



[RSS Feed 17,130 readers](#)

[Twitter 95,293 followers](#)

[DX on Facebook](#) // [DX on MySpace](#) // [DX on Twitter](#)

Search for Keyword(s) [Search](#)

The DX Newsletter

Get the day's biggest hiphop stories, right in your email inbox.

[Go](#)

- [Home](#)
- [News](#)
- [Audio](#)
 - [Singles](#)
 - [Mixtapes](#)
 - [Hitlists](#)
- [Videos](#)
- [Album Reviews](#)
- [Features](#)
 - [Interviews](#)
 - [Editorials](#)
 - [DX Next](#)
 - [Beauty & Brains](#)
 - [Giveaways](#)
 - [Messageboard](#)
- [Release Dates](#)
- [The DX Shop - Sale!](#)



[Home](#) > [Features](#) > [Interviews](#) > Immortal Technique Remembers J. Dilla & Roc Raida, Explains Why He Doesn't Hate America

Immortal Technique Remembers J. Dilla & Roc Raida, Explains Why He Doesn't Hate America

by The Company Man

posted April 24, 2012 at 10:16AM EDT | [33 comments](#)



Exclusive: The Revolutionary emcee recalls Roc Raida's generosity, his experience with Ma Dukes, and why he measures his songwriting and lyrics against the works of Chino XL and Pharoahe Monch.

Immortal Technique is a master communicator. Whether on international television intricately dissecting the complicated nuances of Occupy Wall Street for *Russia Today*, on stage in front of an international crowd of thousands kicking rhymes righteous enough to incite a riot, or in-person, one-one-one talking Trayvon Martin, Roc Raida, and J. Dilla - the Peruvian lyricist connects. He makes the complex seem simplistic; the abstract se IMAX. That quality alone is arguably the linchpin to his decade long rise as one of Hip Hop's most respected emcees.

Over shrimp fried rice and Sushi Deluxe (gluten free-style), HipHopDX chopped it up with Immortal Technique for an hour in Harlem's China Place restaurant - undisturbed, undeterred. In this lengthy interview, The Martyr discusses his mixtape of the same name, the motivations behind his documentary, *The (R)evolution Of Immortal Technique*, his subtle sense of humor, and what surprises him about Hip Hop.

HipHopDX: You just wrapped [your US tour](#) and sold out every date. How's the reaction from your fans and audiences changed over the course of your career.

Immortal Technique: The progression has been real good. I think people have seen the artistic aspects of what I do evolve just as much as the music and the production and everything else. For example, the flows are very different. "The Martyr" had things like "Rich Man's World" which was double-time just to show people, "Hey man, if you want to go that fast, I can too." I don't claim to be [Twista](#), but if I need to change the pace of something in order to move, I'm also able to not just move the pace, but the pace of the politics to keep up with what's going on now. As opposed to people who thought, "Now that [President George W.] Bush is out of office, what is he going to rhyme about?" It's not like all the problems America has went away. It's not like racism ceases to exist because we have a President [in Barack Obama] who happens to be considered African-American. I think it's important for individuals to see that there is still a lot to try and make better about this country and also the music can evolve in it's conceptuality. The supporters that I have don't just like my music because I rhyme about revolution, but because I make it interesting. I tell people all the time that it doesn't matter to me what you rhyme about. You can rhyme about selling drugs but make it interesting.

I wrote a song about the way drugs move. It's called "[Peruvian Cocaine.](#)" It's about how drugs get into this country. So when I meet young brothers during a work shop in the prison system or if I talk to kids in the street and they spit their verse about the life they're living, I tell them, "Hey man, what you have to do is make me identify with you as a character; with you as who you are. What does it feel like to hustle and barely have anything to show for it when everyone else is glamorizing this lifestyle? What does it feel like to sell drugs to the people when those are the same drugs that your parents were probably hooked on when you were a child? What does it feel like to know that you are helping the downfall of your own people? How do you deal with that hypocrisy? I feel like if someone would call you by a racial epithet you would be insulted but the fact that you do things as a denigration of your own race doesn't sit well with the type of man that you take so much pride in thinking that you are." I just want people to think and give it dimension. I think I've been able to do that in the art I have so people know what to expect but, at the same time, don't know what to expect.

Immortal Technique Explains How Emcees Changing With America

DX: Is Hip Hop still competitive in your opinion? You just described bringing out different flows on "The Martyr," for example. That's something that absolutely needs to be in the arsenal of an emcee. Has that changed at all?

Immortal Technique: This is a very different America that we live in. A lot of cities are gentrified. Not that they've all been subdued, but the majority look very different than they did in the past, with the exception of a few. I go to Detroit once in a while, and that place has always been like Beirut - from day one until now. It's crazy out there when I see people really suffering economically yet are paid no attention to by the people that claim to love America so much. I think that when we talk about the way cities have changed, if you're rapping as a New York emcee, this is not New York during the "Crack Era." Because I'm someone that is in the street and someone that is connected, you can't make believe that we're living in the "Wild Wild West." 42nd Street isn't a den of whores, pimps, drug dealers, and murderers anymore. It's a den of corporate leeches. It's a tourist trap. It looks like Disney Land. I think that there's something to be said about how that has effected the way people rhyme.

