[Template:Pp-semi-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-semi-indef" \o "Template:Pp-semi-indef) [Template:Use mdy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_mdy_dates) [Template:Infobox musical artist](/wiki/Template:Infobox_musical_artist) **Eric Lynn Wright**[[1]](#cite_note-1)[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[3]](#cite_note-3) (September 7, 1964 – March 26, 1995), better known by his stage name **Eazy-E**, was a U.S. American [rapper](/wiki/Rapping) who performed solo and in the [hip hop](/wiki/Hip_hop_music) group [N.W.A](/wiki/N.W.A). Wright is affectionately called "The Godfather of [Gangsta Rap](/wiki/Gangsta_Rap)". He was born to Richard and Kathie Wright in [Compton](/wiki/Compton,_California), [California](/wiki/California). After dropping out of high school in the tenth grade, he supported himself primarily by [selling drugs](/wiki/Drug_dealer) before founding [Ruthless Records](/wiki/Ruthless_Records) and becoming a rapper. [Arabian Prince](/wiki/Arabian_Prince), Eazy-E, [Dr. Dre](/wiki/Dr._Dre) and [Ice Cube](/wiki/Ice_Cube) formed N.W.A. After [DJ Yella](/wiki/DJ_Yella) and [MC Ren](/wiki/MC_Ren) joined the group, N.W.A released their debut single [*Panic Zone*](/wiki/Panic_Zone). In 1988, they released their most controversial album, [*Straight Outta Compton*](/wiki/Straight_Outta_Compton). The group released two more albums and then disbanded after Eazy released Dr. Dre from his contract.

Eazy's main influences included 1970s funk groups, contemporary rappers, and comedians. When reviewing Eazy's albums, many critics noted his unique overall style, with Steve Huey of the [All Music Guide](/wiki/Allmusic) remarking: "While his technical skills as a rapper were never the greatest, his distinctive delivery... over-the-top lyrics, and undeniable charisma made him a star."[[4]](#cite_note-4)

## Contents

* 1 Early life and Ruthless Records investment[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]
* 2 Musical career[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]
  + 2.1 N.W.A and ''Eazy-Duz-It'' (1986–91)[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]
  + 2.2 End of N.W.A and feud with Dr. Dre (1991–94)[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]
* 3 Personal life[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]
* 4 Legal issues[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]
* 5 Illness and death[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]
* 6 Musical influences and style[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]
  + 6.1 Legacy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]
* 7 Discography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]
* 8 References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]
* 9 External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

## Early life and Ruthless Records investment[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

Eric Wright was born to Richard and Kathie Wright on September 7, 1964, in [Compton](/wiki/Compton,_California), [California](/wiki/California), a Los Angeles suburb notorious for gang activity and crime.[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6) His father was a postal worker and his mother was a grade school administrator.[[7]](#cite_note-7) Wright dropped out of high school in the tenth grade,[[8]](#cite_note-8) but later received a high-school general equivalency diploma (GED).[[9]](#cite_note-9) [Template:Quote box](/wiki/Template:Quote_box)

