



endary Rock Steady Crew by Crazy Legs himself, whom he started DJin' for as a favor. Nowadays, he helps put together their shows including the world famous RSC Anniversary jams. He also does production work for underground groups and remixes for various labels.

"With Non-Phixion, we're trying to encompass all aspects of hip hop, what we grew up on."

SABAC THE ACTIVIST (Tribe Of Ephraim)

We know about the plans to fill the projects up with contraband...

The official mission of the non-profit organization City Kids is to engage and develop diverse young people to positively help themselves, their families, community and the world through arts and education. Sabac Red serves as Director of Coalition. He develops workshops and programs around such issues as AIDS, drugs, racism, violence, self-esteem and conflict management. These workshops help kids express themselves in a creative manner through sound, movement, poetry, dance, and even hip hop.

"I work with teenagers. I work with kids who're in Bloods, I work with kids who're in Crips, Netas, Latin Kings/Queens on the daily. It's not about telling 'em not to be in a gang, it's about offering them some type of alternative so they can make better decisions in their lives. We never tell the kids here, 'Take off your red, take off your blue, your yellow, your white.' We accept them. That just keeps me informed of what's going on, y'know, from being there at one point, to guiding people that are there."

He first came to the program while in high school after hearing about the music programs and workshops; what got him open was the honeys. City Kids

is known for introducing young talent to the industry, most notably Lauryn Hill. Sabac performed with her in plays with back in the day. Malik Yoba (of NY Undercover fame), who was vice prez at the time, held the position Sabac holds now. He accounts both Malik and CK for helping him turn his life around, showing there was more to life than drugs, beating people up, robbing them, or getting in unnecessary fights.

Born in Puerto Rico, half Sicilian, Sabac came stateside at 4. Raised in the Gravesend/Coney Island section of Crooklyn, he stayed 2 blocks from Marlboro projects and he's been rhyming since age 12. Like Eclipse, he got his name from running with graff writers. Back then, it was an acronym for Smoke A Blunt And Chill. He was that shorty you saw in the club gettin' lit and wildin' out. Sabac's the dancing man on stage, been b-boying since a baby rock. His story's all in the lyrics: the broken home, dealing with poverty, all that. He's got a knack for constructively dealing with whatever demons may be pushing him from inside, constantly striving for positivity. He's frequently seen wearing a kufi. While not a practicing muslim, he did study Islam for a while beginning at age 19. Friends in the Nation of Islam introduced him to the lessons, getting deep into the mathematics. Native American traditions occupy his spiritual studies these days. Through City Kids he spent two weeks on a reservation with Native Americans, participating in sweat lodges.

"I just finished reading this book called *Conversations with God* by Neil Donald Walsh. That book talks about how we all are God. It talks about how people are God and God created us in the vision of God so we have no other choice but to be God. There's no such thing as sin. There's no good or bad, there's no right or wrong. There just is what is. We have an unlimited potential. It's

SUPER-ILL: THE ORIGINS OF NON-PHIXION

A ROOSEVELT FRANKLIN EXCLUSIVE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES COLEMAN



"Imagine true school b-boyisms combined with futuristic imagery. Imagine rhymes of ghetto angst, aggressively delivered over hard hitting beats coupled with thought provoking messages of militant righteousness." - from Non-Phixion's press release

Exit the Stargate / initial perception quickens my heart rate / this dark place / planet Earth orbits one star / come from afar / faraway state of mind / open up your third eye / black helicopters in the sky...

It started at Wild Pitch, the now defunct rap label that brought us classic albums by Gang Starr and Main Source. In '95, Eclipse and Sabac Red were working there with MC Serch, who'd recently split from the pioneering group 3rd Bass. Ill Bill, who was looking for management, hit Sabac with a copy of a song he did called "Dopefiend" to play for Serch. Serch asked him if he wanted to perform together and the two came up with the concept for a new group. Eclipse and Sabac were included and Ill Bill put down his man Goretex who he'd been rhyming with for 15 years. Non-Phixion was born, and soon had a deal with Geffen records. The deal eventually turned sour when Geffen attempted to make the group more "radio friendly" by changing their sound and image. After a year and a half of sitting in label limbo, they jetted in '97. Serch, having just had two children, eventually had to exit to handle his personal responsibilities. Not ones to let a wild pitch slow them down, the group went subterranean, releasing a strong series of singles that have gone on to sell 70,000 units independently world wide. With their debut album about to be released, the big blue marble we call home will be introduced to an underworld thought to exist only in mythology.

DJ ECLIPSE - The Center

Catch him around cats like DJ Premier, head down, he plays the role of humble son. Lanky like a high school b-baller with a peach fuzz ceasar, he don't speak much. Like Terminator X, it's all in the hands. He's a business man and commands the vinyl working for the wrecka stow Fat Beats, which exists at the center of the underground hip hop universe. Their work has helped mad folks blow, including cats like Dilated, J5, BlackStar (if not the entire Rawkus roster) and, hopefully, Non-Phixion.