I'm not saying that this generation is soft. But they grew up in a time when you didn't have to fight to prove yourself in a cypher. Maybe that's barbaric to some people, but you had to be able to stand behind what you said. Nowadays you can talk real reckless and then hide behind bodyguards. You don't ever have to see the people that you insult. You don't ever have to confront the people that you're dealing with. You don't even know what beef really is. You need to pick up [["What's Beef?"](#) by The Notorious B.I.G.] and realize "Beef is when your moms ain't safe up in the street." Not when

in Twitter or your street team ripped down somebody's poster. Beef is when somebody wants you dead; when somebody says

“I don’t care what it takes. I’ll lose a hand as long as I leave a mark on your face forever.” People who were around during the ‘90s remember what New York was like during that time. I’m not saying that it’s a better place. There were obviously people who died needlessly and were caught up in drama that was senseless. But at the same time, I think that that toughness gave the music and aggressive character that is lessened right now. That effects it in one way or another. It either makes it more multidimensional, because now you have all these different brands of music. But at the same time it takes away validity of an artist that actually stands by his music. Now it doesn’t matter because he’s in the same category as everybody else who’s a fraud.

DX: You did [an interview in 2004 with LatinRapper.com](#) and they asked you where is Immortal Technique going to be in 15 years. You said, “I hope I’m alive.”

Immortal Technique: [Laughs]

Immortal Technique Breaks Down *The Martyr* Mixtape

DX: Then on [The Martyr mixtape](#), on “Ultimas Parabras” you stage your own assassination as your about to release the players behind this global conspiracy. Do you ever truly feel like a target?

Immortal Technique: I was supposed to do a big rally at The Pentagon maybe seven years ago. I remember that when I pulled up they were like, “Who are you? Give me your ID.” I understood that I wasn’t just a nobody to them. They had an idea of who I am and what I do, even if because I supported causes like [\[freeing Mumia Abu-Jamal\]](#); because I actively fought against the war; because I’ve wanted people to use the rights that actually make them Americans. Which is sad because law enforcement is now very hostile towards people that actually know their rights. They’re angry because I know that you need probable cause before you can do anything to me. That’s the situation we’re living in right now. Most of America does realize that because [\[General David\] Petraeus](#) is a military commander and he’s in charge of the C.I.A., that we will take more active roles in covert action that is subversive towards a regime that we don’t like. Not because they’re a dictatorship or because they’re a Communist entity. We have no problem with autocratic regimes as long as they back what we do. We’re not at war against Radical Islam. We’re not at war with Communism. We’re at war with people that say, “No” to us. If you want to talk about how wicked the Taliban are, there are elements of Saudi Arabian fundamentalists which is basically [\[the Taliban\]](#) with billions of dollars of backing. The highest authority of Islam over there recently said that there should be no churches and they should all be wiped off the face of Saudi Arabia. Obviously, that’s playing for political points. I don’t think that he was being honest or that the king is going to do that. But the very fact that he’s a king, there’s nothing more autocratic than that. It plays into a double standard and I think that at some point when the double standard that you expose becomes so much so that it is undeniable to the people, that’s when you become endangered as well. Obviously, when you cost them money you get on the hit list, too. But I think the death scene is more about what a revolutionary has to be prepared to sacrifice. I show very clearly at the end after [“Sign Of The Times”](#) when I take a breath. I had [\[Dr.\] Cornell West](#) say, “It’s not your time, young brother, there’s more work to do,” because I want to give a message to children that you don’t have to die for a revolution to be a revolutionary. You have to be prepared to live for revolution which is actually a lot harder. It gives me joy to help people. I find fulfillment in aiding an individual regardless of their race, creed, religion, him, or her.

DX: *The Martyr* has a lot of contextually inline features. Acts like Brother Ali, Killer Mike...

Immortal Technique: [Styles P](#), [dead prez](#)...

DX: Most of those other acts have been able to dance in the mainstream as well as in independent areas. How were the features chosen for this project?

Immortal Technique: First I’ll just say that, a lot of the songs on *The Martyr* have actually been completed for like a couple of years. It’s like I had a compilation of these songs that were half finished or missing a verse or something. I realized that this concept doesn’t necessarily fit *The Middle Passage*, or there’s no way I’m gonna get this cleared, or it wasn’t enough, or this person is now signed to a big label and I don’t need the headache of dealing with that dude. Forget it. I’ll just work with them regardless. I think that the way they were chosen was simply because of the friendships that I made. [Vinnie Paz](#) [\[is a\]](#) very good friend of mine. We have that rivalry - the [\[New York\] Giants](#) versus the [\[Philadelphia\] Eagles](#). We joke all the time about that. He has an Italian mother. I have a Latin American, indigenous African mother. The fact that we make light of the way our parents first took us not eating swine is funny to us. [Styles P](#), I went down to Haiti with him. [Brother Ali](#), I’ve done fundraisers for children’s hospitals in Iraq with before. [dead prez](#) I’ve known for eight or nine years so they were just no-brainers. [Killer Mike](#) was somebody that, when I went down to Atlanta, took me everywhere; took me to meet everybody. It was from one extent to another. I’ll be in the club one night with Greg Street and [Travis Porter](#) comes out of nowhere just chilling with Killer Mike. Then the next day I’m at a [T.I.](#) video shoot meeting everyone, getting introduced to people. It was interesting to see how many people knew who I was down there. They were like, “You know, you should come down here more often,” and that’s what kind of inspired the lyrics behind that. “It’s not a Civil War between the North and the South, between field niggas and these slaves that are stuck in the house.” In other words, people that can’t see the logic behind someone wanting to be independent and not have their entire life be controlled by a machine. So I would say that songs came about in such organic fashion which is why they mesh together so well. They’re built on real relationships, not the label telling me, “You know what would really be cool is if you did this or that,” or out trying to have some Pop hit for the ladies. Okay, I’ll get something for the ladies. I’ll get my homegirl [MeLa Machinko](#) who I’ve known for 16 years now. I knew her since she was knocking people out! [\[Laughs\]](#) It’s funny that we chose [\[“Natural Beauty”\]](#) to talk about the self identity that they have which is pushed on them by a Euro-centric model of what beauty should be. That rejects African and Igbo features even though you want all of them for yourselves. Now who got the collagen under the lips? Remember the Sambo character with drawn on characteristics? That’s an incredible indictment on what we think the beauty industry is in this country. I don’t want models to take it personally. I don’t hate you because you’re a model. But just recognize that the industry is run by people who have no idea what they’re really perpetrating or the harm that they’re doing to children.

