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Darney "K-Born" Rivers

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Interviewees: Darney K Born Rivers, Rodney Morris

Interviewers: Dr. Mark Naison, Lisa Betty

Session 1, October 18, 2016

Transcriber: Sarah Cavanagh

Mark Naison (MN): Welcome to the Bronx African American History Project. We're honored to have here today Darney K Born Rivers, who is a great figure in Hip Hop history also a journalist and a community organizer doing--pioneering anti-violence work. And his nephew Raheem Morris. Welcome to the Bronx African American History Project. So, I'm gonna start with you Darney, to ask you when were you born? In--

Darney K Born Rivers (DBR): I was born in 1968, in the Bronx.

MN: And where did your parents originally come from? Are they southerners or West Indians?

DBR: My parents come from Charleston, South Carolina.

MN: And what are your earliest memories of the Bronx?

DBR: Well, I got a good memory. I could go all the way back to like the 70s when I was like 3, 4 years old.

MN: That's--yeah exactly.

DBR: I could take you back to there where I remember going to church every Sunday. We would run outside early, before my mom gets downstairs; run to the store to get some candy because we lived on the sixth floor. So our moms would give us change that we were supposed to put inside the--

Rodney Morris (RM): The collection.

DBR: --the collection plate. So you know we'd come down and she'd be like, "Y'all better not go to the store and get no candy." So my sister always was chubby. It was me, my brother and my sister. So my mom would give it to us and we would book down the stairs real quick. Run up the hill on 169th and run to Sheridan avenue, there was a store on the corner. And run back down, we'd be in front of the store, I mean in front of the building by the time she get

downstairs, she's just looking at us. You know what I'm saying? You know we looking--we standing right there. We got a suit on. I remember wearing a suit everyday. You know, it was a different era, man.

MN: What was the address of the building you lived on at that time?

DBR: Oh--

MN: What street was it on?

DBR: I think it was 12--it was--no it was 13-something. I think it was 1325 Grant Avenue. That's on Grant and 169th.

MN: Right. Okay and what was the name of the church your family was attending.

DBR: I can't even--I can't really remember but we used to go to the church right there on 170th and Morris Avenue. It was connected to Taft.

MN: Right. It was near Taft High school .

DBR: It was connected. It was across the street. Remember, this is way back in the day, when they had Taft and then they had Taft Annex on 170th and Morris. So connected to Taft Annex was the church and we used to go to church there. And we used to go with my Aunt Rose to another church in Manhattan.

MN: Now what was the neighborhood like when you were, you know, three, four, five years old? What was going on at the time?

DBR: Man, the neighborhood was crazy. You're talking about like 1972. I mean first of all the snowstorms was outrageous. I mean it would be snowing so much that you--we used to climb up fire escape, my brother at that time, not me, jump off the second floor fire escape into the snow. So you already know how high the snow was, you know. And get up, walk and run up there and do it again. You know and when the trucks used to come and came up the street and build it up. The snow would be above the second floor. And that'd be there all the way til the summer. You know 'cuz they gotta wait for it to melt down. They ain't had all the clean team like they did now. You know I remember them days like where the real saying 9-1-1 was a joke. When you

mom would call the police on Friday and the police would show up Monday morning like, "Yo what happened." You know in the winter time because they didn't have goodyear tires and all that. So just have your tires and they used to have the tire chains around the tires, you know, for the snow. So you figure the show this high and you got them cheap tires with some chains on it. That ain't making it man. So that was like, you know, 9-1-1 was a joke. The gangs was heavy. And I'm not talking about like these guys out here now. I'm talking about the gangs, like grown men with chains and studded jackets and the Savage No Men, Savage Skulls, the Ching-a-lings, the Black Spades. You know I mean it was crazy man. It was crazy back in them days. I remember our building, so many people used to get robbed, you know all that around there. Then they had a clubhouse over there too that was the Savage Skulls--the Baby Skulls had a clubhouse over there and--

MN: And this is still when you were on Grant avenue?

DBR: Yeah this is Grant. This is all when I was little. And they used to have--they used to have a clubhouse right? And before you wear your pants, like say you bought a pair of jeans, you gotta throw your jeans in the corner. And for like a whole week, everybody go and peed on it and whatever they had to do. You know, brothers were drinking and all that, hurl--throwing up. Then you threw them on and wore them, you know you was an outlaw. You know you couldn't be out here fresh to death, you was an outlaw. So that's how--you know they had the MC boots, the studded jackets, pants all messed up and dirty.

MN: Now was that mostly Puerto Rican gang or black too?

DBR: That was like--the majority was like Puerto Ricans, but it was some black gangs too. Black gangs, you knew, they had the sweatshirts with the ironed on names, iron on the back. You know, Easy-E and Stash and all them. They had the hats with the big letters on, you know, the plates. So you know back them days, like you knew--the gangs like separated, you know. You had like a couple of mixed gangs but the majority like you seen the Savage Skulls, the Savage No Mans and all that. The majority of them was hispanic.

MN: Now, how long did you live on Grant avenue? When-where did you--how long did you stay there? Til how old were you?

DBR: I mean I got so many memories on Grant avenue. Man we lived on Grant avenue for like--until I had to be about seven.

MN: Okay so you're there til seven. Now do you remember the fires common to Grant avenue or--

DBR: Yeah. I remember like--Grant avenue man, I remember every single day I had a fight. I'm talking from the time I was like three years old til I moved off that block. Every single day I had a fight a guy about something. You know one day or another. You know those were back in the days your mom let you go outside and she'd be on the sixth floor. She'd look out the window all she want. I remember one day I had a fight over a shopping cart. You know the shopping carts that come out of the supermarket. I took my shirt off, dude bit my on the chest. You know I know the dude til today, my boy Glenn. Alright he's a good friend of mine for like forty years. And we still talk about that fight like, "Yo man, you bit me on the chest, man. " And, "What'd you take your shirt off for?" You know? Every time I got in an altercation on that block, my Uncle lived in Queens. He had no kids at the time. My Uncle Fry. Every time I get into an altercation I'd run up and be like, "Yeah I'm calling my Uncle." I'd run upstairs and I'd call him and I swear this dude came. There's not one time he didn't show up.

MN: Really?

DBR: Yeah he had the big--every year, he used to get a new Cadillac, a new El Dorado.And it was guaranteed that he'd show up. That one time, he'd come behind my little green suitcase. You know I ain't go to school at that time, my little suitcase. My mom was like, "Yeah, you out of here." I'd break out for about a week, you know, I'd skip town, if I had a fight.

MN: Right. Now what was school like for you when you started?

DBR: I went to--the first school I ever went to was right around the corner from Grant avenue. I went to 88, which was on Sheridan avenue between 169th and 170th on Grand--right off of Grand Concourse. And, aw man, I remember that school. And I was young, man. I got into that school when I was like five years old and I remember it like yesterday. Everyday before we'd go to school, the food we all used to come with was cereal. So we all shared cereal and eat breakfast together. So, you know, back in the day, you're trying to get your mom to get some cereal in the

morning. You know, money's tight back then. You're like, "Nah, I need a box of cereal." Your mom's trying to get you some corn flakes. You're like, "I'm not going to school with no corn flakes now." Nobody no want no corn flakes, you know? You gotta get some fruity pebbles or something. But them--you better get some corn flakes. "Nah, I'll take some cookies." And I'd give out some cookies there. So I remember going to that school. We used to play--I remember they had the little yard connected to it. We used to be in there playing "Red Light, Green Light, 1, 2, 3," "Kick the Can," you know, games that you don't see kids playing nowadays. You know? Jumping rope. Even the little dudes now--the little guys wanted to jump rope because, you know, if you ain't jumping rope, then the girls ain't gonna play with you. And you gonna need them. We playing dodgeball and all that. We want to put them in. Bombardment ball before they even called it dodgeball, you know?

MN: Yeah, bombardment.

DBR: Bombardment ball, that was the name of it. You know, nowadays they change it up to dodgeball. You know, that was the name of it, bombardment ball.

MN: Now was school something that was easy for you? The academic part? Or did you resist it?

DBR: I always liked school. You know, I'm a Gemini, so I'm a people's person. So I always liked going to school because a lot of people was there. But then I had to do my work, that's where I had a problem. So you know, I'd finish the work fast but then I'd think it's play time, go out and think everyone's at--you know it took me a long time to learn that. That other people ain't--everybody ain't on the same level. Some people you know, take a little longer to do their work. So I'm on there, rush to finish my work and now I wanna play with you. But I ain't notice, at that time, I'm disturbing you from doing your work. Well, you know, at that time man, school was crazy. Everyday somebody was getting in a fight. You look at somebody wrong, next thing you know they'd be like this. And you know what that means, at three o'clock, it's on. It's on, ain't nothing to talk about. You know?

MN: So you were fighting on your block, in school--

DBR: No, after school--

MN: No after school.

DBR: Yeah, not--because this is back in the days, now. There was no fighting in school. Now if I fought at the school, because you can fight at the school, that'd be the day your mom comes to school and tear you up in the class. So that's the last thing I ever wanted--

MN: Okay.

DBR:--because that right there, would go down in history. And you'd never forget that. Somebody would--I mean c'mon, I'd be seeing people right now who got a whipping in like the second grade. I'm 48 years old and I'm like, "Yo your mom just tore you up man! You know that? Yo, you wasn't talking for like two weeks, you came to school!" That's something that goes down in the hall of fame. So you do not want to get a whipping in school. You know and the teacher's being like gassing your mom up like, "Yeah, every time you leave, he gonna do the same." So they really want your mom's to whip you at school. You know what I'm saying? They was like really boosting it up. They already knew, once your mom whipped you at school, they gotta bother with you for at least about another three months. You know what I'm saying? Because you're gonna stop. You don't wanna get played out again. Everybody--you're like the joke of the town. You know, so the buck had to stop there.

