

to live and die as

KOOL KEITH

by fritzthecat

The Golden Age of Hip-Hop ('86-91) produced the first - arguably only - concentrated wave of legends and innovators. Just think - Rakim, Public Enemy, EPMD, Schooly D, Kool G. Rap, Big Daddy Kane, Biz Markie, MC Shan, Boogie Down Productions, Ice-T, NWA, De La Soul, Jungle Brothers, and the list goes on. With most of his peers working on their second or third comeback attempt, Kool Keith has been steady mobbin' just below the radar line the whole time, with a stream of releases under a number of aliases for various labels. Keith is a master of reinvention, rivalled only by Madonna. TPHS caught up with the L.A.-based enigma to chat 'bout his new album, **MATTHEW**.



TPHS: What's *Matthew* all about?

K: It's all about myself - for the first time. It's basically like a real alpha omega of my life. People get to see and hear a personal side - more kind of straightforward. I designed the cover and everything.

TPHS: Are you still doing photography?

K: Of course. Basically, I'm a professional, as far as my angles and stuff. I always go shopping for the best cameras, take pictures of natural living - beautiful trees, stars, and nice ladies of course. I plan to [exhibit] in the near future. I have a lot of creative hobbies. I buy bicycles, I'm a big sneaker collector too.

TPHS: How come you don't have your own clothing line yet?

K: I'm working on some shorts. A nice pair of big shorts. I'm not gonna put a bunch of silly pockets on my shorts. Some nice, big, deep pocketed shorts that your pops would like. All the shorts out right now, you can't put your hands in your pockets; they're so small you have to use your index finger and your thumb to get your money out. I want to have the first pair of shorts that I can put my hands in. How you gonna design some expensive ass \$70 pair of shorts you can't even put your wallet in?

TPHS: Are you really like this or are you just fucking with me?

K: I'm really like this. I have a spontaneous day basically. A lot of rappers have a format; they wake up, puff a blunt, get a 40, sit around, act hard. I go to a mall. I might go get a burrito, I might go to Red Lobster or Roscoe's, or the hot dog spot. I can't live the life of a hermit.

TPHS: Why do people still give a shit about you after over 10 years?

K: I make myself very interesting. I have charisma in my life. I have style. A lot of rappers and singers have no life in general. People are hiding when they don't need to. They don't have a personality at all; it's at 0.1.

TPHS: What's yours at?

K: 9.9 basically. I mean, I've done everything as those rappers and singing bands. I've been around the world, had the limos, the best hotels and the best food. I've done it. I think my success is myself; I'm content. Black music is at a standstill right now. Rock is an ailing thing; it has a limp in it too. A lot of people are lost. How many times can you pose with girls and hang by the beach? Choreographed dancing is getting monotonous.

TPHS: There's going to be a switch soon I think.

K: It's the people that gotta make the switch. They keep putting bad food on the shelves, and people keep buying it.

TPHS: What's up with H-Bomb (Toronto MC)?

K: H is cool; we hang out sometimes. He's a good friend of mine. He rhymed on the album, as Jacky Jasper. Y'all like H-Bomb?

TPHS: I like The Bomb hot sauce.

K: Oh yeah, I'll buy you a burrito and some hot sauce and mail it to you.

TPHS: I'll mail you a bucket of chicken with smooth butter on it.

K: That'd be great.

TPHS: Your thoughts on death?

K: I never think about it. I'll tell you one thing: here's a good marketing plan. You get a new rapper, then you kill him, then you put his record out. That's what black people are doing now, they like it. Society is even sillier. That's the hot trend.

TPHS: Didn't you start that?

K: I did it with the characters, but you got people doing it for real. Consumers don't want to go out and buy a live, living entertainer. You kill a rapper, promote him, and they'll play the records all day long.

TPHS: You killed off a couple people. Who's gone now?

K: Dr. Doom. Dr. Octagon.

TPHS: I wasn't too upset about that.

K: Oh yeah. Octagon was cool. I felt like that was something different - more me. I've got a lot of other projects I'm into now. I'm very deep in my own way.

TPHS: Ultramagnetic MC's?

K: We're working. I'm trying to get those guys to come back into the area, get them motivated. Big groups are hard to work with 'cause each person has their own ego. But *Matthew*, I'm very proud of the album. It's like an updated version of *Critical Beatdown*. To me, it's a classic.

TPHS: I don't believe you.

K: Ha ha. A lot of people out there, I just don't believe them.

> KEEP UP WITH THE MUSIC, ANTICS, AND EVER-EVOLVING PERSONALITIES OF KEITH VIA WWW.KOOL-KEITH.COM.

**YOU GET A NEW RAPPER,
THEN YOU KILL HIM,
THEN YOU PUT
HIS RECORD OUT.**

