

2-3-2006

Smith, Troy

African & African American Studies Department. Troy Smith
Fordham University

Follow this and additional works at: https://fordham.bepress.com/baahp_oralhist

Part of the [African American Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Smith, Troy. Interview with the Bronx African American History Project. BAAHP Digital Archive at Fordham University.

This Interview is brought to you for free and open access by the Bronx African American History Project at DigitalResearch@Fordham. It has been accepted for inclusion in Oral Histories by an authorized administrator of DigitalResearch@Fordham. For more information, please contact considine@fordham.edu.

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 1 -

Transcriber: Laura Kelly

Mark Naison (MN): Hello, this is the 143rd interview of the Bronx African American History Project. It's February 3, 2006. We're at Fordham University with Troy Smith who is one of the major collectors of early hip hop materials in the United States and the lead interviewer is Andrew Tiedt, graduate assistant for the Bronx African American History Project.

Andrew Tiedt (AT): Okay Troy, first I wanna say thanks for coming in, we appreciate it. Your archive of tapes is probably one of the most impressive I've ever seen and especially for this era. Well before we get into that though, I was wondering if you could just tell us a little bit about where you're from. Where did you grow up?

Troy Smith (TS): I grew up in Harlem on 123rd and Amsterdam, the Grant projects, 1966, I'm 39 years old now. Went to elementary school right there, inside the projects, P.S.125, which is [inaudible] school. Junior High school 43 is about 4 or 5 blocks up the hill. Kool Mo Dee, some of the Treacherous Three, the Fearless Four members went there. Then I went to Louis D. Brandeis high school.

AT: Okay, so you're saying that you pretty much couldn't avoid the hip hop influence growing up, it was all around you?

TS: Right. Summer time they had the outside parties, the block parties. In the wintertime they had the indoor parties but I was a little bit too young at that time to go when they first really started getting heavy. But I had all of the - - I had a lot of the shows. Like friends, we would all trade back and forth tapes and stuff like that, and mostly kept mine's very close to me.

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 2 -

AT: So your friends are listening - - what, what - - actually, what was the first hip hop song that you heard, do you remember that?

TS: Well that would have to be a break beat because hip hop songs hadn't come out yet. You know, '79, '80 was Rapper's Delight, but we was listening to it before, before Rapper's Delight. And the first song I really believe I remember was Frisco Disco.

AT: Frisco Disco?

TS: Yeah, that's the one that [sings] 'flight 98 leavin' into somewhere, dum, dum, dum, da, da.'

AT: Okay.

TS: We was all amazed by that. I used to just play it back and forth. The album - - the vinyl was a rainbowish color, so that made it even more attractive. You know, people - - the outside jams and people my age was outside and making like they was dj'ing and everybody had a little rhyme hear and there. 'Yes yes ya'll, to the beat ya'll.'

AT: So everybody had like their dreams and - - did your friends or did you ever MC at some point or - -

TS: I never MC'ed because to be an MC you had to have some serious rhymes and a voice and all that. I probably could do it if I really wanted to put my mind into it but I didn't really get - - those guys that were up there, Kool Mo Dee and them was like miles ahead of us. And they were a little bit older than us anyway. So it was all the guys that were really a little bit older than us, at that time.

MN: Now were there any girls that were cracking in there?

TS: No girls in our area were MC's, and if there were - - no, as a matter of fact there weren't. Not in Harlem, in our part. I remember seeing a light skinned girl in St. Nicholas

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 3 -

projects when Peneleo? and their crew was out there, but she wasn't - - she was just like you know, a person getting on the mic not really saying nothing much. But we knew about Sha-Rock, Peblee Poo, because we heard her on the tapes. Lisa Lee - - not really Lisa Lee. But Sha-Rock and Peblee Poo really stood out. And I liked Peblee Poo more because of the sound of her voice, like I wrote in my story. She had a voice similar to like Diana Ross or something, just the way she let it come out - - the way it came out.

MN: Now who did she work with?

TS: She was originally down with Kool Herc. Well actually, she was down with the Untouchables from Douglas projects, which is like 103rd and Ammsterdam avenue. But she later got on with Kool Herc and the Herculoids. And from Kool Herc and the Herculoids she went to Master Don and Def committee.

AT: So what you're talking about now, about how old were you at this point?

TS: At this time I was about 11, 12, somewhere in that area and my first tape that I really remember - - cuz I had other tapes but they weren't clear, cuz that was real hard to get a real clear copy at that time because it was constantly being duplicated. But my first tape was a tape, Flash on the Beat Box, it was at Tea Connection and Bambattaa had recorded Flash and them at Bronx River, and he was the first one to really make a plate, actually through hip hop, you know. He took the plate, took it to tea connection and you would think Flash and them was actually at the party, but there was a plate being played. And the sound is so good, it was unbelievable, that that tape was all over Harlem and wherever else and it was just like you could bring the radio out, play the tape, and that would be a party right there. And everybody's listening, crowding around, bobbing their head - -

AT: Listening to the recording.

MN: So were these tapes being sold on the street?

TS: Yeah, people would - - it wasn't really sold out of a store. We would sell it to each other for ten dollars, or we would trade. It was really only a few people who were selling. Everybody was cool about it like, 'Here, here.' If you didn't really know each other, then you'd say, 'I got one for ten dollars, or twelve dollars, or thirteen dollars.' You know, at that time. But most of the time I just made copies with people.

MN: Now were these tapes being used for like parties and you now - -

TS: No, they were just your home stuff and bring it out to the basketball courts when we were playing ball or sitting out in front of the building or something like that. But as far as the parties, no. But that tape could've played [laughs] - - did a party. Busy Bee and Mo Dee could've, you know, they could've put that and ran and did a party that well, because it was that entertaining. It was unbelievable. I remember just looking at the radio just being amazed at what I was hearing. Especially when Mo did what he did to Busy. I was in shock.

AT: Which show was that, could you tell us about that?

TS: Which show?

AT: That recording.

TS: The Busy Bee, Mo?

AT: Mmm, hmm.

