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[Kill The Record Labels \[DVD\]](#)

Posted by James in [Movie Reviews](#) on 05 13th, 2009 | [no responses](#)



Title: Kill The Record Labels

Genre: Documentary
 Director: T. Thomas
 Distributor: Focus Media
 Release: 2009

One glance at the cover art for the new Documentary *Kill The Record Labels* may turn away the average viewer, but in reality it's probably the most fitting design possible. This 2009 Documentary, which features interviews with everyone from DJ Cannon to 50 Cent and about a hundred rappers in between is all about the role of mixtapes in the music industry and is actually quite interesting.

For those of you not into the hip hop scene, Mixtapes are the backbone of the industry. Artists signed and unsigned alike use Mixtapes as a form of street promotion. These tapes are either free or at least cheaper than a real label release and feature exclusive tracks/remixes/and one-off verses in order to promote an upcoming release or artist. However, starting a few years ago, the RIAA [Recording Industry Association of America] began to fight back against the use of mixtapes as the money made from these releases is not going to either them or the labels. The money from these sales go to the DJ's and artists that made them and when the suits aren't paid, they aren't happy and this is where T. Thomas' Documentary comes into play.

Through b-roll footage and decently shot interviews with little voice over, we're given the artist's view on the battle between labels and mixtapes and, if you couldn't infer from the title of the dvd, they are fighting for their mixtapes. The argument on the part of the artists seems to be that their only way to promote or build buzz is with the distribution of mixtapes. I for one, agree with this sentiment as many of the rappers we cover on this site came to our attention via mixtapes. Also, the labels okay the use of the artist's likeness and tracks so to say it is illegal is a bit of a confusing statement. They say it's allowed, so how is it wrong? How can you cry foul if you allowed the action to take place. In fact, asked for it to happen?

Visually, the film relies on simple visual transition and artist recognition to succeed. It's not the most advanced [mainly flipping panels or fade/dissolve transition], but it works because of the amount of star power. The sound is solid and the film itself moves at a good pace. However, the amount of new information brought to the table is underwhelming. I mean, anyone who follows hip hop, which would in my opinion be the main audience of this film, know about how cops bust rappers and how mixtapes work, so what else do you have to offer? I will note that there is an interesting section about "hip hop police," but I don't want to spoil it for you.

Kill The Record Labels comes in at a spellbindingly short 50 min., yet seems to stay just long enough to make a point without stuffing it down our throats. T. Thomas has given us a 100% propaganda doc about the fight of hip hop artists to survive and given it artwork to match the theme of mixtapes that fit the focus of the film. However, I don't see initial for anyone outside of the industry or hip hop market to take notice of the film and fear its message may fall on deaf or already aware ears. I support the movement, but don't know if this film will lead to new recruits.

Score: 6.5/10

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