Wright supported himself primarily by selling drugs, introduced to the occupation by his cousin.[[8]](#cite_note-8) Wright's friend [Jerry Heller](/wiki/Jerry_Heller) admits that he witnessed Wright selling [marijuana](/wiki/Marijuana), but says that he never saw him sell [cocaine](/wiki/Cocaine). As Heller noted in his book *Ruthless: A Memoir*, Wright's "dope dealer" label was part of his "self-forged armor".[[10]](#cite_note-10) Wright was also labeled as a "thug". Heller explains: "The hood where he grew up was a dangerous place. He was a small guy. 'Thug' was a role that was widely understood on the street; it gave you a certain level of protection in the sense that people hesitated to fuck with you. Likewise, 'dope dealer' was a role that accorded you certain privileges and respect."[[10]](#cite_note-10) In 1986, at the age of 22, Wright had allegedly earned as much as US$250,000 from dealing drugs. However, after his cousin was shot and killed, he decided that he could make a better living in the Los Angeles hip hop scene, which was growing rapidly in popularity.[[11]](#cite_note-11) He started recording songs during the mid-1980s in his parents' garage.[[9]](#cite_note-9) The original idea for Ruthless Records came when Wright asked Heller to go into business with him. Wright suggested a half-ownership company, but it was later decided that Wright would get eighty percent of the company's income, and Heller would only get twenty percent. According to Heller, he told Wright, "Every dollar comes into Ruthless, I take twenty cents. That's industry standard for a manager of my caliber. I take twenty, you take eighty percent. I am responsible for my expenses, and you're responsible for yours. You own the company. I work for you."[[10]](#cite_note-10) Along with Heller, Wright invested much of his money into [Ruthless Records](/wiki/Ruthless_Records).[[12]](#cite_note-12) Heller claims that he invested the first $250,000, and would eventually put up to $1,000,000 into the company.[[10]](#cite_note-10)

## Musical career[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

### N.W.A and ''Eazy-Duz-It'' (1986–91)[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[thumb|200px|Wright's signature written for an Eazy-E Fan Club letter](/wiki/File:Eazy-E_Fan_Club_letterhead.jpg) [N.W.A's](/wiki/N.W.A) original lineup consisted of Arabian Prince, Dr. Dre, Eazy-E, and Ice Cube.[[13]](#cite_note-13)[[14]](#cite_note-14) [DJ Yella](/wiki/DJ_Yella) and [MC Ren](/wiki/MC_Ren) joined later.[[15]](#cite_note-15) The [compilation album](/wiki/Compilation_album) [*N.W.A. and the Posse*](/wiki/N.W.A._and_the_Posse) was released on November 6, 1987, and would go on to be certified Gold in the United States.[[16]](#cite_note-16)[[17]](#cite_note-17) The album featured material previously released as singles on the [Macola Records](/wiki/Macola_Records) label, which was responsible for distributing the releases by N.W.A and other artists like the [Fila Fresh Crew](/wiki/Fila_Fresh_Crew), a [West Coast rap](/wiki/West_Coast_hip_hop) group originally based in [Dallas](/wiki/Dallas), Texas.[[18]](#cite_note-18)[[19]](#cite_note-19) Eazy-E's debut album, [*Eazy-Duz-It*](/wiki/Eazy-Duz-It), was released on September 16, 1988, and featured twelve tracks. It was labeled as [West Coast hip hop](/wiki/West_Coast_hip_hop), [Gangsta rap](/wiki/Gangsta_rap), and [Golden age hip hop](/wiki/Golden_age_hip_hop). It has sold over 2.5 million copies in the United States and reached number forty-one on the [*Billboard* 200](/wiki/Billboard_200).[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[20]](#cite_note-20) The album was produced by Dr. Dre and DJ Yella and largely written by [MC Ren](/wiki/MC_Ren), Ice Cube, and [The D.O.C.](/wiki/The_D.O.C.).[[21]](#cite_note-21) Both Glen Boyd from the [*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*](/wiki/Seattle_Post-Intelligencer) and [MTV's](/wiki/MTV) Jon Wiederhorn claimed that *Eazy-Duz-It* "paved the way" for N.W.A's most controversial album, [*Straight Outta Compton*](/wiki/Straight_Outta_Compton).[[22]](#cite_note-22)[[23]](#cite_note-23) Wright's only solo in the album was a remix of the song "8 Ball", which originally appeared on *N.W.A. and the Posse*. The album featured Wright's writing and performing; he performed on seven songs and helped write four songs.[[24]](#cite_note-24) After the release of *Straight Outta Compton*, Ice Cube left because of internal disputes, and the group continued as a four-piece ensemble.[[15]](#cite_note-15) N.W.A released [*100 Miles and Runnin'*](/wiki/100_Miles_and_Runnin') and [*Niggaz4Life*](/wiki/Niggaz4Life) in 1991. A diss war started between N.W.A and Ice Cube when "100 Miles and Runnin'" and "Real Niggaz" were released. Ice Cube responded with "[No Vaseline](/wiki/No_Vaseline)" on [*Death Certificate*](/wiki/Death_Certificate_(album)).[[25]](#cite_note-25) Wright performed on seven of the eighteen songs on *Niggaz4Life*.[[26]](#cite_note-26) In March 1991 Wright accepted an invitation to a lunch benefiting the Republican Senatorial Inner Circle, hosted by then-U.S. President [George H. W. Bush](/wiki/George_H._W._Bush).[[27]](#cite_note-27) A spokesman for the rapper said that Eazy-E supported Bush because of his performance in the [Persian Gulf War](/wiki/Gulf_War).[[28]](#cite_note-28)

