Geography, Generation, and Gangsta Rap

Jeff Chang *Can’t Stop Won’t Stop* Chapter 14

Hank Williams
Hunter College, CUNY
AFPRL 290: Hip Hop History and Culture
NWA Context

• Shaping a West Coast sound
• Braggadiocio/ “Stagolee”/Badman narratives
• Is it “the Black CNN”? 
• Marketing vs. Reality?
• Respectability Politics vs. voice of underclass
“I wanted to make people go ‘Oh shit, I can’t believe he’s saying that shit.’ I wanted to go all the way left. Everybody trying to do this Black Power and shit, so I was like, let’s give ‘em an alternative. Nigger niggerniggerniggernigger fuck this fuck that bitch bitch bitch bitch …”

Dr. Dre on N.W.A (Qtd. In Chang, 318)
Album Tracks:

• “Straight Outta Compton”.
• “Fuck tha Police”
• “Gangsta Gangsta”
• “Express Yourself”
• “I Ain’t tha One”
• Parental Discretion Iz Advised”
• “Dope Man”

• Release Date: August, 1988. Priority Records
• #37, Billboard Top LPs
• #9, Billboard Top Soul LPs
• Certified Platinum (3 Mil.)
NWA Promotion

- *Straight Outta Compton* (1988)
  - Alternate distribution space
  - Creates needed content and rough-edged sound
  - Successful crossover to white, Suburban audience
Revised April, 2014
Some rights reserved

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/ or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041, USA.