MN: Right.Now what type of music was listened to in your house when you were at home?

DBR: Oh man.

MN: In the early 70s?

DBR: In the early 70s, man, we used to everytime my mom would come home, every day, she used to play this record called, "Your daddy's home. Your daddy's home to stay..."

MN: Yeah, that's the old doo-wop song

DBR: Oh right, she used to play that.

MN: Shep and the limelites, "Daddy's Home to Stay." I remember that. I could sing it--yeah.

DBR: Right. She used to be playing that. Like a lot of Isley Brothers. Lot of Temptations. Temptations as everywhere. I remember, every weekend, we used to go to the Apollo. And when you go to the Apollo you--you know, we was young, so we didn't care who was up there. We

were just gonna wait til it was over because at the end, they used to let all the kids go up there and start dancing. You know, they used to be like, "All the kids come up on stage." And I was the master of the robot and my brother was like James Bryan. He used to do all the splits and all that and say "Aw!" But I couldn't do the splits but I was the king of the robot, you know what I'm saying, we doing the moves. So we couldn't wait. We was sitting there like this, "Man I can't wait til this is over. I can't wait." You know? "Any kids wanna come up here and dance?" We was up there, you know? So you know, we always like sit in the house all day. KC and the Sunshine band was the joint back then. You know we used to sit in the house and do the hustle. Me and my sister would make up a million routines. So it was like a lot of disco music back then.

MN: Right. Now was there Latin music in the neighborhood that you also heard? Or not so much?

DBR: Yeah, you know I was born in the Bronx so there'd always be some Latin music. [Sings] so the Spanish music was out. I'm talking about Spanish music was out real. It was real. Like you'd come outside, you had your brothers with the bongos. You had your brothers with the tambourines. You had the--it could be winter, they got the burning garbage can to keep them warm. Smoke up in the air, everybody's around there like this, all the time [imitates bongos]. You from the Bronx, you know how to play the Bongos.

MN: Woah, yeah see that's--

DBR: I don't care what color you are. What race, nationality, creed, you know--

MN: And you danced Latin too?

DBR: Yeah, yeah,

MN: Yeah. So this was a musically rich environment you were in?

DBR: Yeah

MN: Even before you got into it yourself. Like just your family, your neighborhood?

DBR: Yeah one of the first DJs I met lived right on the block. His name was Sweet Pea. He lived right on--next to Sheridan Ave. On Sheridan, right next to the school 88. And Sweet Pea man,

like he had all the records. And he used to always let us hang with him, because we was little. So we used be like, "Man, why…" And then we got it. This dude had us carrying all the crates. You know what I'm saying? But it was alright because he was the only one to let us around and that's how I really got into the music.

MN: Now he would spin outside?

DBR: Yeah, man. And at the schools, when the schools had the basketball games he would come. His favorite spot was 22, in the school yard on 167th st. In the school yard on 22, boy he used to tear it up.

MN: Now this was, what, in '73?

DBR: Oh you're talking about like--

MN: What year was this?

DBR: You're talking about like '75, '74.

MN: Okay, so already '74, '75. So this is when Herc is already started and all that stuff.

DBR: Yeah, yeah. This is when--I went to one Herc party at that time with my brother. And he got in trouble that day. I had to be about 7 years old and he wanted to go to the party but I had to stay with my sister. But somehow, someway, my sister had to go with him and I couldn't--and my sister couldn't go nowhere without me so I ended up with them in a Kool Herc--the Herc Boys (sic) was out there, Clark Kent, man, it was--and I knew how to do break and all of that. So there was guys, "Go ahead man, yo, yo." So I was getting it in. All I know, was when we was coming home, my mom was coming up the block and she had--back in the day she had an afro. She had her shower cap on and she must've been frying some chicken because she had the pitchfork and she was about to take us out of the game, man. Yeah, she wasn't a good scene.

MN: Right. Now did your mother--what kind of work did she do?

DBR: My mom was like--she was quiet storm. My mom worked at a telephone company. She was the supervisor of a telephone company. For the longest, so she wasn't really into outside, escape to the country. You know like, she'd come in the house, she'd take us everywhere. Like

all the picnics, every area she took us like Coney Island and we'd go to 42nd st. And even on Mother's Day, she'd be like, "Y'all can do Easter, whatever, y'all can do what y'all gonna do. But y'all gotta go out with me first." So she was like that type of mother. You know like, "You gonna get an outfit to go with me on Mother's Day."

MN: So she would expose you to the whole city?

DBR: Yeah and then after that, "You can get an outfit to go hang out with your friends, whatever you wanna do. You know, but you gonna hang out with me first."

MN: Was she very ambitious for you kids?

DBR: Yeah, my mom pushed us a lot, you know, especially with education. She'd like, man, like it was school everywhere, man, like I couldn't stop playing school. School was everywhere. We got all the encyclopedia books; the adult encyclopedias, the kid encyclopedias, the new version, the old version. We had every version, man, the encyclopedia--we had a big library in our house, you know. She taught us a lot of things.We had a big pool table in our house.
MN: Wow.

DBR: You know, from the gate, we had a big giant pool table. Couldn't play it unless she was there, you know, they had the wrap it and all that. The company come around--

MN: Now when did you move from Grant avenue and where did you move to?

DBR: Well we moved from Grant avenue, we moved right around the corner to 1410 Morris avenue.

MN: Okay so you moved to Morris--

DBR: Across the street from Taft.

MN: Okay so how long did you live at that spot?

DBR: We lived over there for, what, a good--we lived there for about 4 years.

MN: Okay, so you're in the neighborhood when the fires are hitting?

DBR: Yeah the fires came like outrageously, man.--

MN: Yeah because one of the things its--how would you describe what it was like to be living there when that was going on right near you?

DBR: Oh man. I can take you like--the first thing that--I'm gonna take you to the first shot, like even before that, was when the blackout came. You know, and I was young and I wasn't really seeing what was going on. You know, I'm like--my mom's like, "It's a blackout." And we'd be in the house like, "It's a blackout?" And then the lights not go--we getting candles and mom's putting water over here and over there. And it's still daytime, so we outside and she'd be like--yeah well we all had to get up and you'd see everybody on the block, like the adults is getting everything together. It's like panic is going on. Pandemonium. But you don't know what's going on, you know? And then we came in the house, and then, brother, listen man, all hell broke loose. Literally, all hell broke loose. I mean 170 used to be nice, man. You go--it was like a nice shopping area on the other side and all that. We had a nice bike shop underneath our house. All the meat markets, the jewelry stores, the cleaners, everything was nice, man. We came outside the next day, it was like everything was over. Everything, man, all--

MN: And that must have been 1977, the blackout.

DBR: All the stores--

MN: They got the stores in your neighborhood too?

DBR: Man, they killed 170.

MN: Wow.

DBR: They killed 1-7-0. I was on there everyday--even the stores that--it was like the store the dude that used to give us the small dean balls and the trophies, they broke in the store and stole all the trophies, man. You know, the kids was hurt then. Stole all the stick balls, the tennis balls, I mean it was not safe, man. It was like the whole city was gone. It was nothing. You'd see people running down the block the next day with couches, seeing people with big tvs, like it was crazy, man. That was like the beginning of destruction. That was like the beginning of the end for a long time, man. You know, and then after that it seemed like just every second there was a fire. Some way or another, everywhere, no matter where you went, you couldn't escape it. My mom was saying, "There's a fire over here. I'm gonna send y'all to your aunt's house across

town until this gets straightened up." It's burning over there. "I'm gonna send you somewhere else." It's burning over there. It was burning everywhere, man. The Bronx was burning so bad. I'm talking about you could just literally see it, up in smoke. Everywhere. My mom sent us to Queens, to live with one of my aunts and my Uncle Fry out there too, the one who'd always come to get me. When he used to go to work, we'd stay with his wife's grandmother--his wife's mother in Lefrak City. And by the time--we stayed out there for about two years, and when we came back to the Bronx, it was done. Not only was like before, where the stores was burnt down, now the whole Bronx was burnt down. It was like done, man. I'm talking about every block you went on, it was--probably if you see one building standing, you was lucky. If you see one standing building. If you see a building over here, this building is halfway burnt down but people are still living in there. They living on the other half. Then you would see this building on the next block, where half of the fifth floor burnt to the third. People still living on the second. The other half of it--the second floor burnt to the floor. People still trying to make it to the fourth to live in because there was no place else--I mean where you was going at. You know, and I'm talking about the whole city, man. The Bronx really man, the Bronx was like--it was outrageous man--

MN: Same thing in East New York, parts of Harlem but Bronx was the worst. So--

DBR: The Bronx like--it took like--me myself like I lived everywhere in the Bronx. I lived everywhere. I lived in projects. I lived in Fordham Rd. I done lived on 161st. I done lived in the projects on Webster avenue. I done lived in Castle Hill --I mean not Castle Hill but Parkchester. You know, I done been all over the Bronx. You know, and everywhere was torn up. You know, no matter where you went. And there were some places that got it like real hard, man. Like when you went to like Cypress avenue and--

MN: Oh yeah.

DBR: Over there it was like Vietnam. I'm talking about it was really down to the ground. To the ground. That's when you just walk in and you just look and you just seeing flat land like you in a desert or something. And you go down blocks that you used to go down, you hung out when you were small, and there's nothing there. The block I used live on, Grant Ave, right, that block burnt down in the early 70s. I'm talking about every building burnt down on the block, one at a time.

