

# A (SELECTED) TIMELINE

# OF HIP-HOP AND HYPE MEN

## 1970

Socially-conscious spoken word group The Last Poets release the track "When the Revolution Comes," which lays the groundwork for politically engaged Hip-Hop.

## 1973

DJ Kool Herc invents a new technique that extends a song's middle instrumental portion, or "break," by cutting two records together. His technical experiments form the basis of Hip-Hop.

## 1975

Grandmaster Flash begins "mixing," a new DJ technique that connects two different songs during the breaks.

## 1979

Record label owner Sylvia Robinson assembles the Sugar Hill Gang, who record the song "Rapper's Delight" and introduce many Americans to Hip-Hop for the first time.

Wendy Clark, a.k.a. Lady B, one of Hip-Hop's first prominent female artists, releases "To the Beat Y'All."

## 1981

Pop group Blondie releases the song "Rapture," featuring a rap verse by Debbie Harry. It becomes the first Billboard No. 1 hit to prominently feature Hip-Hop, and is the first ever rap featured on MTV.

## 1984

Flavor Flav comes to prominence as a founding member, and influential hype man, of the rap group Public Enemy.



## 1986

Run-D.M.C.'s rap rendition of the Aerosmith song "Walk This Way" marks Hip-Hop's cross-over into mainstream media and MTV.

The Beastie Boys sign with fledgling label Def Jam and release their debut album *Licensed to Ill*, which breaks records to sell over 100,000 copies in the first week. The group would go on to be one of the most successful Hip-Hop acts of all time.



## 1988

The group Cypress Hill begins performing with Sen Dog serving as hype man to frontman B-Real.

## 1989

*Please Hammer, Don't Hurt 'Em* is released, featuring Too Big MC as hype man for MC Hammer. The album sells more than ten million copies and the single "U Can't Touch This" becomes an MTV staple.

## 1990

White rapper Vanilla Ice releases hit single "Ice Ice Baby," though his hard-knocks background was fabricated and the song samples a Queen/David Bowie song and a chant from Black fraternity Alpha Phi Alpha without credit.

## 1991

The beating of Rodney King by four white Los Angeles police officers becomes national news and leads many Hip-Hop artists to speak out against police brutality.

## 1992

Time Warner pulls the song "Cop Killa" from Body Count's new album after protests from law enforcement officers.

West Coast gangsta rap — a subgenre of Hip-Hop with lyrics that boast about a life of violence, drugs, sex, and money — rises to prominence with Dr. Dre's landmark album *The Chronic*.

## 1995

Queen Latifah becomes the first black woman in Hip-Hop to win a Grammy with her song "U.N.I.T.Y." which advocated for sexual empowerment, and the autonomy and ownership of the female black body.

## 1996

Spliff Star begins performing as part of the Flipmode Squad with Busta Rhymes and becomes known as one of the best hype men of all time for his energy and intensity.



## 1998

White rapper Eminem makes his commercial debut with the single "My Name Is" off *The Slim Shady LP*, released on Dr. Dre's label Aftermath. He would eventually become the best-selling artist of the 2000s in the US.

## 2003

Hip-Hop reaches mainstream saturation as stars such as Nelly, 50 Cent, Jay-Z, and Snoop Dogg become advertising reps for companies like Nike, Reebok, AOL, and more.

## 2012

Hip-Hop duo Macklemore & Ryan Lewis release their self-produced debut *The Heist*, which later goes on to dominate the charts and sweep the Grammy Awards rap category. The album's third single, "Same Love," helped propel the image of Macklemore as a conscious rapper after the song received widespread media coverage due to its lyrics supporting same-sex marriage and critiquing homophobia in Hip-Hop.

## 2016

Michael Render aka "Killer Mike" from hip-hop duo Run the Jewels becomes a vocal surrogate of the Bernie Sanders campaign and raises awareness about issues that affect neglected communities of color.



## 2017

With her song "Bodak Yellow," Cardi B becomes the first solo female rapper to reach #1 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart since Lauryn Hill in 1998.

Forbes magazine reports that, for the first time since Nielsen started measuring music consumption in the US, hip-hop surpassed rock to become the most popular musical genre in the country.

### SOURCES

HipHopArchive: "Hip-hop and Politics Timeline"  
Vulture: "White People in Rap: A History"  
MTV: "A Condensed History of White Rappers"