DX: I don’t think you get enough credit for how funny you are. One of my favorite lines on “Natural Beauty” is, “And men who don’t even like women control the business / That’s why the women look like men and the men like bitches.” That is hilarious!

Immortal Technique: Maybe I missed my calling. [\[Laughs\]](#)

DX: “Goonies Never Die” is humorous as well.

Immortal Technique: On that one, I brought the sample to Southpaw. He’s a master producer. He’s somebody who learned the ropes very early on from his work at Bad Boy [Records]. One of the first places that I ever recorded at that was a real official studio was back in 2002 when Southpaw was working for [Diddy]. There was one day when he wasn’t there. Southpaw was like, “Yo, let’s go into the studio. I’ll set you up. We’ll use the mic that Biggie used.” It looked like a machine gun, the mic was so ill. The scratch version for “[Industrial Revolution](#)” was actually recorded over that. We kept the ad-libs and redid the main vocals to put them over in the studio that we built. It’s like we have that functional relationship where I can bring him a melody or an idea and we work well together in that fashion. And just the fact that I wanted to show people that, yes, things are different.

In my generation, when you played Tag, you were slap-boxing. I don’t see people slap-box no more. There are people that are still putting in “work” in the street. That is a lot fewer and far between than what I grew up seeing and what we grew up having to do. We grew up fighting each other for fun. That may seem crazy to people. Shoot the five, that’s what it was. You wasn’t scared when somebody called you out. That’s the way “[Toast To The Dead](#)” comes across. I’m not afraid of my enemies. “Here’s a toast to the dead for my enemies that are gone / I’m not a coward so celebrating / That would be wrong / I pray to God that your soul will come back again / So I can see you in the next life and finish it then.” Why should I be afraid of you? I want to see you. That’s the whole point to why I’m here. Rather than just make this about violence, the song kind of a reenactment of that time, played through the eyes of me telling a younger child this is how we grew up and him saying, “You guys did some funny stuff in the [1990s]. You got ski goggles. How’d you get that Polo? You used to run into the store with 40 people and take whatever you wanted. That’s crazy.” At the same time, it enabled us to have the perspective to say, “You know what, what we need to do now is have that same warrior spirit that actually has some direction that isn’t destructive to our communities regardless of them being Black, Latino, White, Asian, or any other.

Immortal Technique Remembers J. Dilla, Roc Raida And DJ Metaphysic

DX: How’d you get your hands on the J. Dilla beat [for “[Toast To The Dead](#)”]? Did you guys actually work together?

Immortal Technique: That’s a really interesting story. I had that beat for years and years and years. I remember always thinking to myself, “What am I going to do with this?” I had written a bunch of stuff to it, but out of respect for him, I never recorded it. I’ve seen other artists - and I don’t give people free press, so I’m not going to name them by name. But they were using beats of his without talking to the family. I thought to myself that the one authority that is undeniable in this situation that I need to speak to before I even consider recording to this would be J. Dilla’s mother. I made arrangements to meet her through [House Shoes](#), who - by the way wanted no money or anything from me for his involvement. He didn’t take anything from me. He was just the connect. He said, “I wanted to introduce you to her.” I told [Maureen Yancey](#) the back-story of what I wanted to do and how I’d been holding on to this beat and had never recorded it, but also how I wasn’t making any money off of it. I knew it was going to be a good addition to the record, and therefore I wanted to give it her proper tribute because this is another O.G. thing that some other individuals may not understand, you’re supposed to take care of the family. I don’t need to talk to a label representative, I don’t need to talk to this person or that person; I need to talk to Ma Dukes. That’s the most important person I need to speak to. Afterwards, we can have a conversation about whatever because, again, I’m not making any money by selling this. I still have people going to the XXL concert and giving this album away for free. I’ve got five of them in my pocket that I’ll hand out like it’s nothing. I actually spit the verses to her to see if she approved of it before I ever recorded it. She said I had her blessing.

DX: I host a radio show on PNCRadio.fm, and last year we lost [a station family member and one of your frequent collaborators] DJ Metaphysic. What was your relationship like with Metaphysic?

Immortal Technique: That’s my brother. I met Metaphysic and his partner, Danger. Off the bat, I built a strong camaraderie with these brothers. They were down to Earth with me. I had to force them to take money from me for the beats. They didn’t want nothing. They just heard the songs and were like, “Wow.” They wanted to be a part of this. I did a hosting spot for a beat battle and these two brothers were in the battle and they were amazing. I think they actually won. Ever since then, we kept in communication. Whether it was one thing or another it was a blessing. I would talk to them about so many different things. It wasn’t like they were just producers. They were friends of mine. Metaphysic wasn’t so much into history, but he had an emotional and spiritual intelligence that I appreciated. He always had a positive outlook on everything. I remember when he was getting engaged and he had a little daughter and I was telling him, “You getting engaged. It’s about to be over. It’s over, my man.” We joke like that. I’ll always remember when he told me, “No, it’s not over, my brother. It’s just a new beginning.” That’s just such a positive spirit to have. I really miss my friend and wish he was here now to see the success that he was a part of in helping me along in my career.

