

Bigger than Hip Hop Meet Seattle's Dred I Movement

Written by Davey D ID3188

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Bigger than Hip Hop: Meet Seattle's Dred I Movement by Davey D

They have long been a fixture in Seattle's burgeoning Hip Hop Scene. Known as Dred I Movement they have been described as the missing link between "gangsta rap" and "bling", meaning that Moorpheus Magnetik, Hannibal aka Hans Solo and Minister of Information GCLI are streetwise cats who keep it gritty while at the same time have dedicated themselves to holding down the block from both brutal police and racist skinheads who used to be a problem in the Seattle area.

You'll find Dred I Movement in schools, community events and smack dab in the middle of political discourse as it pertains to Seattle's African American community. They keep their social/political game on point and their mental skillz razor sharp. And although they don't speak on it a boastful way, people know that their hand to hand martial arts game is not to be toyed with.

Seattle police found out the hard way several years ago when they decided to take advantage of the brothers and lay hands on them. One officer decided to choke Minister of Information GCLI who used to compete in UCF tournaments before it got cleaned up, and it was all she wrote. Not only did the police get their ass beat, but they were also successfully sued for being out of bounds with the brutality.

In our interview the members from Dred I opened up and talked about the incident. Our conversation placed that "the police vs. dred I" incident in the larger context of police terrorism in what many consider to be one of the nation's most liberal cities. Seattle is home to the infamous "Battle in Seattle" where folks came out in mass to protest the WTO. In fact a movie is being made

about as we speak. Unfortunately as Minister of Information GCLI notes, that liberal attitude is misleading especially as it pertains to the Black community.

He explains that the police have long acted as an occupying force and the oppression they apply is widely felt. He noted that some of the new techniques on citizen surveillance and crowd

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control are first tried out in Seattle and then exported to other cities around the country. Sadly, Seattle's residents who live in the hood are the guinea pigs.

The fact that the first Black Panther chapter outside of California opened up in Seattle should tell you how folks really get down in the Emerald City. Our conversation with Dred I members goes into detail about how and why police terrorism has been able to flourish in the Emerald City and what sort of concrete steps can and should be taken.

Not too long ago the group founded 206 Cop Watch which became major thorn in the sides of Seattle's not so nice police department. These brothers would go around to popular dance spots and film the activities of the police at closing time. What was happening at the time was that many people were complaining that the police were showing up and harassing patrons as they would leave and in some instances sparking violence which would give the police an excuse to come down hard on folks. The guys from Dred I by documenting these events were able to get a number of trumped up charges dismissed.

It was the type of activity that most people would've found to be incredulous until it got Dred I showed it was documented. It was this sort of activity that led to the group both being monitored by the police and what they speculated led to their infamous confrontation. They also speculate that their anti-police activity was the reason why the cops used a tank to resolve a dispute the Dred I and other community activists had with the city when they started running community programs out of Seattle's Coleman School. According to the story the city wanted to take over the facility and the community leaders weren't ready to bounce. The police then showed up with an army tank as a way to reinforce their will and remind folks that they are indeed an occupying force. Yes, folks you read it right, they brought in an army tank-That's how liberal Seattle gets down when it comes to dealing with Black folks.

One other thing that was brought out in our interview was the fact that for years there a serious Neo-Nazi/skin head problem in Seattle. For folks who don't know, people who are involved in those white supremacist organizations saw the Pacific Northwest as a place to set up camp and grow their organizations. The region in some circles is dubbed the "Great White Way". That skinhead mentality and undercurrent is something that has likely seeped into and gets reflected in the attitude of many within police department. Again such allegations sound outrageous until you speak with some of the early Black Panthers who break down the political and social history of the West Coast.

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During the recently held 40th anniversary of the Black Panthers in Oakland, we spoke with the organization's first woman member Tureka Lewis. She explained how California and the West Coast in general had long had the largest and most active Ku Klux Klan chapters dating all the way back to the 1920s. She noted that by the time the Panthers had formed in 1966, they found themselves fighting those Klan forces that had integrated themselves in police departments up and down the west coast and in many instances had gotten into some of the halls of power. She also pointed out that many departments actively recruited "good ole boys" from the South specifically to police Black communities. With that in mind, it should be of no surprise to see how white supremacist organizations popped up in Seattle.

GCLI noted that the skin heads were moved out of the city when an unlikely loose alliance was formed between some of the Black gangs, black militants and revolutionaries and the Anarchist who made their presence felt during the Battle in Seattle. He described one memorable incident where Anarchist were clashing with skinheads and the erupting melee spilled over into a Crip neighborhood. The rest is history as the Anarchist and Crips teamed up to do damage. The guys from Dred I also noted that in their attempts to quell some of the police terrorism which has resulted in a number of Black residents being killed, the Anarchist have been close allies who seem to have the right approach in terms of NOT trying to take over and tell a community what to do and how to lead their movement.

Our conversation with Dred I members concluded with them going into detail about how and why police terrorism has been able to flourish in the Emerald City and what sort of concrete steps can and should be taken. We also focused on how they use their music and Hip Hop as a way to bring about solutions and spark dialogue...

For more info on dred I movement click here:

<http://dredimovement.com/music.html>

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