Building burnt down--building--this building--building. From 167th it came to 169th. All that was burnt down. Then it came from 169th to 170, all that burnt down. The only building that was left was our building and they used to call our building "the Haunted Building." That's how many people died in that building or got killed in that building, it's called Building Haunting. Me myself, I done seen some things in that building. It used to be like a rag, it looked like a blanket. And we lived on the sixth floor. And it used to be there every time in the daytime. But at nighttime it never was there. But we always was scared to look underneath it like, "Yo I wonder if somebody's under there." We never looked underneath it but I know for sure one day I was--I was in my house, me and my uncle, and I--listen, I had to be about 4 or 5 years old. And I'm laying down in the bed, and I could've sworn I seen somebody come out of the closet, man, with the craziest suit on. And I'm hitting my uncle, I'm like, "Yo!" And I'm pushing him and pushing him and pushing him and he won't--I had to be four or five. And he woke up and he looked and he's like, "Uh, what's wrong?" I'm like, "Yo, someone's in that closet, man. Someone's in that closet." And he went to the closet and he looked in the closet, my mom looked in that closet. I would not--I'd never stay in that room again. Only way I'd stay in the room is if they open up that closet and we--they gotta leave that closet open. Like you gotta--I would not stay in that room with that closet closed. They gotta leave--open up that room, you know what I'm saying? That whole building and it was like other people used to have these same--like that building, like everybody had a story in that building, man. There was something in that building, like, "Yo, I'm getting up out of here." People was moving up out of there like, there was ghosts in this building. That's how many people got killed in that building, man. And so at the end, they tore--that building was still halfway hanging on one street. They tore that building down and it was a building across the street where the guy Glenn used to live at that bit me in the chest. His building is the only building that is still on that block. Of course it bends around the corner.

MN: Right.

DBR: But everything else, to today from the 70s, never built back. You walk through that whole block, you see from 170th all the way to 167th. It's nothing. It's decimated. That block is corroded, dead, no--I don't think--I don't know what they can do with it. They got like a little kid park on the side but nobody will ever be in there. And then twice a year, once you will see the

church will come out there with a bunch of chairs and then once a year there will be a carnival out there. That's it. That's all they use that whole--that block for like the last 30-something years.

MN: Now--

DBR: Right across the street from Taft.

MN: When--where'd you go to junior high? What junior high?

DBR: Man, I went to a couple junior highs. When I was young, man, I used to be into a lot of situations, like I was one of them kids that I stayed in a group home or Spofford.

MN: Really? Well how old was the first time you were sent away?

DBR: I had to be like 10.

MN: Really? At 10 you were sent away?

DBR: Yeah, probably like 10.

MN: Is this because of school related stuff?

DBR: No, man, I think that my family just--my mom--my pops was in the--Vietnam and all that. So by the time he came up here, my mom's up here, and they was like real country. They was southern. So they couldn't really like understand like what was going on like in the floor. I guess they felt it--they felt like they was trying to shelter me too much. You know, and I like felt that like, I'm not a follower. So that was really our problem was where they felt that--because other people was doing it, that I was doing it. And I wasn't. And, honestly, I wasn't. You know what I'm saying? And that's where our misunderstanding kept clashing at and it just kept clashing and clashing and clashing, so.

MN: So you went into group homes when you were 10 years old?

DBR: Yeah, I was in every group home out there.

MN: Wow.

DBR: I survived--you can't name--I've been to every group home from Pious 12 to Peach House to Spofford--

MN: So you were in Spofford at one point?

DBR: Yeah.

MN: Spofford, by the way, is an utterly legendary juvenile facility which is one of the most dangerous places you could imagine. So how did you protect yourself in all this stuff, man? Because that--

DBR: Well I, like I said, I always get along with people, so, you know what I'm saying? So when I was in Spofford, I came in there, I was mad short. I'm still short, but I was real short then. So they used to put us in a dorm called 8-3. That's where they--that's where all the little guys used to put--go there. And all the big guys used to go to D-4, the dudes like six foot-something and then everybody else mix inside. So being us, was the little guys, we got together and formed a little crew called Mouse House. And they had Mighty Mouse back at the time, so they--we called Mouse House. So every time that one of the big dudes tried to fight one of us, we all would jump him, the whole Mouse House. So they backed up off us, because no matter if you beat him up at court, or whatever, when you see Mouse House and you go to the kitchen or something, we jumping you. And we a whole bunch of little dudes, we ain't doing that much damage, but, you know what I'm saying? You got twenty little dudes all on your leg and all that, you know, something going down. You know, you like, "Yo, let me back up off these little dudes." So we was Mouse House. And then I was at Tryon with Mike Tyson, you know--

MN: Upstate?

DBR: Yeah, yeah. Me and Mike was up there. I was in all the one's upstate too. I was at Adamsville (sic).

MN: Damn.

DBR: Yeah, Harlem Valley. I was up there, a whole bunch of those--

MN: Now, while all this is going on, are you still educating yourself?

DBR: Yes.

MN: So you're actually learning stuff in school with all the times you're being sent to these places?

DBR: Yeah, because I never had a problem with school. I was always in college-bound. I went to Bronx Community College. I was at the top of my class. I never had a problem with school. The problem was with me and my mom and my pops was thinking I'm a follower. So when I be like, "Yo, I'm gonna go here. I'm gonna do this. I'm gonna do that." They didn't--you know, "Nah, you gotta…" They were sheltering me too much and I didn't need to be sheltered, you know? Like everybody needed a certain amount of attention, but they was overdoing it. And then, I guess, because I had an older brother, and he was running around, so I guess they felt like--and it was only us two, like of the boys, so I guess she's like, "I'm not gonna let him run around and fall into the same…"

MN: Now what about your brother and sister? Did they end up going to college?

DBR: Yes, not my brother but my sisters--I got two other sisters after that as the years went on. All my sisters is real intelligent. They go to school and all that. They work. One of them is a teacher for special ed. The other one works with disabled people. And my big sister worked with disabled people too. But now she ain't been working for a while but due to--because she got diabetes. But--so she been taking--you know she had to lay off from her job but other than that they did pretty good. You know, all of us was in school because my big sister was like, back in the day, she was on some other stuff. Like if you came from school and you didn't want to play school with her, she ain't cooking you nothing to eat. She ain't making no munchies. She--you ain't doing nothing. So you gotta come--and she'd like, three years old I'd be, so by the time I get to my class at school, I'd been through this. So I'm getting out of there fast so, you know what I'm saying? When I get to school, my teachers--and they teaching me something my sister taught me that two summers ago.

MN: Wow. So school was almost like boring for you?

DBR: Yeah, yeah. You know, I liked it but then again, like I said, I finished too quick. And then I found that now that I have a daughter that's just like that and be trying to tell her that I went

through the same thing. You know, you gotta find other things for you to do outside--tell the teachers in advance, too. Like, "Yo, how about a little extra work. You know, on the side. Don't let her…"

MN: Now when did you start thinking of music as something that was going to give you an outlet? And how old were you when that started?

DBR: Well music--like I said, always in my house, they always had a lot of music inside my house, my mom, my pops. My uncle used to work in the garment district at the time. And he came from Charleston, South Carolina too, my uncle Bubba. He came from Charleston with my mother there. He used to take care of my--that's my mother's, mother's brother. So he came up with them because my father was in the war at that time so he came to look after my mom. He used to work in the garment district, so every week he would come and buy us three records, 45s. I think they go 25 set or so. So he used to come with the big list of all of the new records that came out. And it used to be on the little list and then you check off the ones you want. And then all of us would get to get three records. So it was three of us at the time. Everybody would pick they three records. He gonna go buy the records, so we got a collection of records. Then my mom's got the albums. She had a collection of records. Then my pops had--he was on Luther Vandross, all of them. He had Sam Cook and brothers like that. He had a whole collection of his collectors. So everybody had records in the house. Then my father was really into radios, he kept a radio from 8-tracks, he had that. And then a new 8-track would come out; he'd buy that one. He had an 8-track with the globe on the top and then after he'd get the 8-track--he get his radio and he'd start them on to me. So the first thing I would used to do, I started watching brothers do, we used to make the pause tapes. Like, you know, it's like you DJ but you just--you got no--you push the rewind button. You know, you ain't had no equipment. They didn't have the turntables, so that's how people used to do it. So if I make you a tape, I gotta play a tape over here and then I play this tape, "Good times...[sings]." And I stop it, rewind it just a little bit before ago, push the chord, push this one again, and it go, "Good times…[sings]." It's gonna take all day. That's called the pause master, you know what I'm saying? I got a cousin called Pause Master Prince. And but when I give you the tape, it's gonna sound like, "Good times, good times, g-g-good times." And you gonna be like, "Oh!" It's gonna sound like I was DJ-ing but it wasn't--it was called pause master.

MN: Wow

DBR: So they used to call it the pause master, you know what I'm saying? So that's before the brothers came out--so a lot of people would be like, "Yeah, I'm the first DJ." But who was the first brother that was out pausing? Because the pausing--you got DJ-ing from pausing, you know what I'm saying? That's where DJ-ing--the scratching came from. You got that from the brother pausing. But you had to be nice to pause, man. You know what I'm saying? Like I was seeing some brothers do it that was so nice, this one--you see like the school cassette tapes that they had--the cassette players. And they'd hold the thing and push the rewind button. And it was so nice that you could not tell, bro. They'd be [imitates scratching] and it'd be like going back and you'd be like, "Oh!" And he just--those brothers came out before.

MN: Are there still people who do this?

DBR: Like I said my cousin, I gotta see if he's still knows how to do it--

MN: Yeah knows how--I'd like to see this.

DBR: Well, I--

MN: What?

RM: I don't know, because they don't really--they don't sell cassette tapes no more.

DBR: Yeah but they used school tapes--

Lisa Betty (LB): We used to--

MN: You used to do that too?

LB: In the 90s, cause we used to do dance--we used to dance groups. Well, 90s and up to 2000s until we were able to get equipment. Well we found someone's cousin who had actual equipment but we used to do that--

DBR: The pause?

