



Lecture 2: Origin of Hip-Hop

MUS 17: Hip-Hop

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Questions

Quote from Jay-Z, *"I've read articles where people compare rap to other genres of music, like jazz or rock 'n roll. But it's really most like a sport. Boxing to be exact. The stamina, the one-man army, the combat, the ring, the stage..."*

- How's that happen? Why does Hip-Hop differ so much from other music genres?
- Why Hip-Hop is compared with martial arts and sports frequently? Such as Boxing, Karate, Samurai, Bushido, Kung Fu, etc.
- Why Hip-Hop is so aggressive and “adrenal”? Where does the battle culture come from?

The Origin of Hip-Hop

NYC in the 1970s

5 Boroughs of NYC

- **Bronx:** the birthplace of Hip-Hop. Representatives: founding fathers of Hip Hop – DJ Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash, and Afrika Bambaataa
- **Manhattan:** aka "The City", Harlem is a neighborhood in uptown Manhattan.
- **Queens**
- **Brooklyn**
- **Staten Island:** [Wu-Tang Clan District](#)



New York in the 1970s

Social and economic pressures converge to make city navigate extreme financial lows. This creates a snowball effect with:

- Stagflation
- Influx of heroin from Vietnam War
- Mass relocations within the city due to highway construction and “slum clearing” by planner Robert Moses
- White flight to the suburbs

In 1975 President Ford refuses to provide a federal bailout for NYC, and conditions become markedly worse

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FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD

Vows He'll Veto Any Bail-Out



Abe, Carey Rip Stand

Stocks Skid, Dow Down 12

Three pages of stories
begin on page 3; full text
of Ford's speech on page 36

Associated Press Wirephoto

President Ford gives his message at Washington's National Press Club yesterday.



WELCOME TO FEAR CITY

A Survival Guide for Visitors to the City of New York

The incidence of crime and violence in New York City is shockingly high, and is getting worse every day. During the four month period ended Apr. 30, 1975, robberies were up 21%; aggravated assault was up 15%; larceny was up 22%; and burglary was up 19%.

Now, to "solve" his budget problems, Mayor Beame is going to discharge substantial numbers of firefighters and law enforcement officers of all kinds. By the time you read this, the number of public safety personnel available to protect residents and visitors may already have been still further reduced. Under those circumstances, the best advice we can give you is this: Until things change, stay away from New York City if you possibly can.

Nevertheless, some New Yorkers do manage to survive and even to keep their property intact. The following guidelines have been prepared by a council of firefighters and law officers to help you enjoy your visit to the City of New York in comfort and safety.

Good luck.



1. Stay off the streets after 6 P.M. Even in midtown Manhattan, muggings and occasional murders are on the increase during the early evening hours. Do not be misled by the late sunsets during the summer season. If you walk in midtown at about 7:30 P.M., you will observe that the streets are nearly deserted.

2. Do not walk. If you must leave your hotel after 6 P.M., try not to go out alone. Summon a radio taxi by telephone, or ask the hotel doorman to call a taxi while you remain in the hotel lobby. Follow the same procedure when leaving the restaurant, theatre, or other location of your evening activity.

3. Avoid public transportation. Subway crime is so high that the City recently had to close off the rear half of each train in the evening so that the passengers could huddle together and be better protected. It has been proved that increasing the number of Transit police officers will cause a reduction in subway crime, but the announced decreases in Transit patrol will have the opposite effect. Accordingly, you should never ride the subway for any reason whatsoever. In midtown Manhattan, you may, at only slight risk, ride the buses during daylight hours only.

4. Remain in Manhattan. Police and fire protection in other areas of the city is grossly inadequate and will become more inadequate. In the South Bronx, which is known to police officers as "Fort Apache," arson has become an uncontrollable problem. If you remain in midtown areas and restrict your travel to daylight hours, emergency service personnel are best able to provide adequate supervision and protection.

5. Protect your property. Theft has become so great a problem that the City is urging everyone to engrave identifying numbers on all property, and the Police Department has purchased special engraving pens which are made available to the public. If you walk on Madison Avenue or in other major midtown locations during business hours, you will observe that many merchants keep their doors locked and will admit customers only after careful inspection. After hours, they protect their premises with special heavy safety gates. Accordingly, you should observe the following precautions.

