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Interviewee: Obi, Anthony

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

University of Houston
Oral History of Houston Project
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Interviewee: Anthony "Fat Tony" Obi
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Interviewer: Narmi Mena
Transcriber: Michelle Kokes

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Abstract:

Anthony Obi is a Houston native Nigerian-American rap artist that goes by the name "Fat Tony." Having an interest in music since a very young age, Fat Tony began making music with a group of friends during his high school years. After the group's disbandment Fat Tony released his first song called "Love Life" while collaborating with local artist Hollywood Floss. Fat Tony cites his earliest influences to an early 2000s single called "Oh Boy" by Cam'Ron and Juelz, two Roc-a-fella Records artists. Tony also pays tribute to 80s DIY punk bands by working outside of the mainstream music industry. Houston is well known for a style of music called chopped and screwed, a subgenre of remixed rap music that has become characteristic of southern hip hop. Fat Tony raves on about DJ Screw's original sound and how it rose to popularity right before Screw's death in the late 1990s. Also discussed is the genre's association with "purple drank," a cough syrup mixture, and how Houston rap has become synonymous with drugs. The distinction between rap and hip-hop is also defined by Fat Tony, who elaborates on his thoughts on hip hop culture, the state of modern music and currently popular artists including Childish Gambino and Kendrick Lamar.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
ORAL HISTORY OF HOUSTON PROJECT

Anthony “Fat Tony” Obi

Interviewed by: Narmi Mena
Date: March 25, 2013
Transcribed by: Michelle Kokes
Location: Agora on Westheimer

NM: So . . . you are?

FT: My name is Fat Tony. I’m a 25 year old Nigerian-American rap artist in Houston, Texas.

NM: Cool. One of the first questions that I had for you was, how did you get the name Fat Tony? I always wondered.

FT: When I was in middle school, I was being a very bad boy so they put us in this special program where every second and seventh period, twice a week, we had to miss those periods and go to an all-boys class where basically some older man talked to the worst boys in the school about our behavior, about how to grow up and be a man and how to stay out of trouble. You know what I mean? Like kind of stay in school-slash-safe sex-slash-let me tell you about manhood-slash-let me let y’all skip class and eat some free food type deal.

NM: Okay.

FT: During this class they would show us the Scared Straight documentaries, which was an old film series where they would take bad ass kids to a local prison. They would have the prisoners talk to them about how rough life is and how they don’t want to waste their lives the way they did. Anyway, we’re watching the Scared Straight video and we’re having a pizza party and I started writing “Fat Tony” on a cup, I was doodling. My friend next to me was like, “Aw man, that’s your name now?” And I was like, “Shit. Guess it is,” and I’ve been Fat Tony ever since.

NM: Cool.

FT: Plus I was also a chubby, fat boy and my name's Anthony. So it's easy.

NM: Cool. I'm trying to have two recorders going on just in case I can't hear you.

FT: I do that too. When I'm talking to somebody I have a laptop, when I'm talking to somebody. When I'm doing an interview with somebody I have my laptop recording stuff and I have my cell phone recording stuff.

NM: Yeah, we have that one, but just in case. I don't want to miss a thing. Just in case we can't hear you.

FT: Awesome.

NM: This has a recorder, right?

FT: Do you have an app for it?

NM: Yeah. Is it a voice memo?

FT: Probably.

NM: There you go.

FT: Yeah.

NM: I've got both of them. Okay, alright.

FT: Ta da!

NM: We have two recordings going on just in case.

FT: We're live.

NM: From Agora...

FT: We're live from Agora on Westheimer.

NM: Awesome. My second question is how long have you been doing music for, when did you start?

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FT: I started having an interest in music when I was about twelve years old and that was like 2000 or 2001, somewhere around that time. I first started making music when I was in high school around '04. I first started making solo music as Fat Tony in '07, I put out my first project in '07, I think. Or maybe in... actually in early '08 I put out my first project but I started working on it in late '07. In 2010 I put out my first proper album but I had been putting out stuff before that like EPs, mix tapes and stuff.

NM: I remember you came to our school at Challenge, for the talent show? You were on stage and then Chanelle's friend, Miriam...

FT: Miriam.

NM: Yeah, she walked up to the stage. Weren't you performing?

FT: Oh nah, nah, nah. You got me confused with this other guy but I know what you're talking about.

NM: Yeah, I thought it was, 'cause I...she was something else but I didn't know you then and . . .

FT: It was actually a guy that I went to college with that was doing that.

NM: You never did the Challenge thing? You should've.

FT: Really?

NM: You should've. Because I, yeah I met you in that history class.

FT: Yeah!

NM: We were all, "That dude is special."

FT: Yeah, HCC.

NM: We went to that art thing, we had to do that scavenger hunt.