LB: We used to do the pause. That's how we did transition because, you know, 30 seconds of this dance routine, 30 seconds of this song, 30 seconds of that song. We used to have transitions

and sometimes we would have like gunshot transitions because we were doing--yeah, it was yeah--so I don't need to talk--

DBR: Yeah and you had--

LB: It's hard. It took the whole day.

DBR: And, yo, I'm gonna ask my cousin--my cousin, he'd the one that DJs when I eventually started making records, but--Prince, Prince Tafari (sic). But his name was Pause Master Prince.

MN: Pause Master Prince.

DBR: Yeah, he was the pause master.

MN: Now did he live also--live in the Bronx? Or--

DBR: Yeah, he lived in the Bronx, too. That's one of the first brothers who put me onto all the equipment and all that. He had all the equipment in the world man.

MN: Where was he living? What neighborhood?

DBR: Prince was living on University and 190th.

MN: Okay, so he's up in--yeah, okay.

DBR: And before that he was up on Rye avenue and 184th. 184th and Rye. So let me get back to the pause and right. So after the pausing, my pops gave me all the radios. So I get the radios and then we started--you know, we used to go outside in the schoolyard on Taft. And our older brother named Seymour, Lil' Daryl, he used to be doing all types of back flips and all that. So he started teaching us how to dance, how to do the break--how to break and all that, little backspins. It wasn't too fancy like they doing now, now they outrageous. But back then we had a little helicopter, windmills. So he put us onto that. This was like '75, '74. You know, we still was out there doing the robot. That's when you go to a jam and they play "Trans-Europe Express," the whole party. They had 15 versions of "Trans-Europe Express." I mean they played every version in the party, every last version for--and each version was twenty minutes a piece. And then they throw on "Good Times." And by the time "Good Times" and "Trans-Europe Express" go off, the party's over. You was there for about 7 hours just listening to two records.

MN: And the police were not going to come?

DBR: Nah, the police didn't come, man. But everybody came outside and they hooked up their equipment to the light pole. You get one guy around the way who know how to do it. He changed the thing, put in the light bulb thing, snap the light switch on, and it's going on, you know?

DBR: Now when did you start to MC or write--do lyrics? Does that--were you doing the breaking first or--

DBR: Yeah, I started--man, we went through so much with the breaking, man. We--I started breaking and then after that, I started doing the electric boogie. And once I started doing the electric boogie, that was it. I started going on tour doing that with fashion--ladies used to do fashion shows and they'd do hair shows. And when they had their break, we would come out dancing. We did this everywhere, you know, we traveled a lot with dance, so that was--

MN: Now just--who were the other people who you were doing the dance with?

DBR: Me--it was me, my--the name of my crew was called FBI, the Federal Boogie Inspectors.

MN: Federal Boogie Inspectors.

MN: It was myself, they used called me Ice at the time. It was Tron. There was another brother called Lil' E. It was Mr. Joint and there was a kid named Mike.

MN: Now were you all--how old were you at this time?

DBR: Oh man, we was young. We had to be about 10 years old.

MN: Now were these all black guys or also Spanish kids?

DBR: Mike--I mean Mr. Joint. Mr. Joint was Spanish. He--Mr. Joint--he's Native American.

MN: Native American, okay.

DBR: Yeah, Native American, He still dance til today, you know, he still dance til today, man. So we used to come out with the speakers, I mean with the radios and then, the radios was big back then. If you had a radio, you was the man, you know what I'm saying? This is before the big

ones. That's before the big ones. If you had the 8-track, I'm talking like back in the days now. I'm talking about 8-tracks. You come outside, you had to have a bag for the tapes and each one was about this big, one 8-track. And then you had to have a bag for your radio. So got two big bags walking down the block. Now the 8-tracks, we used to take--our mom's and pop's had 8-tracks, but we used to tape over them. You know what I'm saying? We make our own tapes, you know, pause tapes and go outside--your mom wasn't letting you do that with her stuff. You know, that's when you had the wooden--you mom had the big, one wooden stereo, weighed 100 pounds, you lift up the thing. And you get--you even get caught playing that, you done. Don't even open that up, you know, that was like treasure in the house. You know? And the equipment, carrying the equipment, coming out with Sweet Pea, then they have another crew down the block on 172nd and Morris called the Dillinger Crew.

MN: Wow.

DBR: And the Dillinger Crew used to come out and they used to have all the equipment. I used to carry equipment for them. And they had--they used to DJ--Sweet Pea used to come out either 22 or they used to be on the side of Taft schoolyard on the 170 side. The Dillinger Crew lived over there. So when they came out, they was on the other side of Taft. You know, how Taft's had two--

MN: Yeah, right.

DBR: They was on the 172nd side.

MN: Right.

DBR: They'd be out there and sometimes you'd have both of these brothers battling at the same time. The crowd would run over here. Then they throwing a record and the crowd would run over here, you know? There's so much going on in the Bronx, man.

MN: So there were a lot of neighborhood DJs who were outside?

DBR: Everybody. And then we would leave from here and go across town and you had Cool Clyde and all them by Riverdale. That's King Mario--

MN: Yeah, no Mario--yeah, down in Soundview--

DBR: Yeah, yeah with--yeah, that's over there by--

MN: Yeah, we had interviews about them. That was a whole scene down there with Cool Clyde and Mario.

DBR: Yeah, Cool Clyde--

MN: Disco King Mario.

DBR: Yeah, Lance--you had Lance and them. So, there's so many DJs--

MN: We've all interviewed them, by the way.

DBR: There's so many DJs. Then we used to go to the Bronx River, guys--I used to live in the Treehill projects too. So by the Bronx River you had Zulu Nation, Bambaataa and all them over there. They was doing they thing and it was just crazy, man. And then once we started the breaking, we started like battling everybody. Like, you know, that's what it was about. You gotta battle everybody. So we battled Mr. Wave from Rock Steady. We battled Speedy from Rock Steady. And there go another thing--Mr. Freeze--you ever seen the movie Flashdance?

MN: Yeah.

DBR: Well Mr. Freeze, the dude that was with the umbrella, the first day he came from off tour from doing that movie, I battled him. First day, grilled him. Tore him up in the building, burn up--I went--we went to his house, literally knocked on his door, came out. He lived on the Sheila Parkway at the time. And he came out and it was Mr. Freeze, Baby Freeze, Tiny Freeze, Little Freeze, Black Freeze. All of them hung out together like, "Man, I'm looking for Mr. Freeze, the dude that was doing, you know…" But, you know, bars was filled with music, man. One more thing I remember from back in the days when I was young, and this is the best smell in the world, man. I can't never forget this. The smell of the piece of--

MN: Oh one second, hold it for a second. Yeah, okay--

DBR: The smell of the pizza shops, back in the days, man. I don't think there have ever been--you had never--it's like this smell that--I've been searching for it since I was a kid and I can't find it, man. That pizza shop smell from back in the 70s--

RM: Italian pizzas.

DBR: I mean trust me, when you turn the corner on 149th and 3rd avenue, soon as you turned, that whole block just smelled, man, smelled fantastic. You know, I remember that smell like yesterday, man. And so much was going on back in these days, man. You know I remember--I remember running down from 170 and we used to--when they had--they still got it, the McDonald's Webster avenue. and West 70th and we lived on Morris avenue. You know, we used to run down there--like I said, my sister was chubbie, my sister Frenchie. And we would fly down there, we can't leave the block now. We fly down there real quick and run to the fron. You had to run to the front of the counter as soon as you get there. You had to be serious. And you gotta say, "Can I get two all-beef patties, special sauce, no cheese, pickles, onions, sesames…" I don't know how to say it til today. And you say it--as soon as you say it, they give you a free Big Mac. You remember that?

MN: No, I--

DBR: You don't remember that? Oh man, that was in the 70s! How you don't remember that?

MN: I didn't go to McDonald's--

DBR: You was older then--back then. And we never got it, man. My sister, the chubby one, she got it every time, man. And we had to be nice to her cause, you know, to share like, "Yo, let us get a piece, too. We had ran all the way down there. We get caught, we all gonna get a beating. So let us have a piece." So she got it every time, man, never failed it. You gotta run, as soon as you get to the counter, " Can I get two all-beef patties--two all-beef patties, no sauce, no cheese, pickles, onions, sesame." And you had to say that--oh "a sesame-seed bun"--but you gotta say it real fast, man, you know?

MN: Damn. Now what--to switch subjects, what kind of food did your mother make in the house?

DBR: Oh, man, my mom can cook. My mom's like from the country so til today I still don't eat the stuff that my mom would cook, you know? We didn't eat no seafood. My mom was allergic to seafood. So not only that we didn't eat no seafood in the house, she was so allergic that one day my uncle came and cooked and she was at work. And she came like five hours later and still

got all types of hives and had to go to the hospital. So that was the end of that but my mom can cook. She cooked red rice. I ain't never had no red rice since my mom passed away in 1987. I still don't have no red rice since then. She used to make red rice, the Hoppin' John, which was like the rice and she'd mix it with the black-eyed peas and it come out, you know. She--we never ate no liver. She used to make okra--

MN: Oh, I love okra.

DBR: She used to make meatloaf. One day, she didn't like--my Uncle Bubba, he's from the country, he used to always make--my mom couldn't stand it. She'd be like, "Don't cook that in this house." He used to make chicken backs. You know the chicken backs? He used to make the chicken backs. You get a whole big bag with a thousand of them in there for like five dollars. And you're talking like this big but it ain't got no meat on it. It take all day, you'd be waiting for to cook it. You cook it. You do all that and you be like, "Man, there ain't nothing on this." There's just, nothing, like throw this junk away. Macaroni and cheese, my mom's was special. Banana pudding. Sweet potato pies, you know the pies, man. I mean this was like--these used to be some real meals. Thanksgiving come? Outrageous, man, you know? Wasn't really too much pork in the house, you know? My pops was heavy on the lamb chops. He liked the lamb chops. String beans. We had some good meals up in there. That's one thing, you know, mom's used to cook three meals a day now. Unlike today where the people that's going all, you know, everybody's wanna run to the chinese restaurant and McDonald's and all of that. We got--we got food like that on Saturday. That's it. Only on Saturday, your mom goes, "Yo, yeah y'all can go out." And we'd go to Kentucky Fried Chicken and we used to go the famous Carvel's on 167th.

