

A-Alikes Talk Political Hip Hop in Davey D Interview

Written by Davey D ID3066

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The A-Alikes Speak Truth to Power By Davey D

The A-Alikes are probably one of the most political and yet underrated and overlooked groups in Hip Hop right now. This Brooklyn based duo consists of A-Black aka 'K' Karon and Ness aka P-Red who were originally from Tallahassee Florida where they came up with dead prez and the RBG family.

We sat down with the pair and got the 4-11 of their upbringing and how they managed to keep their music so political even though they come from the Crunk infested south. Ness noted that it's wrong to see the south as non political. He cited the Goodie Mobb, and the Geto boys as two examples of Southern groups that always spoke about social conditions.

He went on to add that as oppressive conditions worsen, that artists will have no choice but to speak out and let the world know what's really going on.

Both spoke emphatically about the importance of connecting to the masses and not 'preaching to them'.

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They also talked in depth about their willingness to work with hip hop artists who do not necessarily speak in political tones. They talked about the work they done with members of the G-Unit camp. They said they did not see any contradiction or compromise. All they had to do was find common ground on which to build.

We also talked about a number of songs off their new album 'I Eat You Eat' including the popular song 'What's Your Politic'? and 'Protocal' which deals with police brutality and the laws cats in the hood can use to protect themselves.

Below we included a short bio written by Dream Hampton about the group so you better know them..

A-Alikes are the future of hip-hop. I Eat, You Eat, the first full-length album from the Unsigned Hype graduates, is the best debut by a duo since Mobb Deep's The Infamous. At a time when the economy is sinking, the prison industrial complex is expanding and the music industry is shrinking into a handful of major corporations driven by sales alone, I Eat, You Eat is a fearless offering, connected to the streets and concerned with the future of the community. Influenced by Kool G Rap, Nas and dead prez and inspired by Pac, K and Ness are truly students of the game." The wordplay and poetry of G Rap was crazy," says Ness. "Nas and Pac were the last ones to be able to talk to the streets and bring a certain level of knowledge."

Ness and K linked in Tallahassee in the late nineties, and it was there that they connected with

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their People Army/R.B.G. comrades stic.man and M1 of dead prez and Tahir and Abu of Hedrush. Like the legendary dungeon in Rico Wade's Atlanta basement, they banged out beats, rhymes and ideas in The Attic, a spot where they'd build on everything from the future of hip-hop to the hope for Black and Brown youth.

People's Army or R.B.G.z, the larger collective they would later be known as, seed was planted in those early days in Southside Tallahassee, Florida. The crew grew organically, knowing that the delicate balance between the streets and revolutionary philosophy would be one that they'd be perfecting for a lifetime.

A-Alikes' first single, "What's Your Politic?" asks the streets to stay true to whatever it is they choose to represent, with principle. It's a riff on Malcolm's warning that a man who stands for nothing will fall for anything. "We're trying to be a bridge," explains K. When you read Revolutionary Suicide by Huey P, his whole thing was trying to take what he learned at Berkeley College back to the cats in the pool hall in the hood. At the same time," he clarifies, "no one wants to hear the cat that comes around, preaching, wettin the whole mood of shit."

While Chuck D. from Public Enemy opens their album, his sound bite is more than a prop or symbolism. He is heard imploring his audience not to talk above the people, not to talk to the people, but instead to talk with the people.

The album begins with "Born Free" making it clear from the start that theirs is no slave

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mentality, no new minstrel. They never judge the next man's hustle though, and on songs like "Greyhound" and "They Wanna Murder Me" they bring depth to what it is to be both the hustler and the hunted. "Share" establishes a code of ethics whether the resource be food or the block. A-Alikes know the space they occupy in rap's present, fractured landscape is truly unique. "We're here to re-define what the streets are, what revolution is, we want to re-define what it means to be gangsta, what it means to be conscience even... " says Ness. "Cats is ready to organize and get on some shit. The economy's fucked up. The white tees and army gear have created a united look on the streets. There was a time when we emphasized our differences, like I'm from Philly, you from Cali, now we ready to talk about the ways we're the same, we not here to talk about how different we are from the next man, but how much the same we are. A lot of niggas in the game, they're whole shit is how much they don't give a fuck, our thing is, We give a fuck." -Dream Hampton

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