DX: I don’t think a lot of people are aware of how tight you were with Roc Raida as well.

Immortal Technique: I’ll tell you a story. DJ GI Joe - who drives like a fucking maniac, yo - was on his way driving up from Brooklyn to do a show in Baltimore, [Maryland]. He got arrested about a block away from my house. I didn’t know what to do. I was at a loss for everything. I talked to the people at the police station and he was like, “Your friend has warrants that he needs to pay.” I said, “When is he going to get out?” They were like, “Well, if he’s lucky, tomorrow.” Mind you, it’s Friday. I know y’all are gonna keep him till Monday. So I made an emergency phone call to [Roc] Raida. He was like, “Where you doing your show?” I’m like, “I’m doing it in Baltimore.” He’s like, “Where? Give me the address?” I gave them the address and he goes, “That’s 15 minutes away from my house. I’ll be there. I’ll do it for you.” That’s the type of guy he was. He didn’t want nothing from me for doing the [Revolutionary Volume II](#) cuts. He didn’t ask me for any money. He didn’t ask me for anything. He was just a down to Earth brother. He was somebody who told me, as a world famous deejay - if you can imagine telling a random nobody in Hip Hop who had one underground album under his belt that had sold a couple thousand in the street - that he believed in me and that he thought I was a talented lyricist. To hear that from a World Champion DMC deejay that obliterated people, that was a bastion of Hip Hop, that really was something that gave me a lot of confidence and gave me a lot of encouragement to keep doing what I was doing. He’s another person that I’m very sad that his passing happened in that way in such a freak occurrence. One day I hope to be able to repay his family for the many kindnesses that he bestowed upon me.

DX: George Zimmerman was officially charged in the death of Trayvon Martin today. What are your thoughts on the case?

Immortal Technique: I hope that this arrest isn’t just some symbolic measure of mob justice where the Federal government was forced to pander to the Black community. It isn’t some half hearted measure of throwing the Black community a bone to make them feel as if the system works. It doesn’t

One case being paid special attention to doesn't answer the severe imbalance that exists between blacks and whites being executed for capital murder, the disparity in sentencing guidelines, the youth incarceration, Latino and African-Americans being the target of stop-and-frisks and the massive amounts of police misconduct and the inability for the system to clean up its own corruption. If they don't trust the crime ridden hood to police the hood, how can they expect us to allow a corrupt system to cleanse itself of corruption?

I would like to see some fundamental changes in the attitudes of people and I want to see more Latino people realizing that [George] Zimmerman isn't "one of us." He's a racist. You can be a racist Latino. You can be a racist Black person. You can be a racist Asian, White Arab, Jew, Indian... This case was about a human being and if we cannot deal with the 18th century mentality that we never grew out of because of America's mythology we will never grow as a nation. This arrest is a step in the right direction but it exemplifies that local police are either complicit in this mentality or just are too inept to realize that their lives are no more valuable than the life of a Black child that is specifically demonized in the media, and has been way more than any person of the Muslim faith ever has been since 9/11. If you have ever been the victim of that discrimination as a Middle Eastern person or a Muslim, then welcome to my world, you got - as Paul Mooney so eloquently put it - "your nigga wake up call." People of all races, religions and nationalities will get theirs too as this system becomes more and more autocratic.

DX: I had the privilege of [seeing *The Revolution Of Immortal Technique*](#). One, it's a great movie. It's a really great movie. I wasn't sure how you were going to fill the space. I knew what the idea of the film was about from the press releases. But I wasn't sure how much time was going to be spent building the orphanage. There's shots of you speaking with Chuck D, Cornell West, and others. Most of the time when fans see you, you're the one sharing the message. You were in primetime learning mode in a lot of these conversations. You were soaking in knowledge...

Immortal Technique: When I first started doing this, I was helped a lot and given a lot of really good advice from people from all corners of the ga and from all walks of life. Cornell West had a long discussion with me about the possibility of getting a doctorate one day, of using my art for more humanitarian causes. After he saw how successful I was in Afghanistan, he said, "I see what you did there. You showed the world that they can be successful there so why can't they be successful here?" But also to show people you don't have to worry about the meaningless criticism of people tell you if you hate capitalism then why do you live in this society. He said it in the movie. Anyone that's outside of the capitalistic system is as broke as *The Ten Commandments*. He says, "You can't fully escape it. What you have to do is minimize the influence on that and the dependency of the system as much as possible in order to make yourself independent - if you really don't want to be controlled." In other words, take another cause, like abortion. If Republicans really didn't want abortion, then their concern wouldn't be let's put people between a rock and a hard place. Let's try and legislate something that will never pass in America. Rather, let's try and reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies so there is no more abortions. Let's try and fund more orphanages, especially for Black and Brown people who's souls they claim to care so much about. Come to the hood and set up an orphanage there. Put those millions of dollars that you spend on [National Rifle Association] commercials so that you can save a life that's supposed to be just as valuable under the eyes of God as anybody else is. Now unfortunately I don't see that. Both political parties have their hypocrisies.

But I think when we examined it, the director, Carey Stewart and I wanted the movie to not just be me spewing propaganda, but me on a journey; an evolution. Woody Harrelson is a person that takes their art and their activism and balances that in his life. I talked to him at great length about how to do that. I said, "Brother, you're one of my favorite actors of all time. How are you able to do that in such a way that you can live your life and at the same time be able to support these causes that you're very passionate about?"