"Our mission with Fat Beats is to try and break groups we think don't get as much attention as they deserve, to try and balance out the mainstream and to further do things which are beneficial to hip hop. We want to bring more to the light the stuff we feel goes unnoticed."

Working for a wrecka stow in South Carolina was how he first met Serch who was on tour for his solo album. He played some tracks for him and wound up as his DJ, moving to NYC. As Head of Retail at Wild Pitch he got hip to Fat Beats. Appreciating what they were about, he supported and wound up working there on the weekends. By '96, he was managing the store. The company's since branched out across the globe with stores in L.A., Atlanta, Amsterdam, and Tokyo. Eclipse now oversees all the retail stores as well as other details from the company's warehouse in Soho.

When he's not making undercover corporate moves, he's handling one of his many chores as a DJ outside the group. Every Wednesday he can be heard spinning on the Half Time Radio Show (89.1/WNYU) with his potnah DJ Riz. He fills in for Bobbito on his CM FAMALAM Show (WKCR) when Cucumber Slice is out of town or on gigs. He was made a member of the leg-

THE ORIGINS OF NON-PHIXION

such an art to be able to forgive somebody, when at the same time, there's really no need to forgive because God already forgives."

What got you so open?

Sabac: I had to know how to be lost to be found. If I find myself being lost again, I try to find myself again.

GORETEX - Ghetto Guerilla

my scary team be like/ barely clean/ rockin' Israeli jeans/ that's why I'm mostly beard but rarely seen.

Non-Phixion is about good and bad, positive and negative, with out good there can't be evil, and vice versa. We read between the lines. My shit lyrically is about the struggle, life experience. I can battle, get ill with metaphors, all that, but really, I just wanna let cats know in the struggle. Struggle recognize struggle. The time is now.

When you say struggle, what's dat mean?

The struggle as far as day to day shit. Just cuz we got a record deal don't mean [it's all good like that]. Cats still gotta get dough, knowhuimsayin? I'm still in the streets. I'm doing what I gotta do, that's the struggle. Cats got kids. I got two seeds. I do what the fuck I gotta do now, regardless.

I been on welfare, been seen foodstamps, been seen welfare cheese, all that, knowhuimsayin? You could come to my projects, you could come and chill. I can walk thru there anytime, with people, with boys, with jewels. I get respect where I'm from. Motherfuckers know, I been out there.

Born on Strong Isle, he moved to Crookland in '83. After splitting up with his Mexican father, his Jewish moms raised him until she passed away 10 years ago. He's been on his own ever since.

"Glenwood Projects, it's not Marcy, but it's just as foul as any other spot. You got Bloods in there, 12 year old cats, Crips choppin' each other up, beating up old people. Shit is fucked up. I try and talk to young shorties who I used to just build with on some science shit, 'Yo, leave that other shit alone. Go to school, do something, take care of your moms.' Now they just on some smoke 10 blunts a day, where the dust at, lookin to fuck people up. Yo, it's depressing, B. It's representin', but it ain't much good. It ain't much good comin' of there.

"[Back in the day] I was on some Rakim shit, studyin' the god, trying to figure out how the god came like that, how 4 lines of his shit will shit on a cat's whole album. My outlook is this. I couldn't say that I'm one particular thing, like 5%. There's influence but there's as much influence as there would be Kabbala. I'm down for anything that appears real, that's universal, that can be used as a tool. As a way of life right now, I don't segregate against anything, because ultimately, and straight up, I don't know what the fuck is real. I don't know who the fuck God is. I know God exists but I can't really... y'know? I know one thing exists and created all of us, created music, created rhyme and created everything else."

What makes you know God exists?

How do I know that much? Because I have a daughter. If I look in my daughter's eyes, that tells me that God exists.

So what does God mean to you? What type of definition do you have?

See, the difference is, sometimes I feel like he doesn't. It's almost contradictory. When shit is fucked up, how motherfuckers die and the way the world is, the things people have to go through, I feel it's hell on earth. How could anybody let this happen to people? It's hard. I do feel there's a certain force that exists, but I can't put my finger on one thing and say what is and what isn't, na'mean? For me personally, this [Non-Phixion] is therapy. Cats get to talk what they talk. They wanna put information out. I wanna alert people to a sense of what's going on in the world. There's a million cats going thru the same shit I'm going thru, your going thru, that your man's going thru. I'm just puttin' my shit out there. Non-

Phixion is all about personal struggle.

ILL BILL: We God's Thugs (Elohim)

Money ain't the root of evil it be much more than that America taught me how to kidnap and torture cats

Sitting behind the engineering board with a tightly rolled blunt between his fingers like a Cuban cigar, he looks like a young baby faced Tony Soprano dipped in Ecko. Another alumni of the Glenwood projects at the crossroads of Flatbush and Canarsie, he started rapping at 10 years old, around the same time his family moved in.

