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Rapper duo stic.man and M-1 of dead prez bring their music to Portland this Saturday for a concert at Mississippi Studios.

## Activist rap group Dead Prez comes to Portland

BY OLIVIA OLIVIA  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland will get up close to a popular hip hop group known for confronting social justice issues and embracing Pan-Africanism when dead prez plays Saturday at Mississippi Studios.

The duo, comprised of rapper stic.man and M-1 shared some of their thoughts ahead of the concert with the Portland Observer.

**Portland Observer: You have come to Portland before—how do you feel about this place and the changes the city has gone through?**

**M-1:** We know the activists, so we see the best parts of this city. One time there was a young woman named Kendra James, she was killed, and I remember we were

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here with the people seeking justice for her passing. We have worked with Portland-based artists too, like Myke G. and Mic Crenshaw, and so for us even though has a lot has changed a lot remains the same.

**Portland Observer: What's this city like for you?**

**M-1:** I love the open-mindedness of the people here, the lifestyle, the general sense of freedom, and the environmental consciousness. Portland is in many ways the full package. It's quirky, it's urban, it has a life of its own. I love coming back here and I love performing here.

**Portland Observer: How has the past year of high profile clashes**

**between police and young black folks affected your music? Like Mike Brown in Ferguson or Eric Garner in New York?**

**M-1:** This is nothing new for us. It's sad that we are used to this, this brutality. People are just becoming aware and springing into action under a perceived newness. Our communities are still hurting, they still lack power. What changes power in our community is having some ability to determine our own lives. Not making songs, not a new march, not a new protest. We have to change the very basis of the entire country, not just a town or one police force.

**Portland Observer: I remember**

**you receiving criticism for videos like Hell Yeah, which shows an active robbery and was very controversial. How do you guys react to that kind of criticism?**

**M-1:** Under duress, we as young people of color, especially black people, are pushed to do what we have to do, not what we want to do, but what we have to do, to survive. No one wants to be a gangster or a criminal. These are a means of survival. We don't glorify it all. Our music is about harsh realities and many people refuse to even acknowledge the lives of black people and how difficult the decisions we have to make are. And we don't have a lot of other options in this

era.

**Portland Observer: Do you think many people realize how bad things are for poor black and working class people of color?**

**M-1:** There are people who want to say this kind of reality that I sing about no longer exists. I know this is not true. I know for the most part that people who are overqualified are working meaningless, thankless jobs. If we were in the habit of producing innovative resources, we would be able to take care of everyone in the black community. Instead we're just re-cooking the same soup all the time. The basis of capitalism depends on people not having work. The only way to have 100 percent employment is through slavery.

**Portland Observer: Earlier we learned that you have been involved in local activist scenes. What have been some strong connections here?**

**Stic.man:** My friend Karanja continued ▼ on page 13