TS: That was at Harlem World during the time of Christmas time. It was really just an MC battle along with groups. And first up was the Force MC's, and their actual dj wasn't there, I believe, I'm not really sure. But they weren't really prepared. They should've

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 5 -

been but I don't know why. I asked Steven about that and he doesn't remember. But after him, Johnny Wa came up. Now Rayvon and Johnny Wa were one of the hottest groups in Harlem world at the time. They were extremely good, but at that time Rayvon was in jail. No one knew for years. I kept always saying 'Where was Rayvon at?' And then later on I did the story with him, he told me he was in jail. Bu they were up, and then the next up was Busy Bee. Busy Bee did his same old stuff that he always does, but it's okay though, because he knows how to rock a party. And then he made a mistake at telling the crowd, 'I am the greatest, I am the best, no one can top me,' and kept saying it. And Kool Mo Dee, among some other Mc's, were judges. And he supposedly got tired of hearing that, so he went into the lab right fast, and thought up his rhymes, and told Charlie Rock, whispers in his ear, 'I'm going up next.' He like, 'You going up next?' because he's not even on the flyer. So he'll go up next. And he went up and tore it down. Now the thing is - - well Cold Crush came on next. But the party was so unbelievable that Cold Crush went in there half assed, talking about 'We ain't really comin' here to win no trophies, we all got trophies,' this and that, but that was the show, what Mo Dee did, because it was the first time that anybody ever went at somebody, you know, at a show like that. So - -

AT: And Busy Bee had - - he was really winning a lot of his competitions.

TS: He was winning, yeah. But he was really a - - he could really rock a show. It's just his problem was he kept saying the same stuff over and over. And he was more of a party MC, not a lyrical MC.

AT: Okay.

TS: So that's why it was so easy. And Kool Mo Dee later confessed that he knew that he wasn't like that, you know. But he had to teach him a lesson. Don't go round talking bout

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 6 -

you the best, you know, if you can't totally do the job like it's supposed be done. Now the thing is is, the guy Fatman that owned Harlem World, he gassed it up and tried to make it look like it was a draw. And the crowd was going crazy. But the Bronx cats still loved Busy and they was like applauding him. And the crowd was like, 'You gotta be joking, you heard what Kool Mo Dee just did?' So they had another battle on New Years Night.

AT: Alright, so would you say that there's really - - that there's a major difference between what was happening in the Bronx and what you'd see in Harlem or maybe in other areas, like in Brooklyn?

TS: Well what it is is in Brooklyn they were still mostly on hip hop dj, they couldn't really get there MC's together up there. In Queens as well. But they were good for their sound systems. The sound systems were extremely strong in Brooklyn and Queens. You know, guys in Queens are more of a middle class over there so they were better prepared for getting equipment together.

MN: [laughs]

TS: So, and Brooklyn - - I don't really - - you know, I'm still trying to figure out that.

AT: Nucleus - - Nucleus is Brooklyn, right?

TS: I'm not sure.

AT: But they had the one hit.

TS: Right. Yeah, that was a nice joint.

MN: Was there any difference between Harlem and the Bronx or was there so much - -

TS: No, there was a difference. What it is is um, Harlem really started out as like a disco hip hop thing where Hollywood and them would come down there, and Starski, and they

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 7 -

would play disco records or R&B records like Billie Jean and stuff like that - - let it play out and just talk over the mic and say little rhymes here and there. In the Bronx, they had already started that saying rhymes and the hard beat and this and that. And it slowly trickled down to Harlem. The only way - - when they did finally get to Harlem, which was Harlem world - - the biggest shows were actually at Harlem world where they actually had routines. They would dress immaculately, you know what I'm saying? Those guys from the Bronx would say like they like going to Harlem because the finest girls are there. It's not really the finest girls but they took better of how they dressed and stuff like that and this and that. When they came down, everybody wanted to do their best show, which was in Harlem World. Which was originally a club like what you were talking about up in the Bronx. It was about - - R&B and jazz and stuff like was being played there so when they came down to Harlem, that's when they put on a better show. But it started in the Bronx and everybody in Harlem would say it started in the Bronx, and they would go to the Bronx to get that real sound. And Kool Mo Dee said it himself. He said he's seen the Furious Five do a show one day at Audobon and he was in complete shock, like, 'This is what I want to do. I want and MC - -

MN: Now Kool Mo Dee was from your project?

TS: He was not from my projects, like 4 or 5 blocks up the hill on Convent. And up on that hill is a lot of legendary people. Gladys Night and the Pips came out of there. Other names - - I can't think about it at this moment, but also, Bobby Robinson. He might have been from the hill as well because his store was like a block away.

AT: So at this point were you - - how involved were you, would you say, in hip hop in general - -

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 8 -

TS: I was just a fan at the time, you know, just going over there and listening and this and that and appreciating it. Whenever Fearless Four would drop a record, 'when you coming out with the next one?'

AT: Would you go to shows? At what age did you start doing that?

TS: I never really, ever really went to shows when I was growing up. Because after a certain point, you know, it was just like a part of listening to the radio, like sooner or later, I'm gonna get it. You know and I had an idea already. You know, sometimes we would see the shows outside the park or something like that. So it wasn't like - - you know, it's like, I live in New York and I still haven't been to the Empire State Building because I just see it every day. Somebody in Atlantic City, I mean, California, would say, 'I can't wait to get over there.' I'm like, 'Well, we see it all the time, it's not that big a deal.' And that's how it was back then. And Harlem World, I would go to King Towers to watch the basketball game and Harlem World was a block away and I would never go over there even though I should've went over there. But after a while you just don't think about it no more.

MN: Was basketball your most serious thing at that time?

TS: Well I actually grew up loving baseball more than anything else. I know the history there. I'm a big Yankee fan, but then it just grew to football. I played for the Renaissance Warriors, playing tackling, I'm talking about, with equipment and all that, and basketball. Today I love to play basketball over all three but I still have a joy for any one of em. Let's go play whatever. Let's go I'm ready. And at that time, that's what we was doing, from sun up to sun down, in the winter we playing with gloves on until our hands got

adjusted to the weather. And we'd have our radio out there listening to hip hop or whatever and Mr. Magic show. We couldn't wait for that at 2 in the morning.

MN: When did the Mr. Magic start? What year was that?

TS: I have - - in fact, I have - - well, what I have is some Supreme Team shows. And they basically started at the same time but Magic might have started before him and I think that's 1980, I'm not sure. And I'm trying to get an interview with him as well.

MN: Now what station was he on?

TS: WHBI, and that's like before - - well, it says it on the thing, I gotta listen again. On 104, something like that - - before BLS. And I can't really remember exactly.

AT: At what point did you realize that you were hearing hip hop on the radio as opposed to just, you know, the tapes that were coming out on the shelves?

TS: Uhh, I don't - - I can't - - I don't know how to explain that to you? Can you say the question again?

AT: Yeah, I mean, do you always remember hearing hip hop on the radio?