MN: Right.

DBR: Yeah go there and get some sherbert ice-cream. And--yeah, man, those were the good days right there, you know what I'm saying? Come down and eat sometime on Sunday, mom would bring us to Silvia's on 125th St. Done changed up now, I went down there, they ain't even got no soul food. You're like, "What is this, man?"

LB: Disgusting. Yeah, I'm glad someone agrees with me.

RM: Ever since--it's like ever since she switched her food to like cans--

LB: Cans, yeah, she--

RM: It's not the old food, man.

LB: They merchandized it.

DBR: Yeah, I don't want no canned food. But, yeah my mom had no problem with going in the kitchen. Everyday she would cook, man. I remember the string beans with the potatoes. Oh, man. The one thing I didn't like was the sweet peas. I ain't never liked no sweet peas and my mom stayed making those. And, oh man, every time I tried to find a way to swindle them out of them, like, "I ain't--I got to go to the bathroom." "You ain't gotta go to no bathroom. You better not be trying to throw away those sweet peas!" The sweet peas and the candied yams. Those two things, I--my mom loved the candied yams. Those two things, I did not--I didn't like.

MN: Right, now did you graduate from high school in the Bronx or from one of, you know, the programs?

DBR: I did both, cause, you know, I did both. Because I was one of them dudes, that when I came out--like I was in the youth home in '84 and I got my GED in Troy, New York.

MN: Woah, in Troy, New York.

DBR: Yeah, cause they took me off--cause I said I was always smart, so even when I was in Tryon--I was locked up in Tryon, in the youth home, they still was taking me out to the college in Troy, New York to go to school. You know what I'm saying? I went--I took my GED at the college and all of that. And I could've went to that school, too. They wanted me to stay up there but I was young. I was like, "Man, I'm going back to New York. I don't want to stay down here in Troy, New York." It was 1984, like, "I don't wanna be in Troy, New York." Which I should've had stayed in that school up there. But when I came out of there, I came to the Bronx. So now I finished school. I'm mad young. I was too young to go to college. I couldn't get in college yet. I couldn't get in there, the Bronx Community College. I had to wait. So I said, "I know what I'm gonna do." Everybody was still in school. All of my friends was still in school. So I started going to night school at Roosevelt. Plus all the girls was in night school. So I went back to school to Roosevelt night school.

MN: Right over here.

DBR: Yeah. And then when I was getting--when I was getting the paperwork out of there, the day that I was supposed to--the lady's like, "You can't get a two degrees. You already got a GED." Well then that's when they were like, "You can't come here no more." So, but I, you know, then I went--by that time I had--I could get into Bronx Community College, so I went over there.

MN: So when you made the record, were you in Bronx Community at the time?

DBR: Yeah I was in Bronx Community College when I made "Rap's New Generation." Yeah, but I was like--so many like--before that I was down with so many different crews, man. Before I even, you know--

MN: So when did you start, like rapping? How old were you and--

DBR: I started rapping like when I was about like--I was corny back then, but probably ten years old. Like ten or nine years old, cause I first like--I remember the first time, man. I was in my house. I was living on 170. It's in the 70s. This kid named Vincent, he lived on 167th and Morris avenue, right around the corner from 88. I was going to 88 at the time, elementary school. I was going to 88. I had the Fatback Band, King Tim III--

MN: King Tim III, right.

DBR: So that's the first rap record. And the Bubble Bunch going [sings], that's the first thing I ever heard, you know people were like a little bit of rapping. Then King Tim III was out. And then this dude, one day I'm going to school. It's early 70s, man. I'm going to school. He's like, "Yo, come to my house, man. Come to my house. I gotta let you hear something." So I'm like, "What you want…" And he's like, "C'mon, man, I'm telling you!" I was like, "Man we gonna get in trouble." He said, "Man, this is worth getting in trouble for, man. I'm telling you!" So he pulled out this big album. He said, "C'mon man." We went to his house and it was the Love matchbox, Spoonie G, "The Love Rap." And to this day, man that's my favorite record of all time [sings]. Oh man, that Spoonie G, man. When I heard that, that took it to like a whole nother level. I've never heard nothing like that. Before that all you heard was brothers like [sings] and that's all they said, the whole party, you know? You're gonna find, that's all they said. Two

hours [sings]. You're like, "Man, what the hell is he saying?" You know and that just went on. But Spoonie G had a whole story. So that took me there from there, so I was like, "Man!" So, you know, from there I started writing a little bit of rhymes. Wasn't really into them because I was mad young, but I still was into it a little bit. And then "Rapper's Delight" came out. I'm a real Bronx b-boy, so I done DJ with the DJs, with the pause master. I used to breakdance. I used to boogie. I used to write graffiti. When I was in 22, I used to hang out with Bantu, Ram One, Trap. These are some of the best graffiti artists in the Bronx. You know what I'm saying? Neck, so many brothers, man SoMax, Capper... you know. And we used to go from one thing to another. We didn't start going to--"Yo, we gonna battle each other," and breaking--and we would leave from here and go to Bronx River and the next thing you know we would start breaking and then we would start DJing and then we would start battling and rhyming. Then next thing you know, we on the train tracks, you know what I'm saying? We on the 2 and 5, on the train tracks walking the train tracks. We in abandoned cars and writing. And these dudes was doing pieces from here to the whole train, literally the whole train. The whole train. We come outside the next day and just wait until we see it. And you see that joint go by, man. It was like a sight to see, man, you know? Like, it was like, "Wow, man." The whole train just go by and you see--

MN: Now as all this is going on, did you know you were making world history?

DBR: Nah, you know, when you're in a part of something, you're like inside of it. You gotta be on the outside looking in. You know, and it was just like an everyday Bronx thing, like you came outside and there's music over here. And you walk, man. I mean you literally walk til you gotta put some cardboard in your sneaker, literally. Your brother's gone, man, you know what I'm saying? You out of there. Brothers riding on the back of the bus. I never did that cause one of my best friends fell off the back of the bus and his head got ran over by the bus on the hill on 169th and Grant.

MN: Yeah, wow.

DBR: And his name was Darney, like my name. And we was young. We was like in the 2nd or 3rd grade, man. So I never rode on the back of the bus. My mom said she gonna kill me, I don't gotta worry about falling off there. She gonna kill me, so--moms got the fear of death, you know,

people back in the days--nowadays, it ain't that. That saved me from a lot of things, too. So like I said, we'd start off with the DJing and we used to go to Coney Island--we used to like--on the boardwalk. Every weekend, bring all our equipment, jump on the back of the D train go all the way to Coney Island on the boardwalk and DJ. This is all the way back in the early 80s to the late 70s, you know? And then Coney Island started they little flow in Dj-ing. We like the brothers who really brought rapping and the DJ and all that out there. So there was so much going on in the Bronx, man, and like if you really from the Bronx, you a b-boy. You know, when people say, "Oh, they rappers…" No, hip hop and rap is two different things. Rap is just a part of hip hop. Hip hop is graffiti, DJing, breaking, rapping, the way you dress, the way you speak, you know, it's a whole mixture that people just don't get. In the Bronx, it's like we the foundation of that. You could see an old Spanish guy right now or you could see a young white dude, you could see an old white guy right now. Look at the Notorious PhD! He know how to rhyme. He got a rhyme. You could rhyme on anybody in the Bronx. Somebody's grandmother, and they got a rhyme."Oh I used to freestyle--I got a little freestyle, or something." And they got something, cause this is just where we hitting and it been like that. You know, we all been amongst each other. You go up to anybody in the Bronx and they know how to do a little graffiti. May not be the best thing you gonna see on the train, but I guarantee you they know how to throw a little graffiti up and they gonna have a name. "Yo, I had a little tag name. My name was…" This is a part of our culture, you know what I'm saying? Djing, 52ing, everybody coming out, you slap boxing all day. That's what we did. Came outside, you had nothing else to do. Three slaps and you did this all day long. You gonna stay outside and your face--you got fingerprints on your face. Mom's like, "What you was doing all day?" "Oh we was slap boxing." You know, part of the Bronx, man, you know. And we done dance--we danced in Lincoln Center. This was early 80s to the--when Jamaica Funk came out. We was up there, we did an African type dance. But then they let us get our stuff off and then break when Jamaica Funk--when it went down we got to do our breaking and our boogieing. So we was like part of really bringing it out cause Lincoln Center never had nobody in there break danced or did nothing. You know, they used to have classes on us in Hunters College, bring us down there and let us dance for the class cause they ain't never seen it before, like, "Oh, this guy's spinning on his head?!" You know, they was like amazed, like--and you was sliding all over. You boogieing, you popping--they--"I ain't never seen nothing like that!" So, you know, we used to go to 42nd street, dance, come back with

three-, four-hundred dollars. Get on the train, dance, come back with three-, four-hundred dollars. This was when I first started getting into rhyming and knew I was nice. And yo, I used to go--right now, you'd think it was crazy and it was crazy cause we was young and crazy. We used to go on the train, right? Go to the back car of the train, bust open the door, you know the conductor would be in the front, nobody would be in the back. So we would bust open the door and get on the mic and me and my partner, Le Breu, we would do a whole routine. [sings] and we'd be rocking [sings] the whole train, riding up [sings]. And by the time we come out of the thing, the whole train would be clapping. Nobody never told us, "Yo, man, get off the train!" We'd get, "Yo! Yo, that was y'all? Y'all wrote that? Yo, you dudes should be making records, man." But there wasn't no records out like that. Like, "Man, y'all….. And we used to do this everyday. Everyday, man, get on the train. Rhyme on the train, man, the whole train gotta hear, cause you know what I'm saying? You on the PTA--we rocking. So we started doing that and that led to a couple people want to call us out and battle. We went and did a couple of battles but that wasn't getting us nowhere. Like I didn't like it really too much--you know it's a jam and we went and battled, it was cool. But then just to be out there battling it wasn't really getting nowhere--"Yo, we gotta try something else, man." And then at that time, they had all the talent shows. There's a talent show everywhere, bro. They stopped that. There was a talent show everywhere. We used to go to Our Lady of Mercy. They always had a talent show.