You'll see stuff in the extras - we're talking about three hours of extra footage - that's so exclusive that it will give you a more complete picture. They'll show me with a sense of humor. They'll show me at the gun range. They'll show me at 12 years old practicing the running-man for a video that we did. They'll show Immortal Technique drunk out of his mind at four o'clock in the morning with Akir doing a random freestyle for like 15 seconds of my completely inebriated, lost to the world self. Stuff that you're just not used to seeing that makes you say, "Hey, this is a complete person - one who's not afraid to confront his flaws and then grow from them. Because that's the only way that we grow, not by denying those issues or by denying that there are hypocrisies in us. But by confronting them and saying, "I want to be better. I want to be a better leader. I want to be a better person. I want to be a better representative of Hip Hop. I'm willing to make that sacrifice." I don't give a fuck who you are, if you don't like what I'm doing, then do you. But don't get in my way. Don't try to stop me because you don't agree with every single thing that I'm doing. Instead, contribute in your own fashion because better people have tried to do that. Go look at them now.

DX: I had the chance to speak to your label mate, Hasan Salaam last November. [He was then in the process of raising \\$5,000 to open a hospital in Africa](#). I think about that in conjunction with the \$60,000 you invested in the orphanage in Afghanistan. Both are very small amounts of money to do extremely worthy things. In America, \$5,000 won't get you through the wrong ailment. Are we that disconnected from how far money can go? Are we that trapped between hubris and Hublots?

Immortal Technique: I think you hit it right on the head. We're disconnected from a lot of things. I would say the value of things in general. All money is right now is a digital salary. It's a bunch of numbers in a computer. You don't have to pay a budget. You don't even print the money that you have to pay off creditors of the United States with. You're printing worthless pieces of paper. You're moving numbers from one account to another. It's almost like they're playing a video game with people's lives in every aspect. They got drones being flown by some random person that drinks his coffee from Dunkin Donuts at 7AM and shows up to a military command station in Colorado and flies a drone the way somebody would play *Top Gun* on [the Nintendo Entertainment System] 15 years ago. People's lives are lost and we justify this as collateral damage. Recently, [the Miami Marlins' manager, Ozzie Guillen] said something about [Fidel] Castro and the community was in an uproar. There are places where people consider George Bush and Henry Kissinger war criminals. They can't leave the country and go to certain countries because they might be arrested for that. Castro hasn't killed hundreds of thousands of people. I think that at some point, yes, there are issues with the Cuban government and its brand of Communism. But we're doing business with China who has ten times worse of a human rights record; who, if you want to talk about people that died in a cultural revolution, don't bring up [Chairman] Mao because your calculator might say, "E." This is what we do. I think when we expose those hypocrisies, it gives us a chance as Americans to make what we see and what we have as America a better place. The movie is a part of that. The work that I do now is a part of that. Especially the philanthropy that I do is involved in that, too.

I want to connect a message very clearly with that: I don't hate America. If I hated America, I would just leave it in the hands of these religious fanatics and this maniacs that want to change the law who supposedly hate big government but want government more involved in every aspect of people's

and you see your son doing something stupid like stealing and you hit him out of hatred because you want

him dead? Or do you punish him because you think he's a better man than that and you see potential for him to be a better human being and you want him to respect himself more than doing something stupid like that? That's how much I love America. I'm not leaving, I'm not cutting and just going somewhere else to criticize from far away. I'm standing here. I pay my taxes. And I'm willing to participate in the process which gives me the God given right as a citizen of this country and as human being to make those criticisms in the hopes that we can one day do better.

Immortal Technique Speaks On The Future Of The Occupy Movement

DX: You spoke with *Russia Today* at Zucotti Park during Occupy Wall Street. In your opinion, how far away is the Occupy Wall Street [movement] really from the Tea Party movement?

Immortal Technique: I think that that's an interesting comparison. The Tea Party came as a response to Obama being elected whereas the Occupy people seem just as willing to criticize the President as they were to criticize policies of the far right. I think that that gives them a little bit less of a biased approach. You'll find the Tea Party activists that say that they're independents. "I'm not a Republican. I'm a Conservative." Alright, well then you're not an independent. You're someone that believes that human life is what it is at conception. You're a person who believes that we should deport 12 million people. You believe in the mythology of America - that [Christopher] Columbus was a great man, that "Communists" are in charge of destroying America as a nation-state. Why can't you just deal with the reality that this country has a mythology - like every other country; George Washington was a racist. Thomas Jefferson was a racist. You read *The Virginia Papers*, tell me he's not a racist. After the war was over with Canada, George Washington demanded of the Canadian - or then the British government - the return of his favorite female Black slave. Do I need to speculate on what he wanted with her or what her purpose was in his household? This is the reality that we live in. Do we need to keep that out of it? These Conservatives that are furious that someone edited the n-word out of a Mark Twain book want to edit everything out of the ugly history of this country because it doesn't fit. You want to paint slave masters in a better light. There is a difference between the right and the left. There is a difference between Occupy and the Tea Party movement. One of them wants people to be ignorant about the way America is. The other would like all ugly truth to be on the table. One is a lot more organized and has a lot more money than the other.

DX: What's the state of the Occupy movement as you see it?

