap. The immediate musical influence these two groups had can be seen in the rap music created by two less-known Memphis rappers during the mid-1990s. Memphis rappers Kingpin Skinny Pimp and DJ Squeeky released albums in 1996 and 1997, respectively, which illustrate how the rap of Three 6 Mafia and Eightball and MJG influenced local rappers to follow their lead, musically and textually. Furthermore, Memphis has since produced over one hundred rappers, most of whom are African

⁶⁴ With the exception of explicit references to Memphis and places in Memphis.

American, testifying to the significance of Memphis' first rappers' narratives in the lives of African Americans.⁶⁵

Memphis rap progressed from a small music industry to one of the city's most quickly-growing businesses. Memphis rap's growing popularity is a result of its first recognized creators that differed greatly from their rap peers. The legacy of Memphis' first rappers has continued into the twenty-first century, showing that Memphis rap shows unique ties with both West African music and African American music, while exploring and expanding on the qualities of both. The legacies of Memphis' first rappers is continued musically, textually, and culturally through Memphis' newest rappers, exemplifying Memphis' role in the creation of a distinctive southern rap style. Memphis rap is distinctive from its rap contemporaries because of the history portrayed through musical style and text. The music conveys the experiences of the rappers themselves, allowing rap to embody a region's history and its people.

⁶⁵ A non-comprehensive list of Memphis rappers can be found in Appendix A.

Appendix A

Memphis Rappers

Stage Names, Location Origins, AKA Names, Real Names, Affiliations, Awards, Albums, Album Dates.

1 TYME

2 Black

2 Thick Family

2nd Family

8Ball & MJG from Orange Mound
AKA “Ball & G”; “Eightball & MJG”
Premro Smith and Marlon Jermaine Goodwin
Comin Out Hard, 1993
On the Outside Looking In, 1994
On Top of the World, Gold, 1995
Lyrics of a Pimp, 1997
In Our Lifetime, Vol. 1, 1999
Space Age 4 Eva, 2000
Memphis Under World, 2002
Living Legends, 2004
Ridin' High, 2007

8 Ball from Orange Mound
Premro Smith
Lost, 1998
Almost Famous, 2001
Lay It Down, 2002
Light Up The Bomb, 2006

MJG from Orange Mound
Marlon Jermaine Goodwin

No More Glory, 1997

40 Kel

901 Thugz

Al Kapone from Memphis

AKA “Ska-Face Al”; “Al Kapeezy”

Alphonzo Bailey

Sinista Funk, 1994

Da Resurrection, 1995

What Cha Got, 1997

Memphis to the Bomb out Bay, 1998

Alkatraz Ridaz Chapter 2, 2001

Memphis Drama Vol. 2, 2002

Goin' All Out, 2002

Memphis Drama Vol. 3: Outta Town Luv, 2003

Memphis Drama Vol. 4: Crunk Roots, 2005

Showdown, 2005

Whoop That Trick Mixtape, 2005

True Underdog, 2007

Alkatraz Ridaz

Blackout

Big Tiece

Block Burnaz

Boss King

Buck Sticky

Chopper Girl

AKA “Wicked Witch of The South”

Dirty Dolla\$, 2004

Chrome from North Memphis

Straight to the Pros, 2005

Straight to the Pros, Dragged and Chopped, 2005

Criminal Manne

Crunchy Black from Memphis

AKA “Crunchy”

Darnell Carlton
On My Own, 2006
From Me to U, 2007

Children of the Corn

Charvez

Club No Name

Da Crunkstaz

Da Volunteers from Orange Mound
Comprised of: Kilo, C-Bird, J.Rock, Noon
Da Game, 2002
Gunz and Rosez, 2004
What's Yo Favorite Color?, 2006

Darkside

DJ BK

DJ Boogaloo

DJ Glock

DJ Jus Borne

DJ Paul from Whitehaven
AKA “The King of Memphis”; “The Killaman”
Paul Beauregard
Founding member of Three 6 Mafia

DJ Sound

DJ Spanish Fly

DJ Squeeky

DJ Zirk

Evil Pimp

Frayser Boy
Cedric Duane Coleman
Academy Award for Best Song on *Hustle & Flow* (2005)