6. Safeguard your handbag. If you carry a handbag or similar personal luggage, try to hold it firmly with both hands whenever you are in public. Never let it out of your hands; above all, never let it out of your sight. Places that seem most secure, such as restaurants or cocktail lounges, are often the most dangerous. Even a moment's inattention can result in a serious loss.

7. Conceal property in automobiles. If a package is visible on the seat or floor of your automobile, even though the vehicle is locked, there is an excellent chance that your property will be gone when you return. Accordingly, all property should be locked in the trunk or the glove compartment. Do not park your car and then transfer property into the trunk; you will probably be observed. All property should be secured before you arrive at your parking place. Remember also to keep all doors locked and all windows closed when you are in the vehicle. Remember too that auto thefts have increased this year.

The South Bronx

- Of all NYC's boroughs the Bronx is hit hardest.
- Many residents in former low-income neighborhoods were relocated to the South Bronx in the wake of highway construction, and many residents of previously middle-class apartment buildings leave for the suburbs
- This highway construction destroys vibrant, bottom-up neighborhood structures
- By the mid-1970s many buildings were vacant, abandoned, and burned out



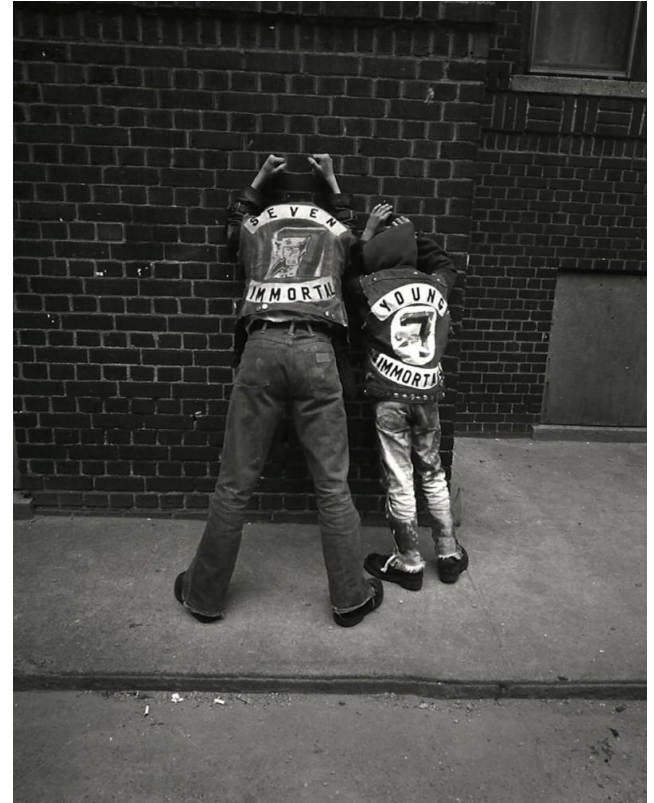
Bronx Gangs (11:43 - 19:15)

- A thriving gang subculture had developed in the Bronx during the 1960s.
- Their style was distinctive, especially the “cut sleeves” denim jackets decorated with patches representing the gang color.
- Gang culture street law: Don’t fly your color in other turfs, or else you might lose your color or lose your life.
- Conquer other gangs by taking their color.



Bronx Gangs (23:10 - 30:45)

- Gangs geography: gangs distributed in different boroughs in NYC.
- Some gangs embraced some forms of political consciousness, especially the cause of Puerto Rican independence.
- Ghetto Brothers initiated to stop violence and build a community by helping the neighborhoods.



Bronx Gangs (50:33 - 58:00)

- In 1971, Benjy Melendez of the Ghetto Brothers brokered a large scale gang truce that was largely successful.
- The war stopped, peace returned to Bronx, people started to embrace a different lifestyle.
- People now can step into the areas (turfs) formerly ruled by the gangs, thus available the gatherings, parties and jam sessions.
- Gang members from different groups are invited to one party to play music and dance together.

Bronx Gangs (50:33 - 58:00)

- Connection between gang culture and Hip-Hop: many of the DJs, MCs, breakers, graffiti artists were former gang members.
- When the war ended, they found another way to express themselves through music, dance, and art; through Hip-Hop.
- The translation between the violent attitude to something positive, but in the same time, intimidating.
- Competition is always and has always been there. It's more like challenging to dance/DJ/rap now and not to fight, and who won the battle won the fight.

