

= Esham =

Esham Attica Smith (born September 20 , 1973) is an American rapper from Detroit , Michigan known for his hallucinogenic style of hip hop which he refers to as " acid rap " . That style of music fuses rock @-@ based beats and lyrics involving subjects such as death , drug use , evil , paranoia and sex .

Esham and his brother James Smith ran the biggest @-@ selling independent hip hop label in Detroit , Michigan throughout the 1990s . Their influence spawned an entire subgenre within hip hop that eventually fueled the careers of Kid Rock , Eminem , D12 , Royce Da 5 ' 9' ' , Tech N9ne , ICP and many more .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early career = = =

Born Esham Attica Smith ? in Long Island , New York , Esham grew up splitting time between the Seven Mile neighborhood on the East side of Detroit , where he lived with his mother , attending Osborn High School , and lived with his grandmother in New York during summers . He studied piano , guitar , and trombone in high school , and listened to artists such as Sugar Hill Gang , Run @-@ DMC , Ozzy Osbourne and Kiss . Esham began to write original lyrics , and was encouraged by his older brother , James H. Smith , to seriously pursue a career in hip hop . According to Esham , " He felt like I had a dope flow , and he thought I could bring something new to the game , just coming from the city of Detroit . Back then , it wasn 't really a [rap] music scene in Detroit . Everybody was just imitating what everybody else was doing . " In the second grade , Esham met Champtown , who was also an aspiring rapper . The two performed together at open mic events Seafood Bay . In one occurrence , Champtown and Esham were forced to rap for a drug dealer at gunpoint .

At the age of 16 , Smith released his debut album , Boomin ' Words from Hell , in 1989 . Of the album , Smith stated , " It was the crack era , [...] and that 's where all that really came from . It was all an expression about [' 70s- ' 80s drug cartel] Young Boys Incorporated , Mayor Coleman Young , the city we lived in and just the turmoil that our city was going through at the time . We referred to the streets of Detroit as ' Hell ' on that record . So that 's where my ideas came from . " In 1990 , Esham and James H. Smith founded the independent record label Reel Life Productions , which reissued his debut album with an alternate track listing and artwork . Esham found it difficult to develop a fanbase , because many wrote off the dark content of his lyrics and imagery as shock value , while hip hop fans did not connect to Esham 's albums because of his heavy metal influences .

In 1991 , Esham met Joseph Bruce , a member of the group Inner City Posse , who praised Esham and Reel Life Productions , and gave Esham a copy of the group 's EP Dog Beats , beginning the two rappers ' friendship and professional relationship .

After releasing two EPs , Erotic Poetry and Homey Don 't Play , Esham completed the double album Judgement Day , and its two volumes , Day and Night were released separately on April 9 , 1992 . In All Music Guide to Hip @-@ Hop , Jason Birchmeier wrote that Judgement Day , Vol . 1 " may not be his most well @-@ crafted work , but it certainly stands as his most inspired work of the ' 90s " , while Vol . 2 " isn 't quite as strong as the first volume , suffering mostly from a number of weak tracks [...] the first volume doesn 't rely quite so much on cheap shock , instead focusing on evocative horror motifs , making Judgement Day , Vol . 2 the less important of the two . "

= = = KKKill the Fetus , Closed Casket and Dead Flowerz = = =

As a student at Osborn High School , Esham met Mastamind , who gave him a three @-@ song demo tape of his music , leading the two to form the group Natas with Esham 's longtime friend ,

TNT . In 1992 , Esham appeared on Carnival of Carnage , the debut album of Insane Clown Posse , released on October 18 . He produced three tracks and rapped on the album 's final track . In November , Natas released their debut album , Life After Death . Following the release of this album , Esham , Natas and Reel Life Productions were the subject of much controversy when a 17 @-@ year @-@ old fan killed himself while smoking cannabis and playing Russian roulette while listening to Life After Death . In 1993 , Esham released his third solo album , KKKill the Fetus . Jason Birchmeier wrote that " At this point in his career , his rapping has already reached near @-@ peak levels , and his production shows a continued path towards an inventiveness . [...] Never again would Esham be so gritty . "

On November 22 , 1994 , Esham released his fourth studio album , Closed Casket . Jason Birchmeier wrote that " most fans taking a chronological approach to his catalog should be fairly numb to Esham 's exploitative shock attempts . Yet if this is one of your first experiences with Esham the Unholy , this album should pack a punch with its dark nature . " In May 1996 , Esham released his fifth studio album , Dead Flowerz . It peaked at # 38 on the Billboard Top R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Albums chart .

