

The Origins Evolution of the Hip Hop Police by Davey D

Written by Davey D ID4087

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Many people have long believed the first Hip Hop cop came out of New York City and recently arrived on the scene sometime after 9-11.

Much of this is centered on Hip Hop's infamous Hip Hop task force which was led by former NYPD detective Derek Parker. He and that task force has been the subject of several high profile news stories, a documentary and a book he authored.

The truth of the matter is that Hip Hop's first cop is a gentleman by the name of Ron Stallworth who comes out of Utah. he's the author of 4 books dealing with the topic of gangster rap including; 1)Gangster Rap: Music, Culture & Politics, 2)Significant Developments in Gangster Rap Music Since the Rodney King Uprising, 3)Bringin' The Noise—Gangster Rap/Reality Rap in the Dynamics of Black Revolution, and 4)Real Niggas: Gang Bangin' To The Gangsta Boogie in AmeriKKKa.

If that's not enough Stallworth has testified before Congress and the Senate Judiciary Committee where he submitted some very compelling papers.

Stallworth books were written when gangsta rap first started to come out of Los Angeles in the early 90s and continued to be updated to the day he retired two years ago. His books are department issued self-publications which have been read widely by his fellow officers. They are extremely thorough, very detailed and have a keen political analysis that would actually shock most people outside of law enforcement because of some of the positions and conclusions Stallworth takes.

In addition to breaking down the lyrics, street culture and gang connections behind the songs and groups Stallworth and his Utah based unit (Department of Public Safety) kept tabs on, his books gave prophetic warnings as to what would likely happen if certain suppression based policies and practices weren't changed or completely eradicated. Stallworth felt that it was important his fellow officers had a clear understanding of the socio-economic and political conditions that gave rise to some of the material put out by so called gangsta rappers and Afro-centric socially conscious rappers. He let his fellow officers know why some of the rap songs being put out advocated for harm and outright killing of police.

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In a recent interview Stallworth noted that some of his analyses did not always fit well with his brethren, but he vowed to remain objective and speak the truth.

In this interview which is the first of three parts we talked with Sergeant Stallworth about his unique background in Law Enforcement. His biggest claim to fame is how he as a brown skinned African man managed to infiltrate the Ku Klux Klan in Colorado and even be offered the position of Klan chapter leader. His Klan membership card was issued by to him personally by KKK leader David Duke.(that is shown in the picture above). His incredible police work led to the eventual dismissal of Klan members who had joined the United States Army with a couple of members actually working at NORAD. (North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD)).

This is a crazy story that in many ways eclipses his work in Hip Hop and will keep you riveted on the edge of your seat as Stallworth provides the blow by blow details. In parts 2 and 3 we talk about Stallworth work in Hip Hop.

Part 2:

We continue our conversation with Sergeant Ron Stallworth who pioneered the whole Hip Hop police thing. In this podcast we speak to Ron about how and why he got involved with Hip Hop.

He explained that he had no intention to become any sort of expert or to keep tabs on rappers. He's an old school type of cat who was working in Utah department of Public Safety.

One of the things this department was charged with doing was engaging the youth gangs. In the late 80s and early 90s Stallworth noted that many of the white Mormon kids started to associate themselves with Crip and Blood culture out of South Central LA and Compton and thus formed gangs. This sort of attachment puzzled Stallworth who eventually made trips to Los Angeles and teamed up with gang task force leaders to see first hand how gangs were operating and how and why they had such a hold on white kids in Utah. He eventually discovered that gangster rap via groups like NWA is how these white Mormon kids were getting their leads and cues. They were fascinated with what they concluded was 'black culture'.

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Out of necessity Stallworth had to become an expert in this new subgenre of Hip Hop. The rest they say is history. Stallworth felt it was important to truly understand the culture of He then began to see how police misconduct had fueled a lot of the rage being expressed in the songs. This led to Stallworth writing a ten page paper which contained his conclusions and observations became the basis for his first book.

In this interview Stallworth breaks down the methods he used to gather intel. He said it was all about connecting the dots and that ironically many of the rappers themselves through their lyrics and album covers which showed graffiti, street signs and other key indicators that provided all the information he and other law enforcement officials needed to paint a picture.

He talks about how the biggest challenge he faced was explaining to other officers the perspective of the rappers and how and why law enforcement needed to change some of their approaches. He wanted the police to study the artists, and find common ground which he felt could lead to better relationships in the community.

He admitted that many officers were invested in maintaining a negative outlook and too often over reacted to situations that could best be diffused with better understanding. In our interview Stallworth referenced a situation in Detroit involving NWA where plain clothes officers rushed the stage after the group attempted to perform the song 'Fuck tha Police'.

In order for Stallworth to maintain what he saw as an objective outlook he would write the books that was issued to the department on his own time and publish them with his own money and resources.

During our interview we discussed the history of surveillance in the Black community in particular Cointel-Pro. Stallworth explained in great detail how and why what he was doing was not the same as Hoover. First and foremost he felt Hoover crossed the line and violated the constitution. In fact he noted that Hoover needed to be jailed. With respect to his operation, he basically listened to the material put out by the artists and then cross referenced things with police resources. In other words if a rapper said he was down with gang, then Stallworth would check that out and see if it was true or not. If an artist took a picture of a street sign and put it on his album cover, he would check it out and see what the deeper significance behind it. In short many rappers were telling on themselves.

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Part 3:

We conclude our three part conversation with retired Sergeant Ron Stallworth. Here we talk about the 4 books he's written on Hip Hop and Gangsta Rap. We pay particular attention to the book he wrote on Hip Hop activism.

He spoke about the things he saw and heard within Hip Hop that predicted what would eventually take place during the Rodney King rebellion in 1992.

Stallworth noted that today rap music has been neutralized and has lost a lot of its urgent message. He says today kids are all about making money and that's clearly reflected in many of the songs that are commercially viable. Says we live in a time when people want to escape poverty.

We spoke about the Stop Snitching Movement. He personally finds it disgraceful; however he understands the sentiments behind it. He says people in the community are getting the wrong message when they are being asked to tell while Congressmen remain silent when they are asked to speak out.

We talked about studio gangsters. Stallworth said there are a number of rappers who say lots of things in records that don't add up when he checked them out. He cited Snoop Dogg and Ice T are glaring examples. He also talked about the 2Pac (Tupac Shakur) case and Suge Knight. He said if he was running the investigation into Pac's killing he would start with Suge (Marion 'Suge' Knight). He then talked about the Death Row organization and it being a unique in the sense that it was represented by both Bloods and Crips.

Lastly we talked about the music industry and the role that street gangs played and how they are perceived by law enforcement versus traditional organized crime like the Mafia. We talked about how and why the street gangs came under surveillance and why we don't hear as much about the mob.

Part One

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