

# LOST BOYZ REGROUP AFTER MEMBER'S DEATH

CONTRIBUTED STORY

FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

With the senseless murder of group member Raymond "Freaky Tah" Rogers just weeks before his 28th birthday earlier this year, it seemed the dream that they've always longed for would evolve into a harrowing nightmare for the Lost Boyz.

The four-man unit hailing from South Jamaica, Queens, New York had quickly risen as one of Hip-Hop's premier acts as fueled by Gold-certified albums in two consecutive years, 1996's #1 Legal Drug Money and 1997's Love, Peace & Nappiness.

In that short span of time, group members Mr. Cheeks, Freaky Tah, Pretty Lou & Spigg Nice released numerous classic hits such as the bounce jam "Jeeps, Lex Coups, Bimaz & Benz," the eulogistic "Renee," the testimonial act "Music Makes Me High," the hands-down party starter "Get Up" and the double-take relationship drama "Me & My Crazy World." In addition, they made their presence felt on the scene by lacing several hot joints like 112's "Come See Me," Queen Pen's "A Party Ain't A Party" and more.

Lost Boyz also increased their popularity with a relentless touring schedule, energizing crowds stateside and abroad with mic skills and a hypnotizing signature group dance.

However, their ride to success would become derailed during initial recording of the new

album with the shooting of rapper Freaky Tah. Spigg Nice explains the underlying significance of the album title, "Although there's no doubt this album let out a lot of tension for us: LB still stands for life." Lead rapper Mr. Cheeks adds in agreement, "We took a loss but we just gotta hold our heads, be strong and do what we have to do. 'Cause the game is kinda bugged out."

Shaken but not broken, the unit persevered and completed the duration of the album with a rejuvenated sense of purpose. "This is what we live and die for. It's much more than a group, it's an organization. We've been through this for so many years," Pretty Lou states. "This is family business," he emphasizes. Indeed, Mr. Cheeks and Freaky Tah were brothers, while Pretty Lou and Spigg Nice are their cousins.

LB IV Life contains a deeply satisfying blend of destined dance-floor anthems such as the irresistible bassy-romp of "Ain't That Funky" offers his opinion, "We've had the party vibe going before we even made records. But, we can give you freestyle, hardcore lyrics, whatever."

The album's closing cuts are steeped in the self-explanatory defiant tones of "Can't Hold Us Down" and "LB Fam 4 Life." In closing, Pretty Lou sums up the group's resilience and state of mind this way, "We are and always will be Lost Boyz no matter what. Right or wrong, we're LB IV Life."

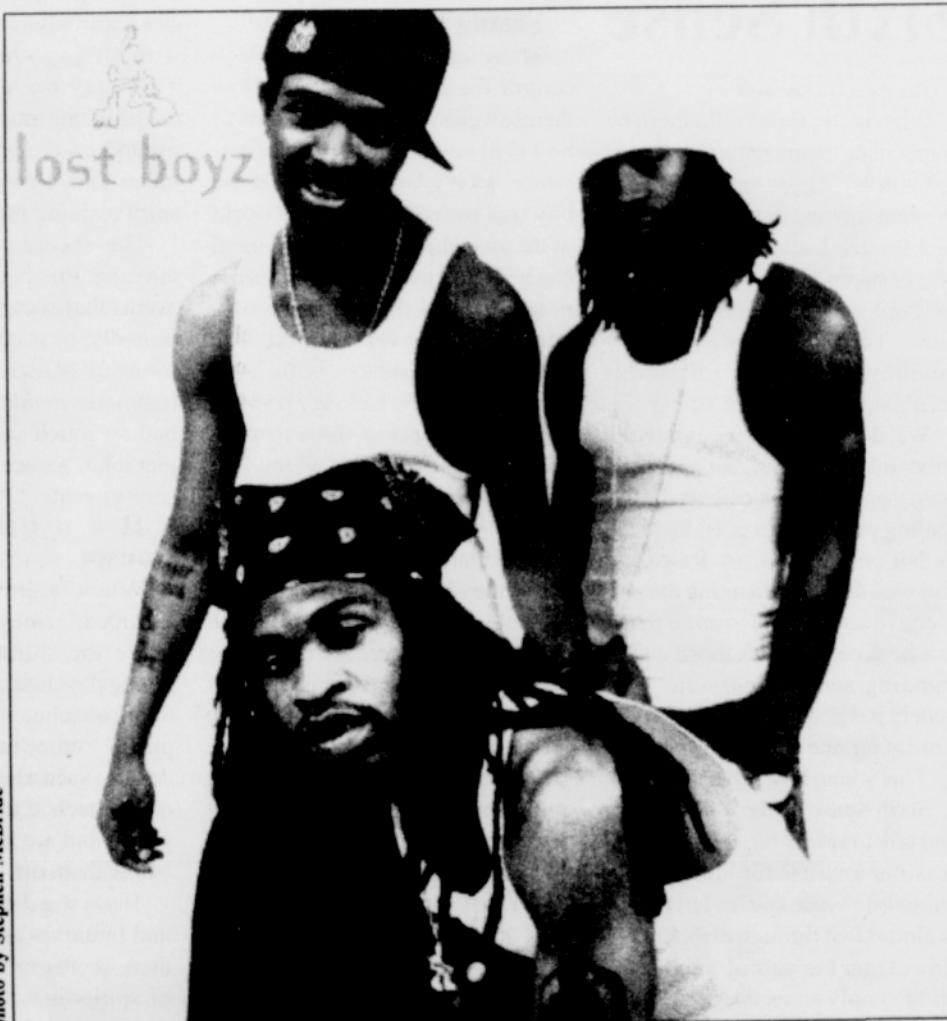


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