



Happy Hip-Hop Week, everybody!

As you surely know by now, Monday unexpectedly brought us [Frank Ocean's *Channel Orange*](#), and yesterday dropped [Azealia Banks' *Fantasea*](#) mixtape on our unsuspecting heads. And now to end the work week, none other than Public Enemy has sneaked out their new album [Most of My Heroes Still Don't Appear on No Stamp](#) on iTunes today.

Much like Green Day's strategy with the imminent [Uno-Dos-Tre!](#) trilogy, the influential rap group's new LP is meant to be paired with the upcoming September release *The Evil Empire of Everything*; according to a press release, Public Enemy frontman Chuck D considers the two albums to be "twins, not identical but fraternal."

Obviously, we can't speak for *The Evil Empire of Everything*, but we can say this: *Most of My Heroes...* is pretty damn great. Let's start off with the obvious: Who are these heroes Chuck D speaks of? They are legion. To be specific, some of the under-repped political and civil-rights figures that the record throws shout-outs to include [Cynthia McKinney](#), [Dorothy Height](#), [Dolores Huerta](#), [Emiliano Zapata](#), [Fred Hampton](#), [Huey Newton](#) (though he does have a comic character named after him), [Cesar Chavez](#), [Elizabeth Martinez](#), and [Emmett Till](#) (plus many, many more).

EW Daily Poll: [Funnier hurricane hero?](#)

So in case you were wondering: yes, the album's 11 tracks are indeed politically inclined. As the statistics-happy lead track "Run Till It's Dark" makes clear, Chuck D has never sipped the post-racial-America Kool-Aid: "Forty or so million blacks in America/How can 13.5 percent of the population [be scarin' ya?](#)"

And as one would expect, the group doesn't spare the hip-hop community either. Just take a gander at this indictment of the state of current rap music (or, really, most popular music today), taken from "Get Up, Stand Up": "This song don't give a damn/If the rhymes don't fit/Beat don't bounce/If the DJ quit." And to drive the point home: "This song don't give a damn/If you can't sing or dance to it/Can't romance to it."

The Hard Rhymer's just as merciless on "Truth Decay": "Truth don't sell a lot of records or books/To hell with rapes, to murder rates/To lying on mixtapes/I want the truth." The album's great lead single "I Shall Not Be Moved" expands on that theme: "They got me started; where I start?/Cause I do it to support the art/What good is learnin' from some record/When y'all only listen to 15 seconds." And then there's the crafty, Large Professor-featuring track "Catch the Throw" — a play on Jay-Z and Kanye West's luxury-rap monster *Watch the Throne* — which argues that a disadvantaged community can certainly find socioeconomic progress and prosperity, but in the end, "You can't change race in the United States."

But what makes *Most of My Heroes* so good isn't just PE's usual revolution-keen lyrics — it's also the album's evolution-keen production. In [a year that saw Killer Mike *R.A.P. Music*](#) bring Bomb Squad production and fight-the-power, Reagan-angst urgency back into style, these O.G.s (with help from great guests like Bumpy Knuckles, Brother Ali, and a Run-less DMC) seize the moment by spiking their usual formula with newer, weirder, and welcome musical elements. Even non-fans of Public Enemy will find it crisp and listenable. The Z-Trip-assisted title track, for instance, is built on a minimal alarm-clock hook that mesmerizingly complements the song's shout-speak vocals track, while the record's closing number "WTF?" further confirms that Chuck and Co. are equipped to handle relaxed, non-agitated production.

We have no idea what *The Evil Empire* will end up sounding like, but we can say that at least this half of PE's twin-album series is an unexpected but good way to end a great week in music.

Read more on EW.com:

[Azealia Banks releases 'Fantasea' mixtape as a free online download](#)

[Target won't sell Frank Ocean's 'Channel Orange'](#)

[Def Jam: Early release of Frank Ocean's 'Channel Orange' part of original marketing plan](#)

[Back to EW Home](#)

[Previous Post Justin Bieber hurts mom's ears at concert, gets sued for \\$9.2 million](#)

[Next Post Promoters shutdown Bruce Springsteen, Paul McCartney concert after it breaks curfew](#)

- [EW.com Home](#)
- [The Music Mix Main](#)

You Might Like