### End of N.W.A and feud with Dr. Dre (1991–94)[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

N.W.A began to split up after Jerry Heller became the band's manager. Dr. Dre recalls: "The split came when Jerry Heller got involved. He played the divide and conquer game. Instead of taking care of everybody, he picked one nigga to take care of and that was Eazy. And Eazy was like, 'I'm taken care of, so fuck it'." Dre sent [Suge Knight](/wiki/Suge_Knight) to look into Eazy's financial situation because he was beginning to grow suspicious of Eazy and Heller. Dre asked Eazy to release him from the Ruthless Records contract, but Eazy refused. The impasse led to what reportedly transpired between Knight and Eazy at the recording studio where *Niggaz4life* was recorded. After he refused to release Dre, Knight declared to Eazy that he had kidnapped Heller and was holding him prisoner in a van. The rumor did not convince Eazy to release Dre from his contract, and Knight threatened Eazy's family: Knight gave Eazy a piece of paper that contained Eazy's mother's address, telling him, "I know where your mama stays." Eazy finally signed Dre's release, officially ending N.W.A.[[29]](#cite_note-29) The feud with Dr. Dre continued after a track on Dre's [*The Chronic*](/wiki/The_Chronic), "[Dre Day](/wiki/Fuck_wit_Dre_Day_(And_Everybody's_Celebratin'))", contained lyrics that insulted Eazy-E. Eazy responded with the [EP](/wiki/Extended_play), [*It's On ~~(Dr. Dre)~~ 187um Killa*](/wiki/It's_On_(Dr._Dre)_187um_Killa), featuring the tracks "[Real Muthaphuckkin G's](/wiki/Real_Muthaphuckkin_G's)" and "It's On". The album, which was released on October 25, 1993, contains pictures of Dre wearing "lacy outfits and makeup" when he was a member of the Electro-hop [World Class Wreckin' Cru](/wiki/World_Class_Wreckin'_Cru).[[29]](#cite_note-29)

## Personal life[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

Wright had a son, [Eric Wright Jr](/wiki/Lil_Eazy-E)., in 1984. He also had a daughter named Erin[[30]](#cite_note-30) who now legally changed her name to Ebie.[[31]](#cite_note-31) Wright also knew that he had at least five other children by five separate women during his lifetime. His oldest son Eric in an interview in 2015, said that three more children, now adults, were confirmed through DNA testing with Eric Jr's sister and Eazy-E's father, to be his as well, bringing his total children to at least ten.

Wright met Tomica Woods at a Los Angeles nightclub in 1991, and they married in 1995, twelve days before his death.[[32]](#cite_note-32) They had a son named Dominick and a daughter named Daijah (born six months after Wright's death).[[33]](#cite_note-33) After Wright's death, Ruthless Records was taken over by his wife.