MN: The hospital?

DBR: No, the church.

MN: The church.

DBR: Yeah, we used to go to the church up there on 196. They used to have a lot of--

MN: Wow.

DBR: --talent shows, so--Harry Belafonte used to get to school down on 54th street in Manhattan. I think it's Prenting (sic) And he used to throw a lot of talent shows down there. All over the Bronx, man. Stardust Ballroom used to throw the talent shows.

MN: That's on Gun Hill?

DBR: On Gun Hill. The Savoy used to have talent shows. And they all had the talent shows. We would go there, start our boogieing, dancing, get our way in there. Next thing you know, we going there rapping. And they always had somebody singing that record--oh man, what was the name of that joint, man? [sings]--

LB: Jennifer--

DBR: Oh, man, every time!

LB: Yeah.

DBR: You're like, "Man, why do we gotta go up against somebody singing this again, man?" Every talent show in the Bronx, somebody sung that. Yeah you're like, "Not them again." And sometimes it would be the same person. You're like, "Man, you're here again?"

LB: Dreamgirls.

DBR: Yeah, this is before Dreamgirls and all that. You know, I don't know when the original movie was out. I'm talking about this was back in the early 80s, the late 70s, man.

RM: Who made that song?

LB: It was a play. The Dreamgirls was a play--

DBR: Yeah, yeah but I'm talking about the original--

RM: A female made that song. I can't remember the name--

DBR: Yeah, I'm talking about the original.

LB: Oh.

DBR: And that was at every talent show. Somebody had to come out--that was the competition, was somebody came out singing that. You'd be like, "Oh, here they go again." You know what I'm saying? Cause they got all the [sings] and all that so you gonna get the crowd and all that. So we had to go against them. And we had so many DJs in the neighborhood, man, being from the Bronx, man. The first guy I ever got down with, you probably know him, was BreakBeat Lou.

MN: What neighborhood was he--was his…?

DBR: He was from around the Fordham road neighborhood. BreakBeat--his name is BreakBeat Lou. To today, he's legendary. He made all the break beats, man. I mean, he's responsible for--

MN: BreakBeat? Is he still alive?

DBR: Yeah. I think you had a couple of--he be with all Freddie and all them.

MN: He's a friend of Freddie?

DBR: Yeah. His name is BreakBeat Lou. And when you see all the--he made with break--is b-boy, break beats or something. It's a record company now.

MN: Now that's not Danny Dan, the Beat Man?

DBR: Yeah, but that's Danny Dan's partner, that battled him everyday.

MN: Oh, that's his partner.

DBR: Yeah, BreakBeat Lou. Them two together make all the break beats from way back in the early 80s.

MN: Wow.

DBR: They make the break beats. Well I--he was my first DJ. I was his first MC. You know what I'm saying? And he had him and a guy Buck-O. They had all the breakbeats, man. I'm talking about--breakbeats is like where you take the--[sings], without all the singing and all that and just have the beat, the break part of it [sings]. He would just make the whole record on that. You know when they had the .... "One! Two! Three! Four! Hit it!" [sings]. He would have just that in the whole record. "I'm on the floor. I'm on the floor." You know, "One, two three, four," and you got about a whole disk. So these dudes like created that. Breakbeats, that's like legendary all around the world, man. All the breakdancers through them on cause they got all the beats. You know, the ... the bongo rock, and all that--"Dance to the Drummer's beat," you know legendary breakbeats.

MN: Yeah, Danny has over 100,000 records.

DBR: Yeah, yeah, him and BreakBeat Lou. Honestly speaking, these dudes have got hundreds of thousands of records, man. And you could ask them any--they don't know the whole record but they know the punch of that [breakbeats]--let them hear any beat and they'll tell you who made it. The year they made it, don't matter what gen. of music it is--it could be jazz, it could be rock and roll, let the breakbeat [breakbeats]--they'd be like, "Oh yeah, that was Led Zepplin in 1982." Yeah, they know every breakbeat in existence, man.

MN: Now, when you started rhyming, did you write your stuff in advance or you make it up at the time?

DBR: No, there was none of that freestyling cause, you know, that was wack. Cause if you came up to somebody and you tried to freestyle, man, they'll take you out. And that's like you lose the battle. You don't want to get taken out.

MN: So you wrote your stuff down and memorized it?

DBR: Yeah, you wrote down your rhymes. You had your battle rhymes. You had your love rhymes. You know what I'm saying? You had your party rhymes. You had your hardcore rhymes. And, you know, you stepped outside and wherever you went at, 9 out of 10 times somebody knew you. "Oh yeah, you got them dudes from the Classical Two over there. Somebody want to battle you" Somebody went and battle you. So usually, if they ain't ready, they gonna get taken out. And like when they came over to me and my boy, we was executing them. Now don't forget, we was like the new era coming out. We was like the guys coming out with the new rhymes. These dudes was still coming out with the [rhymes older style]. And we was like, "What?" [rhyming/rapping]. Like we coming out, man, you know what I'm saying? [imitates battle]. Like, "Who? Man, get this guy out of here." You know, like we come to …. Yeah, we got no time for that, man. You know what I'm saying? So that's how we was going there--

MN: So where did you meet your partner in Classical Two?

DBR: Oh man, believe it or not, when we moved from 170 and we moved uptown in 1978. And we moved from uptown because 170--it came down from 169, all the drama. And then it came to

170. Now if anybody know 170, 170 and College avenue, which was one block from Morris--it was like hundreds of people getting shot and killed over there--

RM: To this day.

DBR: --from the 70s to today. Just a couple of--a month ago, not even a month, two weeks ago, they did a drive by and this kid got shot in the head and got killed right on the corner of 170 and College avenue. And before that, somebody got killed down a block. Then the summertime, the dude got killed in the party--coming out the party.

RM: I was there.

DBR: Yeah, yeah he--

RM: He got killed in the party.

DBR: Yeah, he got killed in the party so it just ain't stopping over there. Yeah, you figure we moved in '78 cause it was too violent.

RM: That was on--that was on Clay.

DBR:I just told you three incidents that happened within the last--from June!

MN: This year?

DBR: This year. It just happened. And the kid that got shot in the head, his brother who--he had got killed in a drive by. He was like 17, 18. His 24 year old brother got killed--shot on the same block and killed about four years ago. And so that right there, that 170 and Morris was just a haven, man. They was throwing people off the roof.

MN: That's right near Taft, right?

DBR: Yeah, right around--we lived in the--like when you see right across from Taft, we lived at 1410, the beige building on the corner. And then, you know, they got the same identical building, 1405, which is on College.

MN: Right.

DBR: Well the College building was a "Woah, woah, woah, woah, woah." And all the way to today, it's still the same. Like we said, you know, this is '78 it was going on . There was big in hip hop and big in that but the killing and all that, that area is like outrageous. So we moved from there and moved up to the Fordham road area. When I moved to the Fordham road area in '78, for at least about six, seven years, I was the only black guy on my block, literally. There was nobody black. Nobody. There was Italians, the Albanians, the Yugoslavians. So then my boy moved around, La Breu, but I didn't like him when he first moved around. He was mad tall. My partner who turned out--and I was mad short. So I didn't like him. And he used to hang out with this guy named Cisco. So like I said, I always used to get in a bunch of trouble when I was young. You know what I'm saying? I always would get in a bunch of fights. So it didn't matter if he was tall or little. So every time I used to see them, they used to have Chinese slippers on and all that. They thought they knew karate. Here was Cisco--you see these dudes, these dudes was towering over me. They always was after me cause I would see Cisco and they had a record out called, "Cisco kid was a friend of mine."--

MN: Yeah, right. That's War.

DBR: --[sings], War. So I used to sing that joint every time and smoke used to come off this dude. Then these two, they start chasing me down the block. So they after me for the rest of the day. So I didn't like them. And then one time, I ended up going to one of those reform schools. And I was in there for about six months and the whole time I was in there though, every day my mom would say, "The kid Anthony keep asking about you." So at first I was like, "Why does this kid keeping asking about--I don't even like that guy." I was like, "Yo, the tall guy?" She's like, "Yeah." I'm like, "I don't know why he keep asking about me." Everyday this dude asked about me. I swear everyday. Everyday. So when I got out, I went home and my mom's like, " You should go see how that kid is. Cause he asked about you everyday. You know what I'm saying?" I'm like, "I'm not going up there and asking about that kid. I don't like him." She's like, "Well he asked about you everyday so you should go up there and at least tell him that you appreciate that he asked about you." And I went up there. This was like, what, in '80. Then I went up there and I told him, "Yo…" And ever since that day, I hung out with him til the day he died. Word up. I don't know--that one day. It's like we had so much in common but we never got to speaking up. We never spoke or nothing for like two years I was up there. All we ever did was

try to fight. And but when we finally got to know each other, that one day, that was it. Man, my mom used to be like, "Yo, that Anthony call you out the window." Because that was it. Everyday. "Yo!" He'd call me out the window two in the morning, three in the--my mom's like, "Man, you better tell Anthony not to be calling out there." You know, we became like brothers, man. So me and him started writing rhymes. We started taking it serious, you know? It's like we used to take the dancing serious. We used to dance and practice, literally, for--if it's a weekend, we would practice all day. From like ten o'clock in the morning, literally, to like my mom's gotta tell us to come upstairs, like one o'clock in the morning. All day, so our moves were perfected, you know? Like perfected to the point that if we doing a routine and you mess up the routine, we used to be like, "Yo, you mess up, just stop. Don't try to catch up."