TS: No it wasn't out, it wasn't out. It was umm - - like I said, when Rapper's Delight came out, I was walking through the streets on 125th Street and I heard it, and I was like, 'And they finally put it to vinyl now.' And it wasn't, like Cash says, it wasn't all that, you know, it was - - because we heard the real hip hop every day. So when I heard, it was just like I said, 'Oh, they finally played...' But people that didn't listen to hip hop like I did, that was older, you would go to their house and you would hear that everyday, all day long, and you just got like - - it got a part of you, you know. And there's - - I'm not going to say I don't like it, I think that it's you know, I like the record. But I heard it so much,

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 10 -

and like I said, I knew the real hip hop before that. So it was just another record, it wasn't that big of a - -

MN: Now were you and your friends also listening to BLS?

TS: Everybody was listening to HBI, I mean as far as our age group. We couldn't wait to tune him on and you'd be like this in the bed, you know, holding up, holding up, and then 'boom' when it start, hit record, and then after that you probably get right up because you wanna hear everything that's coming out. But it didn't take long until after a while you know, you started recognizing everything that came out. Once that joint from, what's that - - eight wonders by Sugar Hill, that was it. It started like, it was just another thing now. You catch it when you catch it. And we were waiting for Mr. Magic to play those live shows again. The live shows meaning like a Cold Crush Tape, you know, cuz you still never had enough of it. I mean what I have today, I never had back then. You know, I probably might have had ten tapes, but that was a great deal because no one else around there had ten tapes. And they played over and over and they still - - you know, everybody still wanted to listen to it.

AT: Can I hear a little bit about your definition of what hip hop culture is? I mean you always see this, you see it online, it's referenced in the media, you know, its b-boying, mc'ing, dj'ing, graffiti. Would you say there are other aspects of this world that are important that you don't hear about?

TS: Yeah, I'm always amazed when they put graffiti with that because there might have been one person that grew up with us that did graffiti. And he went to the shows - -

AT: Just one?

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 11 -

TS: Yeah, and he went to the shows. And he had a whole crew of guys. We tried it when it first started but you had to have a hand for that. And then it came with the desire. Then are you ready to hear all that madness from your mother.

[laughter]

TS: Because we would go into our man's house and he's got graffiti all over his bedroom, and I was like, 'How'd your mother let you do that?' But he was a wild kid anyway, he ended up going to jail and all of that stuff. That's my man today. He's home now. In fact, he's a road manager for DMX. He was a big name back in the - - if he didn't go to jail, he'd probably be one of those guys like Ventura or one of those guys. His name was Enter.

AT: Enter?

TS: Yeah, Enter. He was really doing his thing back then. But I don't know how they coincide - - put that with that. Cuz I've never seen that.

MN: Now, what about breaking? Was that part of - -

TS: Breaking, I didn't get down with that. I looked at it and said I don't see myself getting down like that, getting down there on that floor and doing it. But they were all around us though and it didn't really grab my eye. But the electric boogie, I used to say, 'Damn, I like the way they do that.' And I tried it for a minute but I wasn't - - I just - - it wasn't something consistent. I was running around playing ball. I liked playing ball. I mean, to be honest with you, I was selling drugs, I was getting high, I was all over the place, I was fighting. So I never really - - you know, I'm a Gemini. I don't know how much that hold but - -

MN: [laughs]

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 12 -

TS: - - but I'm involved - - I was involved with a lot of different things at that moment.

But hip hop was always the center of me, I always loved that. I'm not amazed at how I am today, because my friends used to always call me 'old school.' 'Go ask him. Say that line from the Cold Crush [laughs]. [inaudible] I would come right out and say it. So, but other stuff - - like I said, break dancing, it was in there but it wasn't really around us. I'm in Harlem, the break dancing thing was a Spanish thing now. It started out black but then it switched to Spanish and the black people did the electric boogie. And that's why I don't know why they don't put more focus on that. They just keep going to this break dancing.

MN: Now, the electric boogie is more of an upright thing or is it - -

TS: It's more of an up thing with your body and all that and they do do the moonwalk and all that but the break dancing is more of the feet, on the bottom - -

MN: And the spinning.

TS: Spinning and all that. And at one time they used to call it - -it start out, Uprock. And they would dance up top and do all this like that. And then it started going down to the bottom. And those cats in Brooklyn say they started that.

MN: Right. Now your project, were there a lot of Spanish people there also?

TS: Yeah, there were some Spanish people. It was mostly black, mostly black. And we had a small percentage of the Spanish brothers that hung out with us. We didn't even look at it like, 'They were Spanish, get out of here.' That was our man, whatever. But it was most - - and what lived in my project was the Five Percenters, there was Zulu Nation, then there was us, the Grant boys. And when I say Grant boys, cats that just lived in the

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 13 -

projects and if somebody from the outside gave us trouble, we would come together. But we also fought amongst each other.

AT: These are guys you grew up with?

TS: Yeah, exactly, guys we grew up with. The Five Percenters were in there and the Zulu Nation were in there. And sometimes we would go against the Ball Busters and outside cats trying to come in.

MN: Now you live in maybe 5-6 blocks from Columbia University?

TS: Exactly.

MN: Well, was there any connection between those two worlds?

TS: Yeah, they used to have parties up in there. Hollywood and them used to have parties up in there. That's all I could remember right now. And I just did a story with another cat, he talked about doing that - - Oh! I can't remember his name right now. He made a joint. Anyway, he said - - he was telling me about the story when they were up at Columbia and Hollywood and Eddie Cheeba was doing a show and at the same time up on the wall they were showing 'The Game of Death' with Bruce Lee. A video - - a film projector was up and it was playing and I was amazed. I was like, 'Yeah, c'mon, give me some more.' Because I like that little stuff that we basically don't hear that often. But he added that in. But Columbia, they had their world up there and we had ours. They didn't - - you know, we just went up there to do that party, then we would come out of there. But they were getting stuck up when they came through my projects, to be honest with you. They were getting robbed. So they were told, 'Don't come through there.' That was during that time. It's a whole different now, over there in that area.

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 14 -

AT: Alright, so, not to beat a dead horse but to get back to the point of hip hop culture and style. Now how would you say the style - - did you feel like you were wearing hip hop style at that point, as far as clothes are concerned or is this something that wasn't - -

TS: Nah.

AT: - - it wasn't as obvious?