Gone on That Bay, 2003
Gone on That Bay: Dragged and Chopped, 2003
Me Being Me, 2005
The Key, 2007

Gangsta Blac from South Memphis, Taylor St. and S. Pkwy.
Courtney Harris

Breakin Da Law, 1994
Can It Be?, 1996
I Am Da Gangsta, 1998
74 Minutes of Bump, 1999
Down South Flava, 2001
Da Underground King, 2001
The Mayor and the Pimp, 2002
Gangsta Blac, 2004
Parkway Drama, TBA
Return of Da Gangsta

Gangsta Boo

AKA “Lady Boo”; “Lady Gangsta Boo”; “Queen of Memphis”; “Underground Queen”;
“Queen of the South”

Lola Mitchell
Former member of Three 6 Mafia

Gangsta Pat

Patrick Hall
#1 Suspect, 1991

Gimisum Family

Infantry

Indo G

J. Mack from Whitehaven

JWood

Jack-O

Jazze Pha

Phalon Anton Alexander

Joe Gotti

Juicy J

Jordan Houston

Founding member of Three 6 Mafia

Juicy J - Volume 5, 1992

Juicy J - Volume 6, 1993

Juicy J - Volume 7, 1993

DJ Paul & Juicy J - Vol. 1: Da Beginning, 1993

Juicy J - Vol. 8: Gates From Hell, 1993

DJ Paul & Juicy J - Vol. 2: The Exorcists, 1994

Juicy J - Vol. 9mm: It's On, 1994

Juicy J - Vol. 10: Chronicles Of the Juice Mane (Original), 1994

Juicy J - Greatest Hits, 1995

DJ Paul & Juicy J - Vol. 3: Spring Mix '95, 1995

Chronicles Of The Juice Man, 2002

Chronicles Of The Juice Man: Dragged & Chopped, 2002

Juicy J solo tape, 2007 or 2008

Kamikaze Inc

Kasper

Kavious

Kinfolk Kia Shine

AKA “Nikia Shine”; “Kinfolk Jones”; “Kinfolk”; “Kinfolk Kia \$hine”; “Kia Shine”
Nikia Shine Coleman

Kinfolk Thugs

Comprised of G.C. Eternal and Mr. Tyme Bomb

Kingpin Skinny Pimp from North Memphis' Dixie Homes projects

Derrick Dewayne Hill

King Of Da Playaz Ball, 1996

Skinny But Dangerous, 1996

The New Beginning, 1998

2000 Rap Dope Game, 1999

Back To Tha Playaz Ball, 2000

Da Product Vol.1, 2001

Greatest Hits And Remixes, 2001

Pimpin & Hustlin, 2002

Still Pimpin & Hustlin, 2002

Code 999 Chopped, Screwed and Mixed, 2003

Da Syndicate, 2003

Tha Classic, 2004

Knine01

Koopsta Knicca

AKA "Koop"

Robert Cooper

Former member of Three 6 Mafia

Da Inevitable

Da Devil's Playground

La' Chat

AKA "Co-Queen of Memphis"

Chastity Daniels

Former member of Three 6 Mafia

Murder She Spoke, 2001

Ultimate Revenge, 2004

Dramatize, 2004

Bad Influence, 2006

Lady Trice**Lil Wyte**

Patrick Lanshaw

Doubt Me Now, 2003

Doubt Me Now: Surped Up and Screwed (Dragged and Chopped by DJ Black), 2004

Phinally Phamous, 2004

Phinally Phamous: Chopped and Screwed (Dragged and Chopped by DJ Black), 2005

The One and Only, 2007

Loislane

Lord Infamous from Whitehaven

AKA "Scarecrow"; "Keyser Söze"; "Tricky Ricky"

Ricky Dunigan

Three 6 Mafia Member

Lord of Terror, 1994

Tentatively called "The Man, The Myth, The Legacy" or "Tha Club House Click", 2007

DJ Paul & Lord Infamous: Serial Killaz, 1992

DJ Paul & Lord Infamous: Come Wit Me 2 Hell, 1994

DJ Paul & Lord Infamous: Come Wit Me 2 Hell Pt. 2, 1995

Lootchasers (the)

Comprised of Kingman Skinny Pimp, Chrome, Shank.