Immortal Technique: They're doing an event on May 1st that I'm definitely going to perform at. I'm definitely going down there. It's still alive. There are still people that would like to see a lot of reforms within this country. They've brought to light an incredible amount of economic imbalance that exists in America and I think that was really important. Regardless of whether people think that they've achieved something or didn't - even in their criticisms - they came across making sense. Some of the criticisms I heard, for example, are, "Oh, it's nothing but homeless people down there." Really? Homeless people like the type of person that might lose their house because some predatory loan was given to them by a bank that knows exactly what they're doing and is completely able to manipulate the law to its favor to repossess someone's home? You set people up to fail. Let's call it what it is. The other criticism: "Oh, they're all drug addicts." You mean like people who are in prison for football numbers of years simply because they are addicted to a substance? Whereas I see plenty of prominent citizens in this country - actors, lawyers, politicians - that will tell you that this is a disease and that this needs to be cured, not spend ten, 20 years in a federal or state institution based on someone's self destruction. Obviously if they've hurt other people, that needs to be taken into consideration. I'm not a fan of the prison system. But at the same time it's important for us to acknowledge the flaws that exist in it. I think that Occupy did an incredible job of showing that disparity and putting it front and center in front of everyone at a time when there were other uprisings in other parts of the world.

DX: What's the difference between Occupy Oakland and the other locations?

Immortal Technique: Man, when I went there, it was such a revolutionary sense. I'm not saying that the other Occupy's weren't revolutionary. But it seemed like they had a lot more chutzpah. They had a lot of guts over there. Not that other places don't. But they seemed very passionate. They had a lot of balls and they did things that no one else did. In order not to be moved, they set up tree houses lined up like a village in Avatar on some shit. I saw people in the trees up there. When I went there, I was like, "Are you serious? People are living in the trees?" They were like, "Yeah." Ain't no 5-0 climbing up there to get them down. Just to give a small example. They had open mics there all the time. They invited me to come there and rhyme. Not that other places don't. Oakland just seemed to take less shit from the cops. Every time I've been to Oakland, they just never take shit from the cops. I'll put it this way, sometimes I'll take less money to do a show in Oakland than I will to do a show in San Francisco just because I know it's gonna be that type of wild, crazy ass crowd. I love Oakland. I love it out there. The Bay Area is a beautiful place, man.

DX: Who's the most impressive artist you've been in the studio with? Who is someone who you knew you had to come mic game tight because they were on the track?

Immortal Technique: Probably Chino XL and [Pharoahe Monch](#), who both are the definition of a lyricist. Chino and Pharoahe are people who are personal inspirations to me. That's what I measure myself against. I'm like, "Man, does this concept compete with them?" They're both people who happen to be very good friends of mine. Mind you, I've worked with a lot of incredibly talented lyricists - whether it's somebody like a Brother Ali or a [Crooked I](#). I wouldn't take anything away from them because they are off the chart in terms of what their ability is. Just for me personally because I grew up listening to their music, it would be Chino and Pharoahe that had me wondering, "Man, how am I going to tackle this one?" I can't just walk into this fight. I've got to train for this one. I think Pharoahe Monch is one of the most underrated artists in Hip Hop - of all time. He's just a lyrical genius. Him and Chino.

DX: You're 10 years in now. You're not a new artist anymore...

Immortal Technique: I can't be a part of the Freshmen XXL [cover]. They won't take me. [Laughs]

DX: [Laughs] You've traveled the world and built an orphanage. You've spoken to and inspired across the planet. With everything that you've experienced, what still surprises you about Hip Hop?

... The places it reaches. If we're talking about me, myself - the places that I've been able to reach. When I get hit up on Twitter by [earmilk](#) The Club - Week 31 [SHARE THIS PAGE](#) »

someone from Africa, or the fact that I was able to travel to Australia and to New Zealand. When I did songs on *Revolutionary Volume 2* - an album that came out in stores in 2004, 1,000 people in Melbourne and Sydney, sold out shows, knew every word to it. That surprised me. That kind of blew me away. It was like, "Wow, this is how it is." The fact that I'm going to be able to go to Europe tomorrow and do this. The fact that this art form is a way that the children of decedent's of slaves have the ability to speak to not only the children of the poorest of the poor, but of the richest of the rich and deliver an unfiltered message of independent music that you haven't figured out how to turn the Internet off to prevent them from hearing, that's as impressive as it is humbling. Be careful. Don't turn that Internet off. That's the biggest mistake [Egypt's] [Honsi] Mubarak regime ever made. Because all those niggas sitting at home not doing shit - that are jerking off to porn, or that were blogging and doing what they did - when you shut that Internet off, you brought them all out into the street. Don't shut the Internet off here homie or we're coming to your fucking house. And dinner's on you.

[Purchase Music by Immortal Technique](#)

More Interviews On HipHopDX



[If I Were President: David Banner Speaks On His Policies & Cabinet Choices Including Sway, Bun B & Ludacris](#)



[Latinos In Hip Hop: How Psycho Realm & Others Transcend Racial Barriers](#)



[Rappers Recall Household Favorites For Mother's Day](#)

ear milk - The Club - Week 31

SHARE THIS PAGE

»



[Krizz Kaliko Explains T-Pain & Chamillionaire Collaborations, Experimenting With Dubstep](#)



[Producer's Corner: Amadeus Breaks Down Duties As Trey Songz' Musical Director, Role In Diddy's Hitmen](#)

Share This

- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)
- [Email to a Friend](#)
- [More Sharing Options](#)

-
-
-
-

GET PREMIUM STREETWEAR UP TO 80% OFF!

CROOKS & Castles **MARRIED MOB** **SUPRA** **G-SHOCK**

OBEY **HELLZ** **WESC**

Skullcandy  

JOIN PLNDR.COM

one moment...

Don't miss out on...

earmilk The Club - Week 31

SHARE THIS PAGE



Got an account with one of these? Log in here, or just enter your info and leave a comment below.