MN: So all these things that you see as spontaneous, that took a lot of work?

DBR: Yeah.

MN: From the dancing--

DBR: Yeah.

MN: --to the graffiti, to the DJing, to the MCing. Everybody's working at this stuff.

DBR: Working. Like we perfecting it, man. This ain't… Prince is practicing DJing all day. Literally. You know what I'm saying? So we practicing dancing all day. Then once we started the rapping, we started doing the same thing. So we was like the only way we could get better is we gotta battle each other. So me and him battled each other every single day. So you better have a rhyme tomorrow. You can't come out here with that same rhyme you had yesterday. So that made us have to write everyday. You know what I'm saying?

MN: So you would in an apartment or you'd battle--

DBR: No, I'd battle him wherever I see him at. You know we'd come outside and the crowd already out there. It's on.

MN: Okay, so you battle in front of a crowd.

DBR: Yeah. We battle. Yeah, wherever I see--if I happen to see him--if I go to his house and we catch each other in the house then we gonna battle there. And if we catch each other outside and the crowd is out there, it's a battle right here. If we catch each other at the school yard, it's a battle right here. But we battled each other every single day. He used to be more writing than me, like, man, he was writing way more than me. So by the time I come out tomorrow with my rhyme, he got like two rhymes. So I'm like, "Oh man, I gotta start stepping up. Tony D's writing some more rhymes." He kept changing his name. First, he was Smitty Ditty, then he was Tony D, then he was La Breu. You know what I'm saying? So I'm like, "Wait a minute. You Smitty Ditty, Daddy…" Then he was Daddy-D. Like I'm like, "Man, this dude's got a new name everyday." He goes Smitty--then he wrote a rhyme about it, "Smitty Ditty, Daddy-D." Then he had his brother was Paulie-O. Yo, man, this dude, you know what I'm saying? This dude was ridiculous. So he kept me on the writing. So I gotta write and write. Me and him used to go to talent shows, right? And we never was on the same--same thing, we battled. "Cause how do I know you're nice and you know I'm nice and we go ahead as a group? You may be riding on my coattail. I may be riding on your coattail. And then when somebody call us out, we're gonna get grilled. So we gonna go to the talent show but you gonna go as a solo artist and I'm gonna go as a solo artist. And we gonna see who win." And it never failed. Every time we did it, we always came in a tie at first place. Always. And then the crowd would have to judge it. Sometime he won and then I had to come back--I'd be in the second place and I had to come back next week. And sometime, I won and he'd have to come back the next week. But he had to wait. We would split the prize. They never got onto us until like, we went to the Disco Fever. And this had to be--then we went to the Devil's Nest, we done won. We done been down to Harlem World. We done been down to Apollo. We done been to amateur night at--we done been everywhere, with the same thing. So one day we go to the Disco Fever amateur night and we did it.

MN: That's on Jerome avenue?

DBR: Yeah, Jerome. The legendary Disco Fever.

RM: Yeah, that's right. I forgot it used to be on Jerome.

DBR: Yeah, the legendary Disco Fever. We went down there for a talent show. Like I said, my mom and pops are on it again. I'm talking to my pops, "Yo, I want to get inside the talent show

tonight." He think I'm going to hang out and do all this like the Joneses and I'm telling him, "No, I just want to go to the talent show. I'm coming right back." It started at 2 o'clock. My pops lived on 161st street so I had to go to his house until 1 o'clock. And he let me go. He's like, "Don't hang out afterwards so you should be home about like 4 o'clock." So alright cool, you know, I didn't care. I just wanted to be in the talent show. And I was too young so in there, they're not letting you in either way. Like when you see the fat boys in the movie Krush Groove, when they told the dude, "Yo, I'mma roll you up out of here." The dude, Mandingo, he really is the same dude that really be at the door. Mandingo. He used to be at the door in Harlem World, too. And he really, when we used to go down to Harlem World, he used to say, "Yo, we gotta dance." If he see us one time not dancing, "You out of here." And he meant it. We'd be in there doing the boogie and he see us and we'd be chilling talking, he'd be like, "Yo, you gotta get back to it." So he was like--yeah, you gotta be like, "Alright, man, yo." You tell the boy you talking to, "Yo, man, I gotta dance the whole night or he gonna throw me out." Because we was underage, couldn't go in there. So to make sure you ain't buy the drinks or buy the smokes, you better be dancing. So that's how he did it to us with the talent show. When he seen us, he was like, "Oh, y'all in here? Ain't no dancing going on in here." And we like, "Nah, we wanna be on the talent show." He like, "Alright." He said, "Yo, soon as the talent show is over, y'all two better be up out of here." We like, "Alright, we can buy that." So we got up in there. We got on the stage. That day, it's a club called Rooftop. I never got to go to the club at the time cause, you know, I was young. I didn't know about that club. But that day, there was a DJ there named Brucey-B. He DJ'ed for the club. And another legendary DJ from the Bronx named Starchild. Starchild used to DJ at the Disco Fever. So when we got there, we was young, man, you know, we used to be like bang, do rhyme. We didn't have nothing but we knew we wanted to be in the talent show. So Star was like, "Yo, y'all got music?" So we was like, "No." So he's like, "How y'all gonna be in the talent show?" We said, "We ain't got no music." So he said, "Alright y'all, I'm gonna DJ for y'all." He's like, "Yo, y'all better not be wack, man." He said, "Y'all getting on stage together?" He said, "Y'all getting on stage together?" I was like, "No, we getting on stage solo." So he still can't--he's like, "Alright." So he let us get on and we got on, boom! A whole bunch of groups--it was a big Bronx thing. It was a whole Bronx battle, about like 60 groups. We came on. Boom. Both of us came in first place, again. I won that time. He had to come back the next week to try to win cause it was like twelve weeks of going and then the final

was for the big pot. So I won that week. The next week when he came, Starchild introduced us to Brucey-B. He was like, "Yo, man, these dudes is nice, man." And Brucey-B then was--Rooftop Records was about to come out. So Brucey-B played for La Brue that night cause I was already out of it. La Brue won, he beat all of the other dudes. He won. That's when they came over. They was like, "Yo, man, why don't y'all be on the stage together?" He was like, "If y'all get on the stage together, y'all will kill them." And then we explained to him that we don't want--you know, we want to see how nice we are as individuals. And then he brought us down--Brucey-B ended up bringing us down to Rooftop Records where we met Teddy Riley.

MN: Wow,

DBR: Teddy Riley is the guy that--he was down with a cool name. What was it? New Kids on the Street at the time? It was New Kids on the Street?

LB: …(13:40) a lot of groups are.

DBR: It was him--he was a little kid then, he was young. It was him, Timmy and Pharrell. Yeah, Pharrell or something like that. Correll. Correll. Them three and they had New Kids on the Street. Something like that they was. And we went down--

MN: Not New Kids on the Block?

DBR: It could have been, New Kids on the--

RM: No--

DBR: No, no, no, no, not these dudes. It was New Kids on the Street.

RM: It was New Kids on the Street. New Kids on the Block, they were--q

MN: They were from Boston--

DBR: They was from Boston.

LB: They took--

DBR: Yeah, they took they joint and ran with it. Well they was something like that so then we met him that day. And he was like, "Yo, y'all got some demos?" Him and Gus. Gus was the guy

that owned the Rooftop, legendary Rooftop Records. So, they was like, "Y'all got some demos?" We was like, "Yeah." So we had like fifteen songs but we had no demo. So when La Brue was the banging man, so La Brue started banging. He started banging and we started hitting demos for them. Boom. We started hitting records back to back to back. It was like this, everybody was like this, Teddy Riley, all of them, everybody. So he was like, "Yo, I want to work with them." So he said he wanted to work with us. He was like, "I want to work with y'all." So we like, "Alright cool." From there--we still didn't have no music. We broke out, went home. We was happy. We told the whole world we was about to make a record. We came back the next day. They had a beat that they was gonna give to the guys that made, "We're at the party. We're at the party," with Cool G and all of them. But Teddy wanted to give it to us. Them dudes was like the old school rappers and Teddy wanted to give it to us. He was like, "Y'all are different, you know. I want to do beyond, man." So it was a tug of war in that. So they said, "Y'all make up something to it and they gonna make something to it. And we gonna see whoever got the best record is gonna keep the beat." So they went home, and, you know, these dudes done made records for years, man. You know? The Crash Crew. Who was in Crash Crew, man? Crash Crew was G-Man and them.

MN: This isn't Cool-G Rap by any chance?

DBR: No, no, no, it was Cool-G and Craig G and all them. They made "We at the Party." Man, they gonna kill me for not remembering their record, man. Oh they most definitely gonna kill me for this one. Like, word up, for real. But anyway, we came back to the studio the next day. That night, anyway--I'll tell you, my mom's great. My mom's like--I came in the house about 10 o'clock. I got the beat, but I ain't got nothing--we don't know--we got record but we gotta make something new, man. We got the horns and we got the [imitates the beat]. We got all that but we ain't got nothing and we like, "Man." La Brue at his house. I'm at my house. So my sister used to sleep in the same, like we sleep in the room split in half in our house, like there's a divider. So if I turned the light on in the middle, her light gonna be on. I'm like, "Man." So I used to stay in the bathroom and write all my rhymes. So I go in the bathroom that night. I'm in the bathroom all night, just playing--yeah, I'm in the bathroom all night. When anybody come, they had to knock on the door, "I gotta use the bathroom." My mom was like, "Boy, you better get and go to school in the morning. I'm telling you that now. So you could stay in that bathroom all night."

