

Music

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The question was asked last year, "What chu gonna do when Big Punisher comes knocking at your door?" Nothin'! The ammo's poppin', the panties are droppin' and all bets are placed as to how long Pun will once again reign as hip-hop royalty. Now calm down. There ain't no beef. The biggest thing in hip-hop since the late Frank M.H. White just wants to make sure nobody's been sleeping on his couch while he's been gone. Making sure that no one's been occupying his throne during his down time and that no one has "borrowed" his unique way of making hits—as in hit records, that is.

After taking time from his hibernation, the poppa bear of rap will once again make a thunderous presence with his highly anticipated Loud Records sophomore release, *Yeeeah Baby*.

Yeah Baby is an intense collection of high quality gems that are destined to withstand the test of time and will undoubtedly prove that Big Punisher is well on his way to becoming a professor in the art of 21st century emceeing.

Pound for pound, rhyme for rhyme, Big Pun covers more ground than

any other rapper in the game today. It's no secret that Pun is capable of pulling lyrical feats that reach an uncharted level of lyrical amazement. On *Yeeeah Baby*, Pun takes the time to entertain the countless ears that have suffered at the expense of time-wasting wannabes. It's that amusing side of Pun that helps make songs like "Laughing At You," an entertaining middle finger anthem for the young and teased. Pun explains, "Laughing At You" is where I'm trying to show that rap aint' just rhymes and beats. It's more than that. It's a song with meaning — put together with a concept. It's for people that were too short, overweight or a class clown that eventually blossomed at a later age and made it."

With a rapid-fire rhyme style that combines hardcore with a charismatic persona, Big Pun was first introduced to the rap world via another Latino rap delegate, Fat Joe in 1996. Pun instantly made a strong underground impact with memorable appearances on *FunkMaster Flex Mix Tape Vol. 2* and Fat Joe's LP, *Jealous One's Envy*.

His 1997 Loud Records debut, *Capital Punishment* is Big Punisher's crowning achievement. The double platinum beautifully



Big Punisher (aka Christopher Rios) died from an apparent heart attack. He was pronounced dead at approximately 4 pm. on Monday, February 7, 2000. Big Pun died at the young age of 28. Tragically, the young entertainer who was steadily making his way into the homes of people that might not have given any thought to Latino hip-hop.

PHOTO BY DANIEL HASTINGS

captured the unique mixture of rhyme, flow and characteristics that made Pun a headline superstar capable of exceeding all expectations. The single "Still Not A Player," with its unifying adlib—"Boricua, Morena" was the key that ultimately opened the door to the wider recognition of Latino artists on the radio, and in the process, set off the Latino invasion on the music charts. Pun later helped the cause again by guest appearing on Ricky

Martin's remix of "Livin' La Vida Loca" as well as teaming up with Bronx bombshell, Jennifer Lopez for her multi-platinum LP, *On The 6* alongside Fat Joe. *Capital Punishment* also went on to earn a Grammy nomination for "Best Rap Album" at the 1998 Grammy Awards.

"I'm gonna rhyme about sex, money and whatever else I rap about," Pun says. "But I don't rhyme about drugs. That's not my thing. I don't

be putting that in kids' heads, because I still wanna be able to bring flavor to the game. Now hip-hop is twenty years older, my fans are older. I can't rhyme to them about getting high on the corners — watchin' out for the cops and slinging crack. I can't rhyme about 40's and a blunt. We don't do that anymore. We've got families and kids. We're on lap tops trying to do this and that — trying to expand our business up."

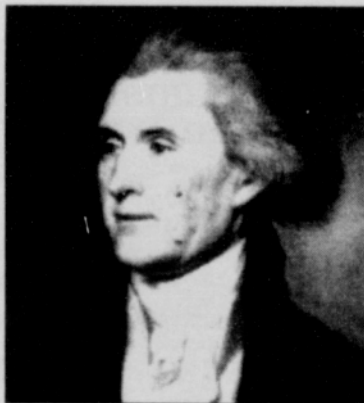
Jefferson from page 2

was sent to live at another plantation, where he took on a new name. Historians, however, cannot confirm this account, and Byron Woodson has traveled across the country, spending countless hours pouring through county records trying to establish a connection between this slave child and Thomas Jefferson.

Both Thomas and Byron Woodson also have submitted to blood tests in an attempt to prove that their long-dead ancestor was fathered by the late president.

"African Americans, a lot of them are very sensitive because their white grandparents and great-grandparents didn't acknowledge their children," Byron Woodson says. "It was painful to people. And that pain seems to run down generation after generation."

When Byron Woodson's blood test shows that his DNA does not match that of Jefferson, he remains undeterred. "I'm still very interested in telling people our story," he says, "because it's a story that needs to be told, needs to be heard by all Americans."



Recent DNA tests have all but proven that President Thomas Jefferson, had a long-standing relationship and several children with a woman who was his slave. Jefferson apparently lived a dual life, sharing his house with his white daughter and grandchildren while his unacknowledged mistress, Sally Hemings, and his children by her worked in the same house as slaves. "Jefferson's Blood," airs Tuesday, May 2, at 10 pm. on PBS, FRONTLINE.

PHOTO BY THE GRANGER COLLECTION, NYC

Beenie from page 8

queens and reggae ragamuffins can be experienced during Brooklyn, NY's *Annual West Indian Pride Week*. The states have their own circuit of Carnivals. From Canada, Florida and finally, New York in September...you too can experience dance hall riddims for a domestic price. During my years living NY, Brooklyn celebrating with these residents from the decent of West Indian countries like Trinidad, Jamaica, Grenada and Belize have been the best way to experience first hand what makes the annual seven day and non-stop dancehall & reggae club circuits so jam packed & jumpin'.

From the Jamaican & Trini dancehall jams, to Soca, to reggae riddims, Brooklyn opens and packs

its clubs to feature artists like Beenie Man, Lady Saw, and others representin' dancehall, reggae & it's culture. The streets stay packed from people club hoppin' and packin' the streets just to pay their \$30 or so to get in. Believe me, if you experience the week long concerts, then please note that, this is just a taste of how this cultures dancehall divas and kings represent. Dancehall divas & kings are like honey to a bee. How sweet it is. When you visit the Pride Week & Labor Day Parade to see NY's imported and yes, very abundant population of Caribbean culture in Brooklyn, it isn't of the ordinary to see a Beenie Man, a Buju Banton or a SuperCat. From the carnival callaloo, coconut bread, curried

goat, roti, and rice & peas, to the subway that you catch at lam to get to, *yes, the beginning* of the dancehall party...the aproximate 2 million residents & visitors chanting in the dancehall and the rhythm of reggae will keep you dancing from dusk 'til dawn.

Performing his hits of "Tell Me", & "Who am I Sim Simma", Beenie made sure his fans understood who Beenie is and what he represents...*Sim simma, who got the keys to my Bimmer*

Who am I? The girls dem sugar/ How can I, make love to a fellow? In a rush, pass mi the keys to my truck/Who am I? The girls dem luck/ And I and I will make love to Precious Irie!