Comments 33 posts

•

FUCK TECHNIQUE:

FUCK TECHNIQUE

Posted 11 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

Anonymous:

FROM 'LEAVIN THE PAST' TO 'TOAST TO THE DEAD'.....

Posted 21 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

Ricki Lutes:

extremely dope interview!

Posted 21 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

Anonymous:

Immortal Technique is going to Heaven.

Posted 21 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

Anonymous:

Immortal Tech has stood on his square from day one - Phncn MRchntz

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

Anonymous:

not a fan of the nigga but i respect dude, hes thorough when he says stuff about helping the block he does it most niggas dont do that

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

ayee:

"I want to connect a message very clearly with that: I dont hate America. If I hated America, I would just leave it in the hands of these religious fanatics and this maniacs that want to change the law who supposedly hate big government but want government more involved in every aspect of peoples lives. If youre a father and you see your son doing something stupid like stealing and you hit him for it, do you hit him out of hatred because you want him dead? Or do you punish him because you think hes a better man than that and you see potential for him to be a better human being and you want him to respect himself more than doing something stupid like that? Thats how much I love America. Im not leaving, Im not cutting and just going somewhere else to criticize from far away. Im standing here. I pay my taxes. And Im willing to participate in the process which gives me the God given right as a citizen of this country and as human being to make those criticisms in the hopes that we can one

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

DJ J-Ronin:

Great read! Shout out to my brother Immortal Technique! I am so glad Hip-Hop has an current, articulate revolutionary mc who goes hard! Best interview i've read on this site!

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

GOD:

Seeking Wisdom from Rappers

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

GOD:

Never cared for dude. He seems smart his music was ehh at best and well I feel he's better at speaking than rap. Now on to his fans. Calling the people who dislike this guy sheep? Last I checked sheep follow a herd of sheep and are easily frightened. So how come when a dude says Immortal Technique sucks. You jump on him like a frightened kitten? Perhaps you should stop seeking wisdom and do as Immortal Technique does, have your own opinion. Sheep

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

o

4Real:

Quit hatin' dude. What are you doing with your life?

Posted 23 days ago

•

Anonymous:

Great interview. I always find myself learning when this dude speaks.

Met this guy in person, sharp dude. Keep gettin it Tech, que viva la revolucion!

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

Anonymous:

foot in mouth, Killer Mike made you look cool and you had to fuck it up

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

urbanation:

supa rappers

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

STAN:

He is a smart man. Everything he says is on point.

I am a huge fan of his, but it seems like all his new music lacks the same power that his earlier stuff had. Point of No Return was one of the greatest hip hop songs ever made, so much power there.

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

o

Jon:

I think he's saving it for "The Middle Passage". Patiently waiting...

Posted 23 days ago

•

Gawdsent:

Great interview and write up. Tech's one of those cats that can say 'Real Talk' and make it sound like an UNDERSTATEMENT.

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

Anonymous:

I respect IT, he tells it like it is from his perspective, I dont always agree but I definatly respect his integrity

Rap wise, I'd like to see him drop more shit but his buisness hand is trump tight, he sells out everywhere he plays and generates alot more interest then even some mainstream cats can do

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

z:

this is how an interview should be done

real deep conversation

more like this please....

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

Anonymous:

A real mc, not a wild conspiracy theorist.

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

o

Anonymous:

listen to bin laden. that whole song is based on a conspiracy theory dip shit

Posted 23 days ago

•

Illove:

Immortal technique beats are wack.

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

o

Anonymous:

If your checking for beats on an IT album then you already missed the point and should turn it off

Posted 23 days ago

•

Yo!:

One of the best reads on DX in a while. I am often a hater of this guy, but this interview made me a fan for the first time since like 2003-2004 Tech, I'm in your fanbase again.

Church!

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

Anonymous:

"I tell people all the time that it doesnt matter to me what you rhyme about. You can rhyme about selling drugs but make it interesting."

This is one of the realest sentences I've EVER read. It's how you do it. That is what makes you lyrical and not your content.

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

•

SODMG4EVER:

wackest most uninteresting rapper ever. hes a stupid conspiracy theorist poser.

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

o

Tiburon:

Nah only facts b. You could check him on that. Run with the herd though b, you just sheep.

Posted 23 days ago

o

Anonymous:

He has some tired themes, but unlike other conspiracy freaks, he is actually well-spoken and can back the shit up he says.

Posted 23 days ago

o

Anonymous:

only an ignorant ass boogie motherfucker would say that...go jam to that industry bullshit pussy...stay the fuck out of real hip hop

o

kn0wsk1ll:

immortal technique sucks butt.

Posted 23 days ago

•

HoustonTX:

Immortal Technique should be hailed as a legend. No other word is more fitting for him. He is definitely up there with big and pac.

