

Ray "Benzino" Scott

Rap and hip-hop artist Ray "Benzino" Scott has never shirked controversy. He seems to thrive on it in much the same way fellow rap and hip-hop artist Eminem does. That may be the only thing these two share. A war of words has been blazing between the two rappers for the last three years, mostly in the form of dis records and underground freestyles.

Benzino began his music career in the early '90s with the local Boston crew Almighty RSO, a hardcore outfit that put Boston on the hip-hop map, but never hit commercially. Benzino would soon become a household name for different reasons. After he received several flattering features from The Source magazine, it was discovered that Benzino was secretly co-owner of the hip-hop publication. His latest headlines have involved the feuding with Eminem, beginning with the taunting single "Pull Your Skirt Up."

Benzino's new record, "Arch Nemesis," drops today, and it includes yet another Eminem dis titled "Look Into My Eyes." Benzino remains the most prominent and visible Boston hip-hop artist on the scene, despite his recent move to New York.

Hip-Hop as Seen by Benzino

Written by Westside ID917

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Herald: Do you worry that you'll be remembered more for your beef with Eminem than for your music?

Benzino: If that's the case, then I would hope the issues of the conflict - the state of hip-hop, Interscope Records and the monopolization of hip-hop - become known, then I'm OK with that.

Herald: Don't you get tired of the constant battling back and forth?

Benzino: Oh no. Definitely not, cause it's real issues I'm talking about. I have a passion for hip-hop and if I'm able to get across my message to a lot of people because of my position then so be it. Personally, I don't know Eminem. My problem has been the double standard because he's white. You know, the things he can get away with.... Elvis came and put a white face on rock and roll, so now rock is just synonymous with white people. The same could happen to hip-hop. It started in the ghettos, it united a culture. I don't think the people in charge (label executives) really get that or even care.

Herald: Eminem attempted to bury the hatchet with his latest single "Like Toy Soldiers," and you've responded with another dis record. Why?

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Benzino: That was spin. He just wants the sympathy. These guys are the masters of spin, but there was no intentions of squashing any beef. I don't think he's intelligent enough to sit down and talk about these issues. He needs to grow up. I'm the dose of reality that's constantly pulling up his skirt.

Herald: Do you think he's talented?

Benzino: Yeah, he can rhyme. But there's lots of people who are talented. He gets more credit than he deserves.

Herald: Is it important for you to let people know you're from Boston?

Benzino: You know, it used to be. I used to represent Boston all the time. Everything I wore was Boston, Boston, Boston, but not anymore. There's absolutely no culture for black and Latino people in Boston. It wasn't until I left Boston that everything started happening for me. How can I represent a city that doesn't represent minorities? Boston is a racist town. It's meant for the Anglo-Saxon to get ahead. If you're a black man you can't do anything in Boston. You can maybe own a barber shop or a beef patty shop, but that's it.

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Herald: There still is a lot of hip-hop talent here in Boston, though.

Benzino: A lot of kids can rhyme in Boston, yeah, and a lot can make beats, but the culture is held down.

Herald: So, does Boston have any chance to become hip-hop's next Atlanta or St. Louis?

Benzino: No way on God's Earth will that happen. Any advice I can give (to aspiring Boston rappers) is to get out, leave.

Herald: What about using your influence to boost Boston's hip-hop community?

Benzino: Hey, I'm the one responsible for hip-hop in Boston in the first place. But really, it's just not going to happen. I tried.

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