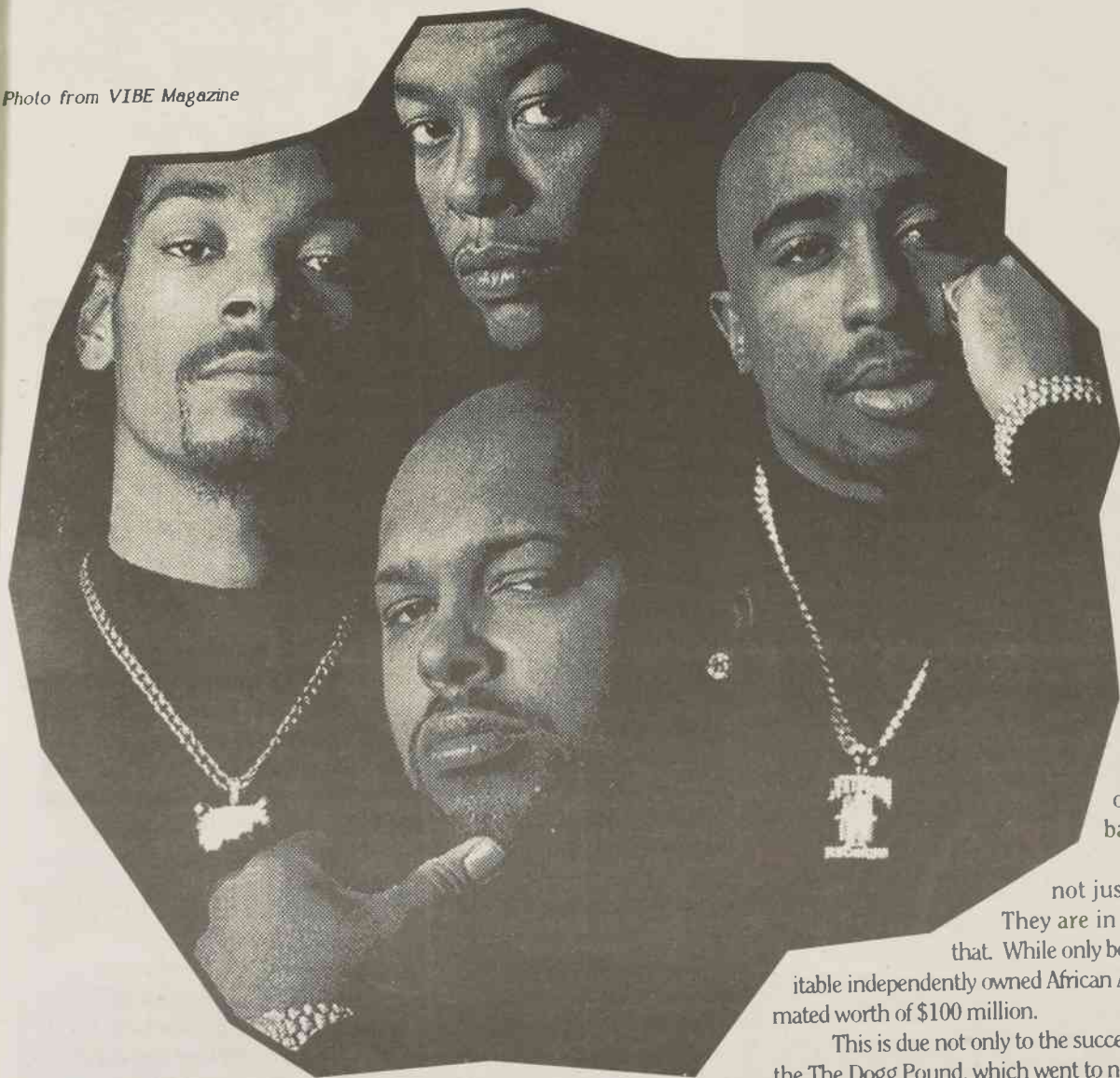


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# Death Row

Photo from VIBE Magazine



By Anthony Braddy  
STAFF WRITER

One former member, Dr. Dre, released "The Chronic" which became the cornerstone for Death Row Records. Dre and his partner Suge Knight founded the label in 1991. The name Death Row was chosen because according to Knight, "...most everybody had been involved with the law."

Looking at two of the members shows this is no exaggeration. Rapper Snoop Doggy Dogg is currently facing murder charges, and newcomer Tupac Shakur has only been out of jail, on \$1.4 million bail since October.

Death Row Records, however, is not just a label full of felons and parolees. They are in a business, so they are doing just that. While only being four years old, it is the most profitable independently owned African American label of the 1990's, with an estimated worth of \$100 million.

This is due not only to the success of Snoop, Tupac, and Dre, but also to the The Dogg Pound, which went to number 1 on the pop charts. Other yet to be released, but already heard from members, include singers Danny Boy and Nate Dogg, and female rappers the Lady of Rage, Jewell, and Sam Sneed. In fact, even East Coast artists Mary J. Blige and Jodeci consult with Death Row.

Recently, due to the attacks of C. Delores Tucker and other anti-rap-activists, Death Row Records has lost a fifty percent shareholder in Time-Warner. This does not mean they have no future plans. Snopp and the Dogg Pound both have new record labels, named Doggystyle Records and Gotta Get Somewhere Records respectively. Tupac Shakur has a soon to be released 28 song double length CD entitled "All Eyes on Me."

Dr. Dre has left the music industry altogether, now directing for Death Row Films.

The early rappers' success usually lead to "beefs," but in the case of Death Row, theirs is with the East Coast. Due to recent incidents (Tupac's shooting in Brooklyn, "Stretch" Walker's murder, B.I.G.'s wife rumored to be gettin' around with Tupac) the feud has intensified.

Dr. Dre even states, "If it keeps going this way, pretty soon niggaz from the East Coast ain't gonna be able to come out here and be safe, and vice versa." With all the negative publicity following them, they still continue to succeed. Who would have thought being sentenced to Death Row would become a blessing rather than a crime? **bl**

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nce upon a time, on the East Coast, everyone rapped about their cars and their women. All the little kids had shell-toe Adidas with fat laces and wanted to be like Run-DMC or a breakdancer.

Later on, artists began to brag about their skills and frequently dissed others. However, when two rappers had a problem with each other they solved it on the stage in what became known as a battle.

Real rap fans reading this article will recall the "beef" between BPD represented by KRS-One and Marly Marl's Juice Crew All Stars. Although these feuds were heated, they very rarely strayed from the confines of a record or concert.

The West Coast entered the rap scene with the subtlety of a Klan member at a Great Hall party. When N.W.A. released its album Straight Outta Compton in 1989, they changed the whole face of rap music. Released on Ruthless Records it sold over two million records, making Ruthless the first multi-million dollar hard-core rap label. Due to problems between the members of the group, N.W.A. eventually split up and members went their separate, albeit successful, ways.

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