TS: Nah, what it was was, you just wanted to dress the best, whatever was rocking at that time, which was [inaudible] and addidas, and pumas. And some of us didn't have it. I didn't have it all the time either. But that's what you would wear even it wasn't a hip hop show. The first day of school, Easter Sunday, you know, in the summer time, Izod suits, short suits and stuff like that. It had nothing to do with hip hop itself. But whenever you went to the hip hop show, you would dress your best. So guys would wear British walker shoes. Nobody was really - - you know, you - - nobody wore suits [laughs] to a hip hop show or come out to the park in this outside jam. 'I'm gonna go to the jam and wear a nice suit.' No, they would come out there with their clean sneakers. We always kept our sneakers clean. That was the most important thing, keeping the sneakers clean, those shoe strings white and all that stuff like that.

MN: Oh? Yeah.

TS: Yeah. Well, they were putting creases back then but I can't even imagine that now [laughs], putting that crease in my jeans today. But back then everything was extremely sharp with starch and stuff like that. And not really haircuts like today. But that was thing. You weren't gonna be no bum, cuz girls were around. You always wanted to be your best. And that would've been a thing to get on that mic, because you wanted people to take a look at you. And if you could dj, just get over there and dj so somebody could take a look

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 15 -

at you. And the amazing thing is, with those outside jams, it would be in the basketball court and there would be 100 people on the court playing basketball. Because of that, music is being played and you want people to watch you.

MN: So during a jam, they would be playing basketball while the jam - - you know, with the two turn tables?

TS: Exactly. And six basketball courts in there. And in the back, right by one of the basketball courts. And all other basketball courts were occupied.

MN: Now, it seems that, okay, you had - - the two big things to see were the people dj'ing and mc'ing and then basketball. So girls - - was it basically girls watching guys?

TS: No, it was just - - they were just out there. It's not that we knew they were gonna watch us while we were playing basketball because when there's 100 dudes out there, you'd be lucky if you touch that ball at least 4 or 5 times. But we would just go crazy and just try and get this ball as something to do. I guess you trying to run all this energy out that you feel from hearing this music and everybody id out there. And this is like going to the mall for some people. You now, this is like show time right now, I can't wait to get to the basketball courts because the music's playing. Or they'd be in the baseball field playing music and we just standing around talking. And once in a while a fight would break out and in your mind you're saying, 'Damn I wish I was that kid, that was fighting and putting that mac down.' That was it, let's try and shine, show time, show time at the Apollo.

AT: So who would you say were some of the - - if you had to name a top 4 or 5 mc's from that period, who would you name?

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 16 -

TS: Well at that time, of course it was Caz, Mo Dee, and Melle Mel. But as far as where we were living at, Mo Dee was the top man. Doug E. Fresh, Spooky G, and of course the Fearless Four, whenever they would come through. But it was Doug - - well Doug, you know what's amazing was when Doug first started - - we used to play basketball in Morningside, and he was just a regular Joe. He's about my height, he played okay. When he first got on the mic, at first, he was a corny MC. Cats was like, 'I'm not going with him.' And he used to tell me, 'Yo, c'mon man, I'm gonna go over there.' 'Nah, kid, I'm alright.' But he was persistent. Same thing with Keith Sweat. Keith Sweat, when he used to sing in the lobby, they used to be like, 'Shut up man, get off and let this other dude sing,' this kid named Larry Smalls, he was extremely good. But Keith was persistent. He kept digging in and that's the same thing with Doug. He just kept digging it in. And I remember once - - sometimes I'd be going to somebody's house, a girl or something, and I'm in a cab and I would hear Doug on the mic at an old school jam. I'm at an outside party like, 'Damn, what's up Doug, really putting in his work.' And it just kept happening over and over. And then when the record came out it was unbelievable.

MN: Was he a Bronx guy?

TS: No, Doug was from Harlem as well. He was on 118th street, 119th street in Manhattan, a couple of blocks from the Grant. So whenever that record came out, Six Minutes, we was at an outside party and I mean, they must've played that record ten times, back to back to back. And they would always say, 'Alright, we're gonna play it one more time.' And the crowd would go crazy. And they say, 'Well we're gonna play it one more time.' And they just kept playing it until after a while we just walked away. But

Doug, Spoony G, Kool Mo Dee, and the Fearless Four were in that area and they were the top of the line at that time. Whenever they came in they were treated like Royalty.

AT: The thing about Doug E. Fresh, that song really just defined hip hop - -

TS: Yeah, 6 minutes. Yeah, exactly.

AT: - - and then you have the heavy beat boxing in that one too - -

TS: Right, right, the flip side, yeah.

AT: - - that's something that hasn't come up yet.

MN: When did you first come across beat boxing?

TS: Well, Doug was the first one to really do it in our area. I heard it - - they were throwing garbage cans at him one time, at an outside jam. They were like, 'What is he doing?' But, once again, persistence. I ain't gonna front, to this day I still don't care for that human beat box stuff. But he did his thing with it. I mean the beat box itself, when Flash did it, that was amazing. You know I'm like, 'Damn look at that sound man.' You know, everybody wanted a beat box. It never sounded like what Flash had either.

MN: Now what was Flash - - what was the electronics of Flash's beat box?

TS: It was supposed to be something that he had got from another person that was into music. You know, R&B, or something like that. He brought it from the guy and he rearranged it and the sound that he put out was unbelievable. It was real good.

MN: So it was something he sort of play - - he invented it?

TS: Yeah, somewhat. I don't really know the exact history on that part because, like I said, he was supposed to have bought it from someone else, so yeah, it had to have been a beat box from somebody else, but he must have added something to it. And then later,

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 18 -

Master Don, he brought out an even higher powered one that sounded even better than that. So that history of the beat box started from Flash.

MN: And Doug Fresh was the human beat box.

TS: He was the human beat box. And they trying to say it's Fatboy that did it first but in our section, we heard Doug doing it first. It's just like, who made up 'Yes, yes ya'll'?

Some people say Starsky other people say Cowboy. And then when you read my story with ? You just go in - - everybody didn't travel to - - like they did later on in life when everybody just traveled all over. During the early 70's, everybody stayed in sections. Nobody moved. So you had no idea who was saying what over and over here at what time. So anybody could've made up 'Yes, yes ya'll.'

AT: Yeah, there's a lot of that mixing going on. I mean there's that whole story with the Sugar Hill Gang also. That rhyme, you were talking about that earlier, which was actually a Caz rhyme, so - -

TS: Right. Well you could here that all in there. It's not even just Caz, it's Rahim's joint - - some of Rahim's lyrics is in there as well. And if you read that story, well what's his name, Master G, he talks about when he started doing other songs, what's his name, ? had no lyrics, he didn't write anything no more, he was just sitting there.

MN: Well, there's a line from Rapper's Delight, 'I'm Hemp the Demp the ladies' pimp--

TS: That's Rahim's rhyme.