FT: That was fun, kind of.

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NM: That was a long time ago but I remember that. When did you create Fat Tony? When you, well, you started doing music so that's...

FT: When I was in high school I was doing music with a group of friends and that group kind of phased out, everyone that was in the group starting having different interests. I decided I wanted to keep on making music so I just took my solo name and I started working really hard. The first song I made was a song called "Love Life" that another local artist here named Hollywood Floss made a beat for that song. That was the first part that really made me want to start doing my own solo music because it was the first song I made after this group broke up. I kind of always wanted to be in a group, I never really wanted to be a solo artist.

MN: Yes.

FT: I was really disappointed when that group didn't work out but I was so happy with how well the song... when I wrote it I was like, "Yo, eff this. I'm gonna keep on doing my thing."

NM: Cool. What kind of group did you want?

FT: I've always wanted a group with several rappers in it and a main producer. I kind of wanted a group like a "Souls of Mischief" or a "Goodie Mob" type group where it's several rappers and one producer behind it all. That was always my goal, to have a crew. I never really wanted to be a solo artist at first. I kind of just fell into being a solo artist.

NM: How do you like being a solo artist now?

FT: I like it a lot of the time because when I was younger I was usually the most dedicated of all my friends that wanted to make music. I was the main person for some people that wanted to play shows, to actually record stuff and try to make CDs or try to sell them and stuff. Now, you know what? Now I like it just as much. I like being a solo artist just as much as I liked in a group

but I still love doing projects where I can do duos or do trios or whatever, you know. I still like

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the camaraderie that comes with working with a different artist because a different energy comes out and a lot of times you make up songs that I would have never thought of on my own.

NM: Who were some of your inspirations that kind of inspired you to get into music and to do this?

FT: When I was in middle school was when I first started getting the whole idea, wanting to rap. The song that really, really influenced me was a song called “Oh Boy” by Cam’Ron featuring Juelz. It was, it’s like an early 2000 Roc-a-fella Records song. It was a huge Cam’Ron hit. If you hear it you’ll definitely know it. I remember I was walking to class and I heard a song on the radio, because I always had my Walkman with me. I heard a song and I was like, “Damn, yo! This is what I want to do. I want to make big music like this.” As I got into high school and started getting more into punk rock music and punk music. I kind of saw that you can be what is called DIY. Making your own records, booking your own shows. You know, kind of really operate outside the music industry, being your own record label and that really, really inspired me to want to do it. Before that I looked at musicians as like, “Oh you’ve got to know somebody.” or like, “You’ve got to be from a big city like New York or something like that.” But through these punk bands, looking back at them. I’m talking about looking back at like bands from like the 80s and stuff, like a Black Flag, or Minor Threat. Looking at them being some young guys, kind of like me, just doing their own thing really inspired me to try the same hand with rap music.

NM: Yeah.

FT: As I’ve gotten older I’m still getting inspired every day by my favorite artists. Some of my favorite artists are Prince, the Ramones, UGK, Screw, or E40. These are all different artists that...

NM: Different.

FT: Inspire me to make music.

NM: That's cool. Well let's see. Who do you give credit for the Houston music scene that is known right now? Like a rap...

FT: I feel like the credit should go to several people, one the main people is J Prince and Rap-A-Lot Records because they put out Geto Boys, Scarface, Devin the Dude and Odd Squad. All these major artists back in the 90s that really brought Houston to the forefront. Also gotta give it up to K-Rino and the SPC, the South Park Coalition. I think they were actually the first Houston rappers to make a record. I would also say you gotta give it up to Screw because in the late 90s Screw also kept Houston at the forefront of rap music. In the 2000's you gotta give it up to Swishahouse because Swishahouse artists like Chamillionaire, Paul Wall, Mike Jones, all of them are the artists that brought Houston rap to the pop charts. So like the top ten, you know what I mean?

NM: I didn't know that. I knew that the Geto Boys but I saw this documentary on VICE, did you watch this?

FT: Yeah, yeah. That was a good one.

NM: Did you see the chopped and screwed one?

FT: Absolutely.

NM: Do you know those guys from that house that were rapping and they were baking barbeque and the guy had

FT: Some of those artists, yeah I do know, like ESG. I know him. I'm not sure if Bun B in there but I know him.

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NM: He was in the documentary but there was this house where they were smoking and being...

FT: Was it an old video?

NM: It's that documentary and it's like, that white guy shows up . . .

FT: Yeah.Yeah.

NM: At that house and he had these rules like, "When you, before you come into my house no animals..."

FT: You know what? I think those guys were SPC guys who was part of that South Park Crew, I was talking about. I think that was a Black Panther house.

NM: Yeah! Black Panther house? What is that?

FT: Some of them, I mean some of those people in that group are the Black Panthers.