## Legal issues[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

After Dr. Dre left Ruthless Records, executives Mike Klein and Jerry Heller sought assistance from the [Jewish Defense League](/wiki/Jewish_Defense_League) (JDL). Klein, a former Ruthless Records director of business affairs, said this provided Ruthless Records with leverage to enter into negotiations with [Death Row Records](/wiki/Death_Row_Records) over Dr. Dre's departure.[[34]](#cite_note-34) While Knight had sought an outright release from Ruthless Records for Dr. Dre, the JDL and Ruthless Records management negotiated a release in which the record label would continue to receive money and publishing rights from future Dr. Dre projects with Death Row Records, founded by Dr. Dre with Suge Knight.[[35]](#cite_note-35) The FBI launched a money-laundering investigation under the assumption that the JDL was extorting money from Ruthless Records to fight their causes. This led to JDL spokesperson Irv Rubin issuing a press release stating "There was nothing but a close, tight relationship" between Eazy-E and the organization.[[34]](#cite_note-34)

## Illness and death[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

On February 24, 1995, Wright was admitted to the [Cedars-Sinai Medical Center](/wiki/Cedars-Sinai_Medical_Center) in [Los Angeles](/wiki/Los_Angeles) with what he believed to be [asthma](/wiki/Asthma) due to a recurring cough and wincing that occurred beginning in July of 1994. Instead, he was diagnosed with [AIDS](/wiki/HIV/AIDS). He announced his illness in a public statement on March 16, 1995. Wright allegedly lost his virginity at the age of twelve, and his promiscuous behavior resulted in not only the fatal disease, but also has nine children by seven different women.[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[36]](#cite_note-36)[[37]](#cite_note-37)During the week of March 20, having already made amends with [Ice Cube](/wiki/Ice_Cube), [Snoop Dogg](/wiki/Snoop_Dogg) and [Dr. Dre](/wiki/Dr._Dre), he drafted a final message to his fans.[[38]](#cite_note-38) On March 26, 1995, at approximately 6:35 p.m. PST, Eazy-E died from complications of AIDS, one month after his diagnosis. He was 30 years old.[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[39]](#cite_note-39) He was buried on April 7, 1995 at [Rose Hills Memorial Park](/wiki/Rose_Hills_Memorial_Park) in [Whittier, California](/wiki/Whittier,_California).[[40]](#cite_note-40) Over 3,000 people attended his funeral, including Jerry Heller and DJ Yella. He was buried in a gold casket, and instead of wearing a suit and tie, Eazy-E was dressed in a flannel shirt, a Compton hat and jeans.[[41]](#cite_note-41) On January 30, 1996, ten months after Eazy-E's death, his final album, [*Str8 off tha Streetz of Muthaphukkin Compton*](/wiki/Str8_off_tha_Streetz_of_Muthaphukkin_Compton) was released.