MN: Except I saw it in H. Rap Brown's book, Die, Nigger, Die from 1969 - -

TS: That's good [laughs]. I'm glad you brought that up. He took it from there. Caz took lyrics from Johnny Cash. 'The fifth of June, it was - - 'on the top of the moon on the fifth of June.' And somebody said, 'That's Johnny Cash's lyric.' But Caz would take stuff

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 19 -

from anybody as far as pop music, and change it into something extremely good. And people just sitting there nodding their head, they don't even know what they're nodding. But somebody else would say, 'I know where that came from, that melody.'

AT: Could we talk a little bit more about your tapes that you have. No you have a pretty extensive collection. There's something like, how many?

TS: It's up to 172 now.

AT: 172. And these are - - what is the era?

TS: Everything is basically from '77 to '83. But there's some stuff that goes into almost '87, but that's very little though. Everything is basically '77-'83. And when I say '77, there's only one tape that's '77, Third Avenue Ballroom. Everything else is '78 and up.

MN: Third Avenue Ballroom. Now how are these tapes made? Who made them and what sort equipment were they - -

TS: There's people who put the tapes into their tape deck you know, at the turntables, the tape deck, and at the recorder. I have a few tapes where somebody's sitting in front of the speakers with a radio recorder, and those are not top notch quality, but the shows are decent.

MN: Now when they were taping them, what were they tapping them for? For sale, for personal use?

TS: For personal use. No one thought about selling that. No one thought about selling them whatsoever. But I mean, that's what ended up happening of course when people keep asking. The first person to actually sell live hip hop shows was Kid Capri. The joints he was doing up in the rooftops was so banging like - - and this is like '85, '86, that - - I

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 20 -

remember it was about 11 o'clock at night, on 125th street, 11 or 12 o'clock, my man said, 'Yo, Kid Capri got his tapes.' I said 'The kid from the rooftop?' He's like, 'Yeah, alright, let's go down there.' And they were selling them for ten dollars. And he was really the very first that I remember. Starchild was also doing it with him and, I can't remember his name right now, but he was up - - Brucie B. Those three were the top dj's at that time.

MN: Now has any library or University tried to make a relationship with you about this?

TS: No, and I thought about that. I time, one day. Because I already, you know, I can just make a thousand, you know, copy every last one of them. And I think the museum is in Milwaukee or something that, the hip hop museum - - and just say 'Yo, this is your and don't worry about it.' 'Cuz I know I want people to hear the sound as well. And sometimes even, I'll be like - - the Cold Crush, they have a website and they got these little funky same tapes on there. I be wanting to say, 'Yo, take these tapes man, - -

[laughter]

TS: - - because you got these same little - - and you're the Cold Crush, what are you all doing with these tapes man? You're supposed to have more than this man.'

AT: So do you ever have the artist contact you sometimes?

TS: Yeah, I've sent stuff to Kool Mo Dee, Caz - - he has his hustle out there so I give him tapes so I can get a story out him. JDL is locked up, he wants me to send him tapes. Everybody sometimes, you know sometimes whatever they say 'Hit me with some tapes.' Or I just use it - - you know, use it to open up a door for me. I have so many tapes now that it doesn't really - - I'm not like on some 'Nah, everything is mine, ya'll can't have nothing.' You know, I use it to open up doors for me to get other things as far as the stories or more tapes. I offer to Caz - - 'I'll give you 10 tapes if you just give me 2.' And

they say alright. And I win their friendship like that and whatever and then we become cool and then I can get more tapes out of them.

AT: And where do you find most of your recordings? Are most of them from New York? Do you have any shows from other cities?

TS: Yeah, everybody is basically in New York. I don't have anything from out of town. I'm really not - - I have no real interest in it. But I'm about to take on something from Philadelphia, when I listen to it, I gotta hear it first. This guy, I don't his name, he's supposed to be a top notch dj in Philadelphia from back in that early 80's. And they keep telling e about him so I'm waiting to hear it and I might put it on the list. But that's all I have really interest is the two turntables. I don't want no, vinyl [laughs] you know, hip hop records or none of that. All I want is stuff from back in the days when they were doing their thing.

AT: When you were a kid, how would you get a hold of one of these tapes?

TS: You would hear it and you would say, 'Yo, what's up, can I get a copy?' A lot of times they'd say alright, but you know, a double cassette wasn't popular back then. Very few people had a double cassette deck. So it was just a matter of you trying to find that double cassette deck and get that copy. And a lot of times they would put radios face to face to record and that was, you, know it just didn't come out well. But most of the time you jus hoping that you could luck up and get a tape or you just find it on the ground. I'm not gonna front on you. There was a time - - one time, once or twice, I told somebody I would give them back their tape and I didn't. If they had tried to break my arm, they would've got it. But I wasn't too fast to give it up because it was hot, I was loving it. I remember I used to smoke weed and smoke - - somebody used to say, 'I've got a tape for

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 22 -

him, give it to me.' And I smoke weed, and never come out until the high was down because the tape - - I would just be stuck at the party. I felt like I was at the party listening to him. And I used to love to hear when the record would go down and those guys were just talking. Like Cash snappin' on somebody in the crowd and hearing other people in the background talking to each other or you know - - 'Shut up, look at her, she ain't nothing but a bum.' Or, 'He ain't 17 years old!' You know, stuff like that. And that's what you see on the list when I break it down even more, when I say B.O.- - bad attitude is in the house. I mean - - Bug Out, that was his name. B.O. stood for one of the Zulu Nation dudes. Different little names, so other cats from up in the Bronx say, 'I was at that party. I remember when he was there.' Or, 'I had that party,' because I said this - - I gave this description, you know. And then I hear people from all over say, 'Do you know that in the office we downloaded your whole list and we been in there talking about it?' And I'm like, 'Damn! That's real good.' It kept me - - it just motivated me to keep going more and trying to put more deeper stuff into it, such as 'Let go back into the time.'

MN: Damn. Now when you were going to these jams do you think that they reduced the amount of conflict in the community or increased it, or didn't make any difference one way or the other?

TS: Ummm, nah, I don't think it made any difference. It wasn't like, 'The party's on, alright get your guns ready,' or, 'watch out be careful.' Like I was telling Fab 5 Freddy, I said, 'It was amazing.' We didn't care - - all we wanted to do was hear that music. Even when they pulled out, everybody would run, [laughs] and then in a little while everybody would come right back and the music would start all over again. And nobody would be on cue like waiting, 'Is something about to happen?' Nah, they'd go right back to

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 23 -

bobbing their head, listening to the music, waiting for something good to happen from the emcee and dj, not really this cat here with the guns and all that. So, no, I don't think it really made people scared or nothing like that. What it did though, it probably kept people up late at night, for that lived in the projects, hearing all that music.