= = = Gotham Records (1997 ? 2001) = = =

In June 1997 , Esham rebranded Reel Life Productions as Gotham Records , and released the album Bruce Wayne : Gotham City 1987 , which charted at # 57 on Top R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Albums . Esham later signed a distribution deal with Overcore , a subsidiary of Overture Music , which later became distributed by TVT Records . In June 2001 , Gotham released Kool Keith 's Spankmaster album , which featured several contributions by Esham , as well as Smith 's eighth album , Tongues , which peaked at # 7 on the Top Independent Albums chart , # 46 on the Top R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Albums chart and # 195 on the Billboard 200 . In August 2001 , Esham and D12 were kicked off the Warped Tour after members of the group allegedly physically attacked Smith over the lyrics of his song " Chemical Imbalance , " which contained a reference to the daughter of D12 member Eminem , who was not present during the tour .

= = = Psychopathic Records (2002 ? 2005) = = =

In 2002 , Esham signed to Psychopathic Records , releasing the compilation Acid Rain . It was announced that Esham would be moving away from the horror themes of his previous efforts . On November 18 , 2003 , Esham released his ninth studio album , Repentance . It peaked at # 9 on the Top Heatseekers chart , # 10 on the Top Independent Albums chart , and # 71 on the Top R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Albums chart . Jason Birchmeier wrote that " Repentance is a small step forward for Esham . He seems very confident here , comfortable with himself as an artist [...] when he pulls everything together [...] he makes some of the best music of his long , fruitful , yet largely unacknowledged career . "

In 2005 Esham joined forces with Insane Clown Posse and Lavel to release the Soopa Villainz album , Furious .

His follow @-@ up album on Psychopathic A @-@ 1 Yola , saw Esham achieving his highest consecutive level of charting success , as it peaked at 176 on the Billboard 200 , his highest selling album on that chart to date , as well as peaking at # 6 on Top Heatseekers , # 12 on the Independent Albums chart , # 23 on the Top Rap Albums chart , and # 48 on the Top R & B chart . Allrovi wrote , " During the course of A @-@ 1 YOLA , Esham takes the form of street hustler , kingpin , vampire , and all sorts of underworld characters , injecting his undiluted personality into each three @-@ to @-@ four @-@ minute sketch . His sonic backdrop remains raw but fresh , drawing an impressive amount of energy out of sparse beats . "

Following this release , Esham left Psychopathic in 2005 to relaunch Reel Life / Gotham .

Smith released his twelfth studio album , Suspended Animation on August 3 , 2010 , followed by the album DMT Sessions , and a documentary directed by Smith , Death of an Indie Label in 2011 , which was originally announced as a bonus feature on a deluxe edition of DMT Sessions , but was

instead uploaded onto Gotham Inc . ' s YouTube channel . The Documentary was released with a soundtrack entitled the same , the LP would feature Seven the General as well as Poe Whosaine . Smith was interviewed for the documentary The Untold Story of Detroit Hip @-@ Hop , which is being produced by Detroit rapper Champtown . In 2015 Esham and Insane Clown Posse reconciled their differences and Esham performed at the 2016 Juggalo Day " Ringmaster " Show . With a well reception from the fans Esham was then announced and scheduled to perform at the 2016 GOTJ . On July 24 , 2016 Esham announced via social media that he will not perform at any more Gathering of the Juggalos .

= = Style = =

Esham 's lyrical style , which author Sara Cohen says " utilize [s] shocking (and blatantly over the top) narratives to give an over @-@ exaggerated , almost cartoon @-@ like version of urban deprivation in Detroit " , was derived from the style of the Geto Boys . Smith 's lyrics have focused on themes such as death , drug use , evil , paranoia and sex , and have included references to Satan . Smith refers to his performance style as " acid rap , " comparing the lyrics to hallucinations induced by LSD . Esham 's style has also been described as horrorcore hip hop .

" People were literally scared of my records . There have been so many rumors about me and my records . People got the first album , and they would just make up stories . They 'd get into an accident and be like , ' I got into an accident because I was playing that tape . ' It wasn 't like we helped ourselves when we described what was in people 's heads . It wasn 't to shock people , though , but to get people involved in what we were doing . We had to get peoples ' attention . [...] We said a lot of things that people wanted to say but didn 't say . We talked about a lot of political and social [issues] that people didn 't want to talk about . "

Following accusations of Satanism , Smith decided that Closed Casket would be the last album to feature such themes , and that he would no longer rap about the Devil . According to Smith , " I 've been able to entertain people for 20 years . I just try to uplift people now . The latest things I do , I 'm trying to get a message out to people , while I 'm entertaining them at the same time . "

Esham 's music style has been described as a fusion of hip hop beats and death metal lyrics . Esham defined his style as analogous to " modern day blues [or] heavy metal " . Rappers influenced by Esham include Insane Clown Posse , Eminem and Kid Rock .

= = Discography = =

Boomin ' Words from Hell (1989)
Judgement Day (1992)
KKKill The Fetus (1993)
Closed Casket (1994)
Dead Flowerz (1996)
Bruce Wayne : Gotham City 1987 (1997)
Mail Dominance (1999)
Tongues (2001)
Repentance (2003)
A @-@ 1 Yola (2005)
Sacrificial Lambz (2008)
Suspended Animation (2010)
DMT Sessions (2011)
Venus Fly Trap LP (2012)
Dichotomy (2015)