## Musical influences and style[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

Allmusic cites Eazy-E's influences as [Ice-T](/wiki/Ice-T), [Redd Foxx](/wiki/Redd_Foxx), [King Tee](/wiki/King_Tee), [Bootsy Collins](/wiki/Bootsy_Collins), [Run-D.M.C.](/wiki/Run-D.M.C.), [Richard Pryor](/wiki/Richard_Pryor), [The Egyptian Lover](/wiki/The_Egyptian_Lover), [Schoolly D](/wiki/Schoolly_D), [Too $hort](/wiki/Too_$hort), [Prince](/wiki/Prince_(musician)), [The Sugarhill Gang](/wiki/The_Sugarhill_Gang), and [George Clinton](/wiki/George_Clinton_(musician)).[[42]](#cite_note-42) In the documentary *The Life and Timez of Eric Wright*, Eazy-E mentions collaborating with many of his influences.[[43]](#cite_note-43) When reviewing [*Str8 off tha Streetz of Muthaphukkin Compton*](/wiki/Str8_off_tha_Streetz_of_Muthaphukkin_Compton), [Stephen Thomas Erlewine](/wiki/Stephen_Thomas_Erlewine) noted "... Eazy-E sounds revitalized, but the music simply isn't imaginative. Instead of pushing forward and creating a distinctive style, it treads over familiar gangsta territory, complete with bottomless bass, whining synthesizers, and meaningless boasts."[[44]](#cite_note-44) When reviewing *Eazy-Duz-It*, Jason Birchmeier of Allmusic said, "In terms of production, Dr. Dre and Yella meld together P-Funk, Def Jam-style hip-hop, and the leftover electro sounds of mid-'80s Los Angeles, creating a dense, funky, and thoroughly unique style of their own." Birchmeier described Eazy's style as "dense, unique, and funky," and said that it sounded "absolutely revolutionary in 1988."[[42]](#cite_note-42) Several members of N.W.A wrote lyrics for *Eazy-Duz-It*: Ice Cube, The D.O.C., and MC Ren.[[45]](#cite_note-45) The EP [*5150: Home 4 tha Sick*](/wiki/5150:_Home_4_tha_Sick) features a song written by Naughty By Nature. The track "Merry Muthaphuckkin' Xmas" features [Menajahtwa](/wiki/Menajahtwa), Buckwheat, and [Atban Klann](/wiki/Atban_Klann) as guest vocalists, and "Neighborhood Sniper" features [Kokane](/wiki/Kokane) as a guest vocalist.[[46]](#cite_note-46) *It's On () 187um Killa* features several guest vocalists, including [Gangsta Dresta](/wiki/Dresta), [B.G. Knocc Out](/wiki/B.G._Knocc_Out). Kokane, [Cold 187um](/wiki/Cold_187um), [Rhythum D](/wiki/Rhythum_D), and [Dirty Red](/wiki/Dirty_Red).[[47]](#cite_note-47) *Str8 off tha Streetz of Muthaphukkin Compton* featured several guest vocalists, including B.G. Knocc Out, Gangsta Dresta, [Sylk-E. Fyne](/wiki/Sylk-E._Fyne), Dirty Red, Menajahtwa, Roger Troutman, and ex-N.W.A members MC Ren and DJ Yella.[[48]](#cite_note-48)

### Legacy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[thumb|280px|Graffiti of Eazy-E in the Netherlands](/wiki/File:Memorial_Eazy-E_made_by_streetartist_LJvanT_@_Leeuwarden_the_Netherlands.jpg) Eazy-E has been called the godfather of [gangsta rap](/wiki/Gangsta_rap).[[49]](#cite_note-49)[[50]](#cite_note-50)[[51]](#cite_note-51)[[52]](#cite_note-52) MTV's Reid Shaheem said that Eazy was a "rap-pioneer,"[[52]](#cite_note-52) and he is sometimes cited by critics as a legend.[[53]](#cite_note-53)[[54]](#cite_note-54) Steve Huey of [AllMusic](/wiki/AllMusic) said that he was "one of the most controversial figures in gangsta rap."[[4]](#cite_note-4) Since his 1995 death, many book and video biographies have been produced, including 2002's *The Day Eazy-E Died* and *Dead and Gone*.[[55]](#cite_note-55)[[56]](#cite_note-56)[[57]](#cite_note-57) When Eazy was diagnosed with AIDS, many magazines like [*Jet*](/wiki/Jet_(magazine)),[[58]](#cite_note-58) [*Vibe*](/wiki/Vibe_(magazine)),[[59]](#cite_note-59) *Billboard*,[[60]](#cite_note-60) [*The Crisis*](/wiki/The_Crisis_(newspaper)),[[61]](#cite_note-61) and [*Newsweek*](/wiki/Newsweek) covered the story and released information on the topic.[[62]](#cite_note-62) All of his studio albums and EPs charted on the *Billboard* 200,[[63]](#cite_note-63)[[64]](#cite_note-64)[[65]](#cite_note-65) and many of his singles—"[Eazy-Duz-It](/wiki/Eazy-Duz-It_(song))", "[We Want Eazy](/wiki/We_Want_Eazy)", "[Real Muthaphuckkin G's](/wiki/Real_Muthaphuckkin_G's)", and "[Just tah Let U Know](/wiki/Just_tah_Let_U_Know)"—also charted in the U.S.[[65]](#cite_note-65)[[66]](#cite_note-66) In 2012 a Eazy-E documentary was released by Ruthless Propaganda, called *Ruthless Memories*. The documentary featured interviews from [Jerry Heller](/wiki/Jerry_Heller), [MC Ren](/wiki/MC_Ren) and [B.G. Knocc Out](/wiki/B.G._Knocc_Out).[[67]](#cite_note-67) In the 2015 film [*Straight Outta Compton*](/wiki/Straight_Outta_Compton_(2015_film)), Eazy-E is played by [Jason Mitchell](/wiki/Jason_Mitchell_(actor)), and the film is dedicated in his honor.[[68]](#cite_note-68)