MN: Yeah, because this is interesting. If you tried this in some neighborhoods today, you know - -

TS: They'd shut us down fast.

MN: Was it that the cops just didn't care or they had so many other things to do at that time, or they were understaffed?

TS: I really don't know, that's a good question. Maybe they just were like, 'Good, have a good time, and' - - because like I said, there wasn't really that much beef out there, at least not in our part.

MN: Did you have older people like throwing pots down on you, 'Shut up!'

TS: No, because it was so far away from the projects, that wasn't a problem. I mean when I say that meaning, the basketball courts are very far from the actual buildings and the baseball field. So, nah, that wasn't a problem like that. And the cops never - - I don't remember the cops ever coming to the basketball courts. The cops came to the baseball field because it was closer to the street. So I don't see - - I've never really seem them walking into the courts saying 'Turn that off.' And then in Manhattanville, which was next to my projects, they had permits over there, so they wouldn't even mess with them like that and the precinct was a block away.

AT: What age were the people would you see at these parties?

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 24 -

TS: A lot of those guys were 5-7 years older than me - - than we were. There was very few younger than us there. Because we were young ourselves at the time.

MN: Now were there as many girls as guys at the party?

TS: Nah, nah.

MN: So, okay, the girls are not playing ball, they're not emceeing - -

TS: They're just out there.

MN: They're just out there.

TS: Walking around, talking to each other - - but there was a lot - - there might have been a little bit more fellas, but there was still a lot of beautiful girls out there, standing around, posing as well. Because cats were cool. Brothers were dressing to and getting money so they were digging the fellas as well.

AT: And you said there was a period where you actually stopped listening to the tapes and then you came back to it. So what was it that drew you back into this?

TS: Because it wasn't really out there no more. When I lost my tapes, I was the man with the tapes all the time. So when I didn't have my tapes I wasn't hearing nobody really playing it. And then one day, I ran - - there's a store where we used to hustle at on 123rd - - 125th and 7th. And they always had the speakers out there. We would be on the blocks hustling and we used to always hear the top records. And one day I walked in there, this is after I stopped hustling, and I asked him about something and I'd seen in the back that they had rows of these tapes. I said, 'What's that?' So I look, I said 'Hold up the Cold Crush.' And right away I started buying these tapes up, and that's what opened up the door.

MN: So this is a different sound then you'll ever hear on records?

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 25 -

TS: Nah, nothing really comes - - you know, nothing really comes close, there's still some times when it's extremely good. Like my favorite artists' today, and they ain't even really doing their thing no more, was WuTang, I guess cuz their roughness, their grittiness, Naughty By Nature, DMX is my man, Jay-Z I'm not really a fan of because the sound of his voice. He doesn't even sound like an emcee from back in the days. DMX sound like an em - - he sounds like a JDL from back in the days. So the sound is definitely different. They talk too much today about this being straight hoodlums style. Like, you know, taking and doing this and doing that. They boasted back in those days but it just didn't seem like that was - - it seemed like it wasn't as evil then as it is today. In fact, the only person who really talked about something evil was Pow Wow when he talked about going to jail and then somebody committing suicide. Everything else - - I never heard anybody talking so violently on that hip hop like it is today. And even when Mo took out Busy he didn't - - he did it totally different than what Tupac did to Biggie Smalls and that whole crew. But still to them all, he still degraded them, you know. He still degraded them just like Tupac told him 'I had sex with your chick.' You know, even though he used other lyrics, you know, women is in here. But, you know, I looked at the thing like, 'Damn, I ain't never heard that since Mo and Busy Bee.' But the sound is a great deal different, I don't even care for it. And the thing that really bothers me is there's no hip hop groups, like four emcees in a room passing the mic down with routines.

AT: So would you say that this is the major differences between what you hear in the old school and what you hear now - -

TS: Right, there's no routines today with groups. It's just everybody has - -

AT: There's no conversation going on - -

TS: Right, exactly - -

AT: There's no back and forth.

TS: There's just lyrics. Passing that mic down on freestyle, and that's it. And the thing is [laughs] Fearless Four probably started that too, the freestyle or whatever because one of their records is called 'Free style.' And it was the first time you heard that there was no routines, no conversations back and forth like you said. Just did their rhyme, passed it down, did their rhyme, passed it down. And it was hot, it was dope. But today's there's nothing, none of that that I hear. I heard about a group called Jurassic 5 or something like that but I haven't heard their music yet. But they keep telling me about them.

MN: I got some in my office.

TS: They're not really jumping up though, so that's why I ain't stepping to them. You know, to listen to them.

MN: Yeah, they're more underground, more West Coast.

TS: Right, okay, I didn't know they was West Coast either, but I hear what you're saying.

AT: So this is basically why - - you pretty much - -you concentrate on old school. You don't have any newer recording then?

TS: Nah, like I said, DMX is the one that I dig the most right now. I try and listen to these other guys and it just doesn't - - when I really listen to it - - oh, Nelly's my man too, but he's not really hip hop. He's almost like and R&B/Hip hop singer or something like that. And I can't recite nobody's rhymes any longer [laughs]. That means I don't really listen to it that much. Hopefully when DMX comes out with this album I'll really start digging him. I'm trying to think of some other hip hop emcees, there's really nobody that stands out. What's that joint? 'Lean Back,' that was real nice but it wasn't really, to me,

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 27 -

maybe you can say it was hip hop, but it just seemed like it was more R&B/hip hop as opposed to that straight hip hop sound where it's just the emcee doing his thing without a hook. I really miss them dudes. The other day I was watching - - JD and I came from jail, they had a coming home party for him and when he got on the mic a tear came in my eye because he was doing that rhyming to the beat and the way he was just doing it, I was like Damn. I wish he'd have stayed out here, you know what I'm saying instead of going back and forth to jail. Right now, I was telling somebody, I said, 'There's a starting 5 in jail right now.' Like a starting 5 basketball team. JDL, Mr. Troy from the Disco 4, Crazy 8 is the dj for the Fearless 4, Master Rob, Kevy Kev's brother, another emcee, and Rayvon, he just went back to jail as well. These are some extremely talented brothers that got caught up. I mean, there's so many other stories. What's his name, Ruby Dee from Fantastic 5, he's out in California, I mean, Florida with a belt on his leg right now - - can't leave or whatever. But very talented people at that time. I wish you could read other stories that I did where they talk about some of the very most talented brothers in the world and that was their outlet, you know, getting on the mic and emceeing. And then I notice that a lot of these guys, they all hang out every weekend. So they really damn near irresponsible during the week. None of them really have consistent jobs. A lot of them are good. Like Kool Mo Dee got his diploma and all that stuff. And DLP is now a professor at one of those colleges in Queens and he's a dean at our junior high school that we grew up with. So many other one are, you know, living from week to week, and cell phones keep cutting off every months. So I try and analyze that saying, 'This is the same guys that were hanging out every night.' And they're still in those parties - - that party-type mode or whatever. So that's why like every story I do, I'm so happy when I hear that