Posted 23 days ago | [Reply »](#)

o

kn0wsk1ll:

no. just....no

Posted 23 days ago

o

Anonymous:

Hey kn0wsk1ll, go fuck your pops. IT is trying to wake sheep like you up

Posted 23 days ago

[← Previous Page](#) Page 1 of 1 [More Comments →](#)



Recent Interviews

- [If I Were President: David Banner Speaks On His Policies & Cabinet Choices Including Sway, Bun B & Ludacris](#)
- [Latinos In Hip Hop: How Psycho Realm & Others Transcend Racial Barriers](#)
- [Music My Mom Played: Rappers Recall Household Favorites For Mother's Day](#)
- [Krizz Kaliko Explains T-Pain & Chamillionaire Collaborations, Experimenting With Dubstep](#)
- [Producer's Corner: Amadeus Breaks Down Duties As Trey Songz' Musical Director, Role In Diddy's Hitmen](#)

Hottest Interviews

- [This Month](#)
- [Past 6 Months](#)
- [Past Year](#)

1. [Immortal Technique Remembers J. Dilla & Roc Raida, Explains Why He Doesn't Hate America](#)
2. [Jadakiss Reveals If He Can Still Battle, Breaks Down Recording "Consignment"](#)
3. [Willie D Talks Reuniting With Scarface For Trayvon Martin, Remembers "Fuck Rodney King"](#)
4. [B.o.B. Talks "Strange Clouds" Instrumentation, Says Rock Album Is Next](#)
5. [These Are Our Heroes: O.C.](#)

AdChoices

Get your **FREE Credit Score**

CLICK HERE

TransUnion

[Mystikal](#)


2. [Erick Sermon Details His History With Rick Ross, Says He "Couлда Had Biggie" And Reveals EPMD Is Done Making New Music](#)
 3. [K'Naan Discusses Nas' Comments About Africa And Explains Why Other Rappers Backgrounds "Can't Hold A Candle" To His](#)
 4. [Producer's Corner: Kane Beatz](#)
 5. [Big K.R.I.T. Talks Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Influence On Music, Conscious Rap In The Modern Era](#)
1. [Mannie Fresh Discusses Possibly Signing To G.O.O.D. Music, Reveals Kanye West's Cash Money Past And His Current Relationship With Mystikal](#)
 2. [Erick Sermon Details His History With Rick Ross, Says He "Couлда Had Biggie" And Reveals EPMD Is Done Making New Music](#)
 3. [K'Naan Discusses Nas' Comments About Africa And Explains Why Other Rappers Backgrounds "Can't Hold A Candle" To His](#)
 4. [Producer's Corner: Kane Beatz](#)
 5. [Big K.R.I.T. Talks Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Influence On Music, Conscious Rap In The Modern Era](#)


Most Discussed Interviews


- [This Month](#)
 - [Past 6 Months](#)
 - [Past Year](#)
- 33 [Immortal Technique Remembers J. Dilla & Roc Raida, Explains Why He Doesn't Hate America](#)
 - 29 [Willie D Talks Reuniting With Scarface For Trayvon Martin, Remembers "Fuck Rodney King"](#)
 - 28 [Jadakiss Reveals If He Can Still Battle, Breaks Down Recording "Consignment"](#)
 - 27 [Latinos In Hip Hop: How Psycho Realm & Others Transcend Racial Barriers](#)
 - 25 [These Are Our Heroes: O.C.](#)
- 100 [French Montana Confirms That Kanye West Tried To Sign Him Just Hours Before Diddy, Believes He Will Make Hundreds Of Millions At Bad Boy](#)
 - 77 [Chamillionaire Says Of His Artist Peers: "I Understand Why They Lie," And Reveals What Really Drove Him To Leave Universal Records](#)
 - 70 [Shawn Pen Speaks About The Quad Studios Attack On Tupac, His History With Bad Boy And Roc-A-Fella Records](#)
 - 69 [Papoose Discusses The Release Of "Nacirema Dream," Illuminati Symbols In The Media](#)
 - 63 [Danny Brown Talks Potentially Signing To a Major, Says "No One's a Bigger Fan of Danny Brown Than Danny Brown"](#)
- 104 [Game Examines "R.E.D.," Talks The Fall Of G-Unit, And Says "Bipolar Is The New Swag"](#)
 - 100 [French Montana Confirms That Kanye West Tried To Sign Him Just Hours Before Diddy, Believes He Will Make Hundreds Of Millions At Bad Boy](#)
 - 98 [Royce Da 5'9 Acknowledges Personal Growth, Trend-Setting, Ignoring Canibus](#)
 - 77 [Mannie Fresh Reveals Mystikal Project Has Stalled, He And Lil Wayne Are Talking, And Hot Boys Reunion Was Staged](#)
 - 77 [Chamillionaire Says Of His Artist Peers: "I Understand Why They Lie," And Reveals What Really Drove Him To Leave Universal Records](#)

Find us on Facebook

Sign Up Create an account or **log in** to see what your friends like.











 **HipHopDX.com**
Like

 **HipHopDX.com**
http://www.hiphopdx.com/index/news/id.18960/title.el-p-cancer-for-cure-album-stream

 **El-P "Cancer For Cure" Album Stream**
www.hiphopdx.com
UPDATE: El-P preps his first rap LP since 2007's "I'll Sleep When You're Dead."

16 minutes ago

77,800 people like **HipHopDX.com**.

				
Erica	Seth	Ronnie	Crystal	Olivia
				
Ako	Christian	star	Rafael	Niso

Facebook social plugin

[Giveaways](#)



[PLNDR.Com & HipHopDX Giveaway](#)

HipHopDX has partnered with PLNDR to bring you another giveaway, this time you could win a pair of Supras!



[Roots Picnic Ticket Giveaway](#)

Enter for a chance to win a 2-Day pass to the Roots Picnic June 2nd & 3rd!

[More Giveaways →](#)



© 2012 Cheri Media Group
All Rights Reserved

[Home](#) | [Hip Hop News](#) | [Hip Hop Videos](#) | [Hip Hop Singles](#) | [Hip Hop Mixtapes](#) | [Album Reviews](#)

[Interviews](#) | [Editorials](#) | [DX Next](#) | [Release Dates](#) | [Hitlists](#) | [Contests](#)

[Facebook](#) | [MySpace](#) | [Twitter](#)

[ships](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) **SHARE THIS PAGE**