## Discography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

Studio albums

* [*Eazy-Duz-It*](/wiki/Eazy-Duz-It) (1988)
* [*Str8 off tha Streetz of Muthaphukkin Compton*](/wiki/Str8_off_tha_Streetz_of_Muthaphukkin_Compton) (1996)

Extended Plays

* [*5150: Home 4 tha Sick*](/wiki/5150:_Home_4_tha_Sick) (1992)
* [*It's On (Dr. Dre) 187um Killa*](/wiki/It's_On_(Dr._Dre)_187um_Killa) (1993)
* [*Impact of a Legend*](/wiki/Impact_of_a_Legend) (2002)

With N.W.A

* [*N.W.A. and the Posse*](/wiki/N.W.A._and_the_Posse) *(1987)*
* [*Straight Outta Compton*](/wiki/Straight_Outta_Compton) (1988)
* [*100 Miles and Runnin'*](/wiki/100_Miles_and_Runnin') (1990)
* [*Niggaz4Life*](/wiki/Niggaz4Life) (1991)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:Wikipedia books](/wiki/Template:Wikipedia_books) [Template:Wikiquote](/wiki/Template:Wikiquote) [Template:Commons category](/wiki/Template:Commons_category)

* [Template:IMDb name](/wiki/Template:IMDb_name)
* [FBI file on Easy E](http://vault.fbi.gov/eric-wright-easy-e-ez-e/eric-wright-easy-e-ez-e)

[Template:Eazy-E](/wiki/Template:Eazy-E) [Template:N.W.A](/wiki/Template:N.W.A) [Template:Ruthless Records](/wiki/Template:Ruthless_Records)

[Template:Good article](/wiki/Template:Good_article)

[Template:Authority control](/wiki/Template:Authority_control) [Category:Eazy-E](/wiki/Category:Eazy-E) [Category:African-American male rappers](/wiki/Category:African-American_male_rappers) [Category:Gangsta rappers](/wiki/Category:Gangsta_rappers) [Category:West Coast hip hop musicians](/wiki/Category:West_Coast_hip_hop_musicians) [Category:1964 births](/wiki/Category:1964_births) [Category:1995 deaths](/wiki/Category:1995_deaths) [Category:AIDS-related deaths in California](/wiki/Category:AIDS-related_deaths_in_California) [Category:American drug traffickers](/wiki/Category:American_drug_traffickers) [Category:American music industry executives](/wiki/Category:American_music_industry_executives) [Category:Crips](/wiki/Category:Crips) [Category:G-funk artists](/wiki/Category:G-funk_artists) [Category:N.W.A members](/wiki/Category:N.W.A_members) [Category:Musicians from Compton, California](/wiki/Category:Musicians_from_Compton,_California) [Category:Priority Records artists](/wiki/Category:Priority_Records_artists) [Category:Rappers from Los Angeles, California](/wiki/Category:Rappers_from_Los_Angeles,_California) [Category:Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductees](/wiki/Category:Rock_and_Roll_Hall_of_Fame_inductees) [Category:Ruthless Records artists](/wiki/Category:Ruthless_Records_artists) [Category:William Howard Taft High School (Los Angeles, California) alumni](/wiki/Category:William_Howard_Taft_High_School_(Los_Angeles,_California)_alumni) [Category:20th-century American musicians](/wiki/Category:20th-century_American_musicians)