NM: What's that?

FT: Well the Black Panthers was a radical pro-black organization. It was really big in like the 60s and 70s and it's kind of died out since then. That was the heyday but there's still a new Black Panther movement that isn't really as big as it used to be but there's still people that are like part of tha. I think that those artists were, are part of that movement still.

NM: You're educating me.

FT: No problem! Shit, I'm learning too.

NM: Things that I need to know.

FT: Yeah.

NM: Do you enjoy DJ Screw's mixes?

FT: Absolutely. I love Screw's music and it really took me leaving Houston to love Screw in

the first place because growing up here, I hear Screw every day. There are friends of mine, I

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would try to borrow a brand new album from them and they would only have the Screwed version. I'd be like, "Aw man. You ain't got the regular speed? I'm trying to hear the words, you know?" Screw was like nothing to me; Screw was like water, just there. But when I first left Texas in '08...

NM: Where'd you go?

FT: I noticed that like, "Damn. Houston is a wild wonderland." That was the first time I ever left Texas ever. I started to that screwed and chopped music is weird to people and it's something special. It's not just your regular everyday rap music. I started to have a different appreciation for it. Now I always liked it, I listened to Screw's stuff especially back in high school but I didn't find it as crazy-special until I left or until I started talking to like people that were not from here. Or even talking to people that were from here that just weren't regular rap heads. When I first went to high school that was the first time that I went to any school that wasn't just an all-black school. I was meeting like these white kids and stuff that were really interested in Screw and Houston rap and they were obsessed about it. They were like nerds about it, they knew everything. They knew when the records came out. They knew which studios they made them in, and I'm just like, "Man, this is just some regular shit. What are you all geeking out about?" It was from checking out their fascination with it that I started to feel that maybe it's a little more special than norm. When I left Texas was when I was really like, "We have something unlike anywhere else in the world."

NM: Where did you go to high school?

FT: I went to Carnegie Vanguard High School.

NM: Oh, Carnegie. Poor kid.

FT: Uh huh. That's me.

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NM: Since my article, it's gonna change, it's been changing as I've done more research and talked to some people. What got me into writing this article DJ Screw- Chopped and Screwed. It was kind of a joke like when they were saying, I was like, "Yeah. I should just write about like chopped and screwed, you know, DJ Screw." and I just said it jokingly and then some of my friends were like, "You should write about it." And I'm like, "Really?" They're like, "Yeah, watch this documentary." Then my friend sent me that documentary and I was like, "Oh, okay! That's interesting." Then I talked about it to my teacher and she's like, "That seems interesting. You should write about it."

FT: I'm going to send some too, man. I got a lot of great sites that talk about Screw, essays and stuff that will open your mind to it.

NM: At first I was, I'm not really familiar with Screw. Even my brother was listening to it. But I was never the kind to just go listen to it.

FT: It's really strange. It's really experimental music and I think something that's very exceptional about Screw is that it's so weird and psychedelic and experimental because Texas is known for that. Texas has a history of experimental bands, noise bands, psychedelic bands. I think that Screw's music just falls in line with that.

NM: Now the more I talk and learn stuff, my angle's changing towards what my article's going to be about because this has kind of introduced me to this world. The hip-hop/rap scene in Houston and then you tell me these things like the Geto Boys, they were first started from the South Park Coalition...

FT: Nah. Nah. The SPC is a totally different group. They're the group I've read made the first record of any Houston artist but the Geto Boys were the first Houston rappers to be like

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mainstream proper. They were like a Public Enemy to people, or a NWA to people. They were big like that.

NM: Oh, okay, interesting. What you feel about [REDACTED] (14.46) like how you told me a while ago that it was never a big deal to you but now that you go out to other places, what do other rappers think that aren't from Houston? Like when they're mentioned.

FT: I think that now Screw's style of music is so popular that you hear it in everything. It's in EDM music, it's in popular rap music, it's in straight up pop music. I feel like Screw's sound is everywhere now, so it's kind of common to people. I never really hear anyone that's never heard of it or that's really unfamiliar with it. But maybe about five to seven years ago, when I was first starting to talk to people, especially via the internet that weren't from here, they were like, "What the fuck is this?" You know what I mean? They had never heard it before and it was just a local, regional thing. It was like a southern thing really.

NM: Southern kind of thing.

FT: Now I don't know. I think that Screw's sound is so popular that it's part of rap music now. I think back in the day Screw's style of music was probably like a little niche scene.

NM: Underground kind of thing.

FT: Now I think when you talk about rap music as a whole you gotta talk about Screw because it has influenced rap music forever. Until the end of time now, as long as people are making rap songs, there are gonna be songs that are screwed and chopped. There's gonna be songs with like screwed parts of a hook or screwed parts of the verses, you know. Look at artists like A\$AP Rocky, like a Kendrick Lamar, or even . . .