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 28 -

they're doing something good so I can add it to the story like they're having a profitable life instead of just totally falling off the deep end. Like Pow Wow. That's my man, he's crazier than a bed bug [laughs]. I don't even go no further than that, he's just crazy as a bed bug [laughs].

AT: Can you tell me something, how would you describe what you're doing with this, with collecting - - you know, having the huge archive? I mean, is part of this to show respect for the original artist?

TS: That's what I think it is. Showing a care for them, not leaving them in the dark. At first - - there's times when people come to me and buy tapes from me. And some guys like AD, he don't want nobody selling anything Cold Crush. And one of the guys from Zulu Nation, a kid named Lucky Strike or something that. So I was talking to Caz about it, and when he see the stories that I was doing, and how I did this, the list, he said, 'Man you see what you're doing for hip fop for us man? I got your back, don't worry about it.' Pow Wow said the same thing. So that's how they kind of look at us like I'm bringing them up to the front and putting more shine on them. And the way I talk still, you know, I'm still talking with a street slang but I'm not living in the streets no more. I'm not hustling drugs. I am a Christian today. So in fact, it's like I'm bringing them up. I don't - - you know, sometimes I wonder about it, but I just think that you know - - it's on the internet as well. People keep coming to me saying, 'When are you gonna do my story?' So I think - -

MN: That's a powerful thing you're doing. It must make people feel validated.

TS: And I ain't getting no - - I'm not getting any money for those stories. I get a real joy out of that. I can't wait till I put it up and we get the feedback.

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 29 -

MN: Well that's interesting because that's like what we do here.

AT: It's pretty similar actually.

MN: That's interesting because people - - yeah, I mean, this is awesome. Does it - - I mean it's so interesting that these incredibly talented people, some of them just never pulled themselves out.

TS: Right, right. They got caught in an addiction as well, and just being irresponsible. But on that mic, they loved it. You would hear them even talk about that, 'I can't wait to get that steel in my hand and just control the crowd.' And I could even hear it in them and I'm thinking about it when they're you know, actually controlling the crowd. And these were guys that when you listen to it, they sound real good at that time. They can't pick it up no more. They just can't get with the times. But at that time, at that moment, yes, they were extremely hot, they were a superstar, a ghetto superstar.

AT: Alright well I think that beyond a couple of questions about the actual collection here I think I'm pretty much done.

MN: It's just very powerful that you've done this for a lot of people who did important things. I have to sit and think about it because, you know, it's a lot like we're doing and it's amazing to kind of meet you, that you're doing this on your own - -

TS: Jay Kwan's with me. He started this though, not by myself.

AT: Well, could you tell us a little bit more about Jay Kwan and the web site?

TS: He, like I said, it was his site. He had no - - he had like - - when I first seen it, it was stuff that he had read about. He's saying his first recollection of hip hop was 'Rapper's Delight' so he knew nothing about the live shows.

AT: Jay Kwan's from Virginia right?

TS: Exactly.

AT: So am I so - -

TS: So when he heard this, he got caught up into it. And where he was looking for that Sugar Hill label. Like every time they came out, he didn't care what would come out, he would buy it. So he's a big record collector today, big record collector. And what it was was, like I said, I seen the web site, I always remember it was in red. [laughs] The background was red, the letters were white and he was telling a story about each and every group. And I was like, 'Well this is pretty basic stuff, okay.' But I would always go back there. And one day I started seeing him putting up interviews. And one day he said something about tapes or whatever, or we talked about tapes - - I got his number - - I e-mailed him, he gave me his number. And we just hit it off real good. We got cool real fast. But it took almost like a year to two years before I started doing stories. But the stuff just got bigger and bigger and bigger when people just kept - - they started putting us on another website called 'oldschoolhiphop. Com' and they were talking about the site saying, 'You should see what these guys are doing.' And then we would - - every time we would put up a story we would go to them just as a story goer, we would say, 'Alright, we got a story at the foundation, come and check it out, let us know how you like it.' And right away, 10, 15, 20 different responses, 'Yo, I like the way you did this,' 'Why you didn't ask him that question,' 'I didn't know this was going on,' 'Thank you for what ya'll doin,' you know, this and that. And that's why I said, it started all over the world. I got kids from Tokyo - -

AT: I was gonna ask that actually - -

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 31 -

TS: The kid was 18 years old. I said, 'What do you know about - - I had to meet him in Chinatown, 'What do you know about...?' 'I don't care. I just seen the movie 'Wildstyle' and I love this hip hop and I want to see what this sound like.' I was like, 'Alright.' So I get guys from France and Switzerland. Every once in a while I'll give them my number and they'll call me and I'll see this crazy number coming up with 15 numbers or whatever and we'll start talking. And 'Yo, do you think you can send me something.' I said, 'Alright, we'll work on it kid. I'll see what's going on.' And that's how it happened with me and Jay Kwon. So we would - - sometimes we would talk hours and we would also talk about the stuff that was off the record. These guys were regular Joe's. Like they had a lot of trauma in their life as well, things that they weren't too happy to talk about but they would gain our trust and you know, we would talk about our own situations in life. And it was just amazing that these guys I seen on the tapes, I mean, listen to on the tapes growing up, became my friends. I was a little kid, 11 years old, these guys were about 6-7 years older than me and now they're my friends.

[END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A] [BEGINNING OF TAPE 2 SIDE B]

TS: - - write stories and they would put me in contact with this guy and that guy and send me up to the front and stuff like that. And I would stand there and be like Damn I'm standing next to these same cats that are pioneers in hip hop. And I got a few stories that I'm still chasing. I'm on Busy Bee right now. I think that's the one - - people constantly tell us about doing a book. We've written so much stuff now it looks like it's about to turn into 2 books. Some guys I'm not really interested in such as Bam and Diddle because their stories have been told a million times. They have a little bit of an arrogance. When I say arrogance like, its like you probably really gotta be somebody or whatever to

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 32 -

really get their whole attention. I don't really know them but I'm not that really much interested in chasing them. But Busy Bee is the last one I really want. I have a whole list of names but Busy Bee is the biggest name that I want. Cuz I wanna know, 'How did you feel that night when you were getting' tore up the frame when Mo was doing what he was doing?' And it takes a while but I can gain that from them as well and put into words where it won't look bad or nothing like that.