DJ Kool Herc

- People are searching for the heavy beats, the raw essence, the heavy drums.
- The DJs knew that the instrumental breaks in the records produced the most excitement on the dance floor.
- Jamaican-born **DJ Kool Herc** pioneered the technique of using two records and mixing between them to extend “break” sections (what he calls the *merry-go-round*)
- DJ Kool Herc is widely regarded as the founding father of Hip-Hop. He threw Hip-Hop’s first party in 1973 at 1520 Sedgwick Ave. – the west side of Bronx.

AD Kool HERE PARTY

* * BACK TO SCHOOL JAM * *

PLACE: 1520 SEDGWICK AVE. "REC ROOM"

DATE: August 11, 1973

TIME: 9:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m.

ADMISSION: \$.25 LADIES ♡

\$.50 FEWAS

GIVEN BY: Kool HERE

School's
SELL
OUT

SPECIAL GUESTS: Coco, Cindy C., Klark K., Timmy T



Nie przykład muzyka która grało. Zazwyczaj grali
muzykę z top 40., po prostu hity.

Hip-Hop 50

- [Hip-hop 50: The party that started hip-hop](#) (2023)
- [How Do You Tell the Story of 50 Years of Hip-Hop? - New York Times](#) (2023)





Afrika Bambaataa ([Bronx Gangs](#) 58:00 - 59:59)

- Converted Black Spades (gang) into the Zulu Nation.
- The Zulu Nation framed a positive political message, drawing on divergent sources from Black Nationalism to science fiction
- Slogan: **Peace, unity, love, and having fun.**
- DJs at Bronx river house, the east side of Bronx.
- Afrika Bambaataa built a community that united people.





Bronx Gangs (1:00:00 - 1:03:00)

- Style change to attract girls.
- The guys have little chance to talk to a girl back then, not if they were black in the South Bronx, and live.
- Music calms the savage beast.

The spirit of Hip-Hop is deeply rooted in its origin. Rebellion, freedom, toughness, fighting, rivalry, aim for the top, masculinity, optimism, etc. They are manifested in all aspects of Hip-Hop artforms – music, dance, rap, graffiti, through battle. The causes of common criticisms of Hip-Hop – violence, vulgarity, brutality, offensive expressions, probably obscenity and misogyny as well, can all be traced back to its origin due to the extremely masculine gang culture and the devastation people went through.

Hip-Hop Expressions

- Hip-Hop music reflects the spirits from its hard beat, low frequency booming and punchy rhythm.
- Rap reflects Hip-Hop spirits not only from its lyrical content but more so through its tough delivery, articulation and superb technics.
- Hip-Hop dance community also inherited many of the traditions. C-walk is a gang dance movement. “Cage” works as the Apache line or 45’ for testing the new member. Krump family inherits some gang tradition to form solidarity.
- Graffiti is a way of rebelling and protesting, voicing for the community.
- The battle is a non-bloody form of carrying on the brutality and rivalry of Hip-Hop tradition that origins from oppression, depression, and gang wars.

Grandmaster Flash

- Grandmaster Flash perfected the raw art form of Hip-Hop by improving on the DJ techniques started by Kool Herc and Afrika Bambaataa.
- Grandmaster Flash took Herc's basic technique and refined it by adding a headphone cue mix to his set up. This allowed him to make the cuts cleaner and more in tempo
- Grandmaster Flash connected technique and technology, which turned turntable into an *instrument*.





HISTORY OR HYPE?

HIP-HOP & NEW YORK'S 1977 BLACKOUT

Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five - The Message (feat. Melle Mel & Duke Bootee) (1982)

- The first major rap song with **socially conscious** lyrics
- It speaks to real life and the real situations of the people who live in the South Bronx.
- The music is funky but the lyrics are ferocious, poignant, and cut deep.

Broken glass everywhere

People pissing on the stairs,

you know they just don't care

I can't take the smell, can't take the noise

Got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice

Rats in the front room, roaches in the back

Junkies in the alley with a baseball bat

I tried to get away, but I couldn't get far

'Cause a man with a tow truck repossessed my car



Discussion Assignment: Positionality



Thank You!