I'm up all night, all night in the bathroom. That's where I came up with the "Rap's New Generation."

MN: Wow.

DBR:--Rap's New Generation [imitates beat]. Then the next morning, I came out early in the morning, I went and got La Brue, like "Yo, man, listen to this." I let La Brue hear the chorus. He was like, "Yeah, that's it." He liked it. Then you know him, he got a million rhymes so he was ready. "Yo, I wanna say this, man." So he already ready, you know what I'm saying? He writing a thousand rhymes a day. So La Brue came, we put his together. We came down, we went to see Teddy. He was like, "Well tonight, we're gonna do it. We're gonna take y'all to Jersey and we gonna see what's gonna go down." We went out to Teaneck, New Jersey. We went--this was in '86. We went to Eddie Murphy house cause he's from Teaneck, New Jersey. We went to go see his brother, Mark, cause they had--what was the name of their group? They had a rap group too, Eddie Murphy's brothers and them.

RM: Yeah, that's right. Eddie Murphy used to be singing.

DBR: Yeah, yeah so we went to their house. They had a studio and all that, too. So we went out there and hung out with them for a little while and Charlie and his other brother. And then we went to the studio. That day I cried like a baby cause I kept saying, "Yo, man, I don't want them horns in my record. I don't want them horns." [imitates horns] and that became the legendary horns. The horns was legendary but Teddy Riley kept on saying, "Man, them horns is crazy." I was like, "Man, I don't want no horns, man. I'm not a band. I'm not in no band. You know what I'm saying?" Cause all I was thinking was that back in the day's groups with the fur hats and the cowboy boots and then I'm thinking this [imitates horns]. I'm like, "These dudes are gonna try to throw me in one of these outfits." You know, and this is a different era when we got on ...suits and ...teegood (sic) shirts and … the teegood (sic) jeans and all that so I'm like, "Wait up, man. This ain't it." You know what I'm saying? So we got in the studio that day and Teddy put our record down. He put down their record and everybody heard it, man. It was like, even they said it. Cool-G and them--cause Cool-G done end up--Craig end up being our manager. He was like, "Man, listen, man. They record is better. You know what I'm saying? Put their record out. You know what I'm saying?" They wanted--he was like, "Put their record out, man." You know and

we saw--we was at Rooftop Records and like I said we always was battling. We from the Bronx but now Rooftop Records is in Manhattan. You couldn't come on Rooftop Records or come in there without battling us. So we battled everybody. B-Fast came in there, gotta battle with us. You know what I'm saying? We battled B-Fast. We battled Donald-D, his brother. We battled--Heavy-D was down with Rooftop Records and then from Rooftop Records, he got down with Uptown Records. We battled Heav. We battled Kool Moe Dee. Kool Moe Dee was down with Rooftop Records and then he went to Jive Records. Everybody that came in there, man, we used to have the crazy cyphers in there. We had Cool Ron, the Assassin. We had Tony-T. We had so many people, man, that was down with Rooftop Records. Of course, we had Teddy Riley. And Teddy Riley went on to get Guy. They came through, After our record, we the ones who started the new jack swing. So they made it Raps New Generation and after we made Raps New Generation like a whole new era of rappers came in. You know? Without all the [imitates old rap], even though there is nothing wrong with that. It was just another time for another thing, you know what I'm saying? And we were the ones who lit the match to bring that on. So then we started--they call it the new jack swing era. So after us, Johnny Gill--Teddy Riley did Johnny Gill "Just got paid, Friday night." He did that. Then he did, "Who do you think you are?" Mr. Big Stuff for Heavy-D. That's all underneath us, our trend. Then he did, "Go see the doctor."

RM: Danny--

DBR: No for Kool Moe Dee. And then, you know, they started doing stuff with Michael Jackson. Then he started, you know, the list just went on and on and on and on. But we are the ones who started the new jack swing, you know? Like I tell people, in our era, we battled, like you see the KRS-One, MC Sham. We spread knowledge, you can see the rock hymn. We had the gangsters and the pimps and the killers, the Kool-G raps and all that. We had the funny people, the Bismarcks. But one thing we didn't do, we wasn't killing and cursing at nobody. If you listen, to every record that I just told you right now, to the whole album and you won't hear one curse. None! Cause we didn't have to curse to get our point across. You know what I'm saying? You pull out Rakim's album, there's no curses. You pull out all these legendary classic albums, classic hits, man. These are classic hits that you could go anywhere and everybody know them. You throw them on at any party, "Oh!" everybody getting up. And no profanity was in them. Nobody was talking about killing nobody. You know what I'm saying? None of that.

MN: I mean, it's great stuff, "Microphone Fiend"--

DBR: C'mon, nobody talked about killing nobody.

MN: Stetsasonic, "All that jazz."

DBR: "All that jazz," KRS-One went up there, "My Philosophy."

MN: Yeah.

RM: "Self-destruction"

DBR: "Self-destruction," you know? And even just Ice, "I'm the hip-hop gangster," all that, but he's not killing nobody. You know what I'm saying? There was no uzis and no machine--no drive-bys. It was none of that. You know, so we brought a whole swing, man. And then Teddy did Keith Sweat album after that. So Keith Sweat album jumped off, you know, so that was big.

RM: Yeah, the crying Keith.

DBR: And then we all went from Jive Records--and we went from Rooftop Records, everybody started splitting up cause we was hot. We went to Jive. Kool Moe Dee went to Jive. Heavy-D went to MCA with Uptown Records. Keith Sweat went with, I think he went with Electric Records. Select--he gone with Select Records or something like that. And everybody branched off, man. They started doing their thing. Now, when we made the record, I just thought of it as a regular record but we had so much other stuff. But everywhere I went, I mean everybody, from the beginning, like it never was wack. Like, you know, you take a little while for the record to come out? In these days, Brooklyn used to get the records first. Then after Brooklyn, it was a place called Upstairs Records that was in Manhattan. And Downstairs Records, they had all the records, too. And it moved on to Moms and Pops stores. So by the time it got to the Bronx, it'd be about four or five months. So one day I'm hanging out and I went to Fort Greene Projects, man. And they was doing a festival out there. And somebody introduced me to this lady named Michelle. Cause they was like, "Yo man, you got your record coming out, man. You should talk to that lady cause she got dances. And you should, you know, see if she could get some dancers to dance with you." So I went over there to go talk to--and a white lady, too, from down in Brooklyn. So I'm like, "Yeah, my name is K Born." She's like, "You're name is K Born?!" I'm

like, “Yeah.” She’s like, “You made the record ‘Raps New Generation?’” Don’t forget, the record just came out like a month ago. I’m like, I’m looking at her like, “Yeah, I made the record.” Like, first of all, who are you, now? I’m like, “Miss, c’mon wait.” I’m like, “Yeah, I made the record.” She’s like. “Oh, this is my group right here.” And she had the name of the group was the IOU dancers. And the guy, Flex, who end up marrying--who’d Flex marry? One of Salt and Pepper? One of them?

RM: Yeah.”

DBR: And he was in all the movie, Flex. He played in all the--he played in a lot of movies and all that. He be in--y’all know who he is, too.

LB: Flex Alexander?

DBR: He be in the--

LB: No, who?

RM: The dude--he played in a lot of tv shows.

DBR: He played in a lot of tv shows.

LB: Flex Alexander. Shanice. He married Shanice.

DBR: Yeah, he married Shanice. That’s him. That’s him. Yeah, yeah, he married Shanice. Well Flex, was down with them, too. He was a dancer. He used to dance with me, too. So I’m--and this lady now, don’t forget I just met her. Record just came out a month ago. She says, “Oh yeah, I already got--this is the IOU dancers. We gonna do a show today and we using your record. They love you in Brooklyn.” I’m like, “Miss, the record ain’t even get out yet. It ain’t even in stores.” She’s says, “Yes it is. It’s been in Brooklyn for a while.” She said, “It ain’t in the Bronx?” I said, “Nah, miss, I’ve never seen it in stores.” She said, “Watch this! You gotta stay and watch the show.” Man, I watched the show. I’m talking about these brothers and sisters went off to my record! They had the whole, like they knew the whole routine like that. They had it for a minute. They was going off. Yo, Flex was nice, man. You know, he was dancing--he was one of our dancers. He did--the guy Ill Al Skratch from Ill Al Skratch (sic), he was one of our dancers, too. Al, he was one of our dancers before he started making records. You know, way

before he started making records. And so that day, right there, man, I couldn't wait to get back to the Bronx, man. One, to tell the guy in the record store that was right on 188th and next to the church right there to, "Yo, man, you gotta get my record, man. You know, it's out." And two, that everybody know that, you know, they had the routines and all that. We toured with that lady. We did a lot of shows and IOU dancers, they tore it up. We had the Ecstasy dancers dancing with us. We had the original dudes who came out with the Coogi Girls. So if any of y'all have seen--

MN: Check if the food is ready.

LB: It's here.

MN: It's here. Let's get the food--yeah.

DBR: If any of y'all have seen back in the days, they had the coogi dancers. The girls that used to be at Apollo. They used to have the coogi suits on and all that, dancing. That was our personal dancers. You know what I'm saying? The coogi Girls was our dancers and the Ecstasy dancers was our dancers. We brought that out there. So, you know, all the groups who came out and got their little dances with their coogi suits on and all that. Y'all got that from us. We was the originators of that.

MN: Wow. Okay, well we've gone about ninety-five minutes for the first interview. The food is here. So what I'd like to do is--just get the door--is we're definitely gonna need to do another interview focusing on the crack years in the Bronx--

DBR: Oh man.

MN: --and how that affected everything. But, so thank you so much and let's celebrate and eat. And this is our new student worker.

DBR: How you doing. K Born.

MN: Okay.