AT: Before I finish, can you just put this on record, your top, maybe your top 4 or 5 recordings one more time and I've got the list here.

TS: Well the top 1 is a combination, I can't even put one before the other. Treacherous Three Second Anniversary with the Cold Crush, Flash on the Beatbox and Fantastic vs. Busy Bee. Let e see this for a minute, the fourth one. No this is it right here. Oh yeah, this is four, Flash on the beat box, Kool Mo Dee vs. Busy Bee, Fantastic vs. Cold Crush and the Treacherous Three's second anniversary.

AT: And again, one more time, why are these the best example of what you'd wanna listen to in old school hip hop?

TS: Well, for one, at that time, well even, well not now, but you could have took those recordings and put them on wax and they would have sold like a DMX or Jay-Z album sells today. They would've sold just like that. And this is just in Manhattan and the Bronx alone, not even counting Queens, well yeah, I guess you would still have to put it in there. That's a million, trying to get gold platinum. But these 4 tapes probably could've went platinum. And then there's Busy Bee opening up for the Def Committee. Busy Bee didn't even know he was supposed to be there that night, he just was there. Randy that ran Harlem World, one of the guys that ran Harlem World, just asked him, 'Could you get

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 33 -

on?’ because a certain group probably wasn’t there before Def Committee got on. So he got on and he killed it. I mean, it was unbelievable how he did it. It was probably one of his best recordings too. Then the Cold Crush vs. Force MCs, everybody thought it was a battle but it wasn’t. Cold Crush just came there to do their show and break up .Cold Crush, when you listen very closely, never say anything about a battle. None of their lyrics - - because they were never fearful of anyone. That’s one of the main reasons why I liked those guys, Caz and JDL. Because when you listen to the tapes growing up, you would assume that these dudes were muscle bound killers, they got a pistol somewhere on em, they got sunglasses on, and they blue-black black [laughs]. You know what I’m saying? It just seemed like that because they had so much confidence and heart coming out of their mouth so when they battled the Force emcees they never said anything pertaining to them. When Force emcees came on, Cold Crush left, left the party at New Jersey, and Force emcees started dissing em on the mic. So everybody to this day assumes that that’s an actual battle. And I wrote to the story, I talked to Caz and JDL and they told me different. It ain’t never happened like that, we found out the next day through a roadie that they said this and that and they stepped to them and asked for another battle. They didn’t really wanna battle. Herc, Kool Herc in Herculoids versus the L brothers, that’s a real good one. Mostly because it’s the L brothers going against Herculoids. Herculoids never really come on. And on the flip side, Theodore is cutting up that record ‘Super Sperm.’ The way that he’s cutting it is unlike anyone else. ‘Sup sup per per per sperm sperm sperm sperm sperm.’ And then it just goes straight across and I was like, ‘Damn that sounded good.’ And Grandmaster Caz, I told you about that, where he did something that could have been a 12 inch record and Africa Islam is cutting

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 34 -

[inaudible] the way he's cutting it sounds very good. And Johnny ___ and Rayvon, finally I got a tape with them together, that is a classic. That would sell because his sound is like a disco sound and people, even L.A. Sunshine and emcees, they would recite the lyrics. Tell me when I would tell him I got that tape. He's like 'What? You got Rayvon and Johnny ___?' and start singing their lyrics. On that same tape Kurtis Blow and Grandmaster Flash is doing their thing. And then the last one is Fearless Four at Manhattanville and this one, Crazy Eddie is cutting the whistle from Spoony rapping along with the beat from 'Love rap,' he's cutting it together. That was real hot. And on the flip side is Doug E. Fresh with Mike C and an early Rob Bass. All these guys were very good emcees. And this guy named emcee Holiday who wasn't really known tried to go against Rob Bass. And Rob Bass was very humble on this tape. 'He's like, 'Okay buddy, I hear what you saying.' And Rob Bass tore him up [laughs]. Tore him up and then humbly said 'okay now go ahead, go about your business' type thing. And in fact, DJ Holiday practically apologized, 'I didn't say I wanted to battle.' It was right on the tape. So those are like my top ten but there's so many even more greater tapes on, especially since I've been adding on. That was like I did, stopped when I was at 113. I've run into so many more tapes after that. I should say, you should go under the foundation - - see B boy stops at 113 on 98, one of those. The foundation is like - - I'm getting ready to update in fact, to 172.

AT: That's more extensive?

TS: Right, exactly.

AT: Alright, great. We definitely will. Thank you very much for talking to us.

TS: No problem. I guess you can keep this for your collection, if you want.

AT: Alright. That's unexpected.

TS: I know you asked me to bring you some tapes but - -

AT: I definitely did. Maybe we can listen to a couple after we - -

TS: Yeah, this is the one with Flash on the Beat box, legendary, this is the battle with Cold Crush and Fantastic - -

AT: Alright [laughs].

[crosstalk]

MN: Let me bring my tape deck in here.

[crosstalk]

AT: So are most the shows, are they from Harlem? It's mostly Manhattan?

TS: Well, yeah. This is from, no that's from Tea Connection, that's the Flash on the Beat Box. At that party is Fantastic Five is there, they're just free styling and then when they go off Bam is still dj'ing I think and then Soul Sonic Force and Cosmo come on. They just pass the mic around. And then all of a sudden Flash bam, plays the plate.

AT: So you've got Cosmic Force. Is Lisa Lee on this - -

TS: Yeah, but they're not really - - they're just passing the mic around. They're not doing any routines or nothing. They're just talking and passing the mic. And then he throws on the plate and they rock for about 20 minutes, or 10-20 minutes in that area. And then they say Cold Crush will be coming up next. And Cold Crush comes on. But they're just really warming up but the heart of that tape is the Furious Five on the Beat box, Flash on the beat box. This is the second anniversary. This is when Caz does his rhyme about Evette, and he also snaps on somebody in the crowd, somebody never did that - -

Interviewer: Mark Naison, Andrew Tiedt

Interviewee: Troy Smith

February 3, 2006

- 36 -

[crosstalk]

[END OF INTERVIEW]