I had a lotta beef growing up. There was times when my mother would ask me to go to the store to buy milk. I had so much drama, I took a fuckin' baseball bat and I pounded nails into that shit. I walked to the grocery with a spiked bat so I wouldn't get jumped. **He ain't innocent. He was out there doing all that bad shit, too. Guns, drugs, etc., etc.**

I did all that, and really, I beat the system. I got over, man. I got away with a lotta shit. I didn't get caught. A lotta friends got caught. I'm lucky. I had felony assault cases that I beat on some luck shit, like cats not coming to court, y'know. It's funny now, but it's fucked up. I put my parents thru a lotta bullshit.

Always into music, he was playing bass as a teen in hardcore groups with youngest brother Necro on guitar. He entered the rap game doing open mics and submitting tapes to the Stretch and Bobbito show. He's moving to firmly establish his own label, Uncle Howie Records, as a force to be reckoned with. For him, it's a chance to turn a positive into a negative. His Uncle Howie (as seen in Necro's video "I Need Drugs") is a life long drug addict.

That's my uncle y'know. I love him, I can't change him. I wish he wasn't as wild or lived as hard as he does. He changed my diapers, bought me my first bass. He turned me onto comic books, gave me his comic collection which was a big influence on me.

You can hear it on NP's underground smash, "I Shot Reagan". Out the 3 MCs, his has the most futuristic imagery with talk of angels as aliens, renegade androids and traveling throughout the universe whereas Sabac is political and autobiographical, and Goretex is thuggee assassin, Ill Bill comes with a gangsteristic perspective like a lyrical Bullet as played by Mickey Rourke. He's known for making caustic comments concerning the constabulary of this concrete jungle. His controversial solo single "How to Kill a Cop/ Gangster Rap" got him fame, and a story run by local UPN9 News.

government gang bangin' thugs/ that's what the beast is they say I'm evil/ I'm the most righteous/run up in precincts with/ assault rifles/ kill police and throw bibles

"Living righteous is showing love to those who show love to you, being true to yourself, taking care of people you love. It's defending yourself by any means necessary. My shit is, if somebody's gonna kill you, take your life, kill them first, fuck that. That's what the righteous man would do, especially if you have children. You have to be here to raise your seeds."

check the scary facts/lookit where we at

"Fuck Ghouliani!" screams Ill Bill from the mic at the Bowery Ballroom in NYC as Frosty Freeze and Crazy Legs of the Rock Steady Crew b-boy furiously to the break beats DJ Eclipse cuts and spins. Non-Phixion have built their reputation off of such live performances not only here but abroad. They've already toured Europe and have an extremely loyal following. To their audience, they represent something heroic. These space pirates turned hip hop revolutionaries are looked up to as people who'll say things most others would be scared to: this is how we feel and it's ok to feel that way.

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Their album, "The Future Is Now", has tracks by Pete Rock, Primo, Extra P and their fifth Beatle, Necro, who produced half the album. NP's deal with Matador gives them 100% creative control and non-exclusivity, like the WU with Loud. The downside is Matador is still a rock label who doesn't have a machine set up in place to properly promote a rap album, as witnessed by the disappointing sales of the Arsonists project. Consequently, they are their own A+R, making phone calls to stores and college radio to make sure their shit's getting pushed. It's nothing new to them, which is why they went the indie route to begin with. Nobody's stressing to support them with big clothing contracts or have 'em on tour opening for big name acts.

Ill Bill: We work for ourselves. This way we don't owe nobody anything cuz nobody does shit for you for free. Even if they do, you owe them. Fuck that. I'd rather success come gradually than get plugged into some outta control machine that's gonna turn us into over night fuckin' stars where we get 8% of what is really made off this monster.

Sabac: We could've been out 4 years ago.

Goretex: We wanna make quality music that's memorable. We could've picked the most commercial beats, let's get our shit played on MTV 20 times a day type of style. We picked grimy fuckin' beats. We're making it harder for ourselves in a way.

Eclipse: This is advice to everyone out there: don't throw an album out if the public's not ready for it. I see cats who I've never heard of before put out a single and then 2 months later, they got an album out. How many records do they think they're gonna sell if they have no fan base? It might be a good album, but no one knows who you are. You might sell some copies but not as many as your gonna sell once you've put out 4 or 5 singles, done 50 million shows, been around, done radio, gotten some exposure in magazines. Now people are at least familiar with you. Now you drop an album. Now people are ready.

Goretex: People have different impressions of what "making it" is. This is a job, it turns into an actual job. We've been overseas and are getting ready to go back on tour. We're not getting paid mega dough. We're just doing our thing for the crew. It's promotion. We come back, we still gotta do what we gotta do. If I gotta sling, I'm gonna sling. If I gotta do this, I'm gonna do that. I've punched people in the face for diapers, and that's wack. That's just wack. Me personally, I'm just trying to chill. I'm just trying to do my shit and chill.

come and challenge/ ya battle/ get skull fucked don't be sore

God ultimately saves those whose motives are pure