Million Ain't Enough, 1999

Shank and Chrome Daily Living, 2000

Lutinent G

Mac E

Manson Family

MC Mack

Memphians

Comprised of Covey, Juiceman, Papa Jon.

Mighty Rappin Fishbone

Miscellaneous

Mr. Sche

M-Child

Nasty Nardo

Nicki Scarfo

Orange Mound Slimm

Playa Fly from South Parkway - South Memphis

AKA "Lil' Fly" (while in 36M), "Mista I.B.N."; "Da Truth"; "The Conning King Of Funkytown"

Ibn Young

Out Da Darkness Of Da Kut, 1994

Fly Shit, 1996

Movin' On, 1998

Just Gettin' It On, 1999

Da Game Owe Me, 1999

Fly2K, 2002

Mafia All Day, 2007

Project Pat

AKA "Gold Mouth"; "Project Pattah"

Patrick Earl Houston

Ghetty Green, 1999 Ballers

Murderers & Robbers, 2000

Mista Don't Play: Everythangs Workin', 2001

Layin' Da Smack Down, 2002

Crook By Da Book: The Fed Story, 2006

Mixtape: The Appeal, 2003

Gangsta Grillz 15 (Hosted By Project Pat), 2006

Project Playaz

Prophet Posse

Ray the Jay

Roco “The Infamous”

Roofless J

Scat Cat

Slice Tee

Strange Nation

T-Rock

Anthony Washington

Former member of Three 6 Mafia

Taylor Boyz

Tela

Ten Wanted Men

Tha Prince & Tha Jester

Three 6 Mafia from Memphis AKA “Triple Six Mafia”; “Backyard Posse”

Comprised of DJ Paul/Paul Beauregard, Juicy J/Jordan Houston, Lord Infamous/Ricky Dunigan. Later, Project Pat/Patrick Hall was added. Gangsta Boo, Playa Fly, Gangsta Blac, T-Rock, Kingpin Skinny Pimp, La Chat, Crunchy Black, and Koopsta Knicca also were in the group for periods of time and released solo albums while still associated with Three 6 Mafia.

Academy Award for Best Song

TV show “Adventures in Hollyhood”

Mystic Stylez, 1995

Chapter 1: The End, 1996

Chapter 2: World Domination, 1997

When the Smoke Clears: Sixty 6, Sixty 1, 2000

Choices: The Album, 2001

Da Unbreakables, 2003

Choices II: The Setup, 2005

Most Known Unknown, 2005

Last 2 Walk, 2007

Tom Skeemask

Tommy Wright III from South Memphis and Whitehaven

AKA “One Man Gang”; “Tommy 3”

Associated with the Manson Family and Ten Wanted Men (Comprised of Jesse James, La Chat, 2-Face, K-Rock, C-Roc, Lil' Ramsey, Mac T-Dogg, Project Pimp and Princess Loko).

Memphis Massacre, 1993

Ashes 2 Ashes, Dust 2 Dust, 1994

Runnin-N-Gunnin, 1994

Greatest Hits

Greatest Hits Part 2

On The Run, 1996

Feel Me Before They Kill Me, 1998

Genesis: Greatest Underground Hits, 2000

Behind Closed Doors: Da Soundtrack, 2001

Ashes II Ashes, Dust II Dust, 2006

V-Dog

Yo Gotti from Frayser

Mario Mims

From Da Dope Game 2 Da Rap Game, 2000

Self-Explanatory, 2001

Life (Yo Gotti), 2003

Back 2 Da Basics, 2006

Tales Of a Hustler (not yet released)

Young AJ

Young Kris and FBJ

Young Snipe

AKA “Ben Frank”

Cash On Delivery, 2005

Look, Listen, & Learn, 2006

Spread The Wealth, TBA

Undaground Rap Mixtape Vol., 2005

Ben Frank: The Mixtape, 2007

Time Iz Money/Money Iz Time, TBA

Yung D

Yung Kee

Yung Trill

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