NM: You can hear it in their music?

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FT: ...like Drake. They have lots of songs where they have like a slowed down voice in their songs, you know . . .

NM: Even Kendrick?

FT: ...and that comes from Screw. Absolutely.

NM: And A\$AP? I know Drake 'cause of that "November 18th" song.

FT: Absolutely especially A\$AP. A\$AP's total style is, even that "Purple Swag" song look at the way the chorus like slows. "This is for my niggas getting high on the regular." That's like Screw, you know?

NM: Purple . . . Swag?

FT: Yeah.

NM: Is it a reference?

FT: That was the first A\$AP Rocky song. That was the first popular one.

NM: Is that "Purple Swag", like in reference to like purple?

FT: Lean and stuff.

NM: Yeah? Oh, okay. Yeah.

FT: Definitely. Lean is definitely, I think the popularity of the drug Lean is also making people think about Screw. People think about drank, and they think about lean, think about Screw, and they think about Houston. When you're talking about that stuff you gotta put it all in the same bag.

NM: Yeah. It's that culture with chopped and screwed. It's always, you think purple syrup.

FT: People think chopped and screwed music, they think drugs, they think smoking weed, they think sipping lean. As long as smoking weed and sipping lean is popular people are gonna be talking about Screw.

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NM: That's what I think about before I was even... lately I've been listening to more of his songs like Big Moe, Lil Keke, and trying to learn about it, listen to the beats. They all talk about purple drank and it's like something that connects.

FT: Yeah, definitely.

NM: DJ Screw always taught me that. . . .

DT: Trust me, you are not the only one.

NM: When I was in my class, we have to go around and everybody has to talk about what they're going to write about. Students are like, "I'm gonna write about the Menil Collection," "Oh, I'm gonna write about the Moody Park Riots," and I'm like, "I'm gonna write about chopped and screwed music." You know what I mean? It's like, "Oh does anybody know what it is?" Only like three, four people raised their hand.

FT: I mean

NM: And I'm out of like a classroom of like fifteen people.

FT: I just feel like, well, it also is like a very rap thing. If the people in your class aren't rap fans then they're not going to care about it. It is something that is first of all, for rap fans and is for a certain section of rap fans. There are some rap fans that think screw is terrible music.

There are fans that think screw isn't even real music, think its noise or sloppy. Even though that it's wild and popular in certain places there's still that niche appealed to.

NM: That they just don't dig it.

FT: Yeah, definitely.

NM: Let's see. You've kinda answered this question. How do you feel having influence like in the south, like

FT: Screw music?

NM: Yeah.

FT: There was a time period, which I think is still happening now, but it was really happening last decade, where every major rap album that came from a southern artist, their record label put out a screwed and chopped version with it. The Mike Jones album came out there with a screwed and chopped version.

NM: Isn't that that song "Back then," is that chopped?

FT: Yeah. The album itself came with two discs. One was the regular speed and one was a chopped and screwed version.

NM: Okay.

FT: When Wayne put out the first Carter album the record label put out a screwed and chopped version. I just feel like, I feel like Screw has touched every part of southern music especially. Every Memphis artist, every Atlanta artist.

NM: Louisiana?

FT: Even Florida artists like SpaceGhostPurrp. He is heavily influenced by screw music. I think more than anywhere screw has definitely held a big influence over the entire spectrum of the southern rap wherever it's coming from; Alabama, Mississippi, Memphis, Kentucky, Louisiana or Arkansas.

NM: I didn't know that. Do you feel like you incorporated anything from DJ Screw? Like how you're talking about how he's influenced like many people, do you see it in your music?

FT: Man, in my music? Well yeah. 'Cause my first album, "RABDARGAB," I put out a version of it entitled "SCREWDARGAB" where I had OG Ron C chop the album up in like a screwed and chopped fashion. And . . .

NM: You know OG RON C?

FT: Oh yeah.

NM: Cool.

FT: I'm having him make a chopped and screwed version of my new album "Smart Ass Black Boy" too, which comes out in this summer time.

NM: Awesome.

FT: But as far as my actual songs I might mention Screw but I don't really incorporate screwed hooks and stuff in my music 'cause personally having a screwed hook in my music is kind of played out. I feel like they really dug that into the ground back in like the late 2000s, like in '07 and '08. I feel like every major rap song, every major pop rap song had a like a screwed part in it. I don't really do that in my music but I like to pay homage to Screw by putting out chopped and screwed versions of my albums.

NM: I need to listen to one of your albums in chopped and screwed.

FT: I will definitely send you a SCREWEDARGAB.

NM: Awesome! Cool, that's how you incorporate it. How do you think DJ Screw impacted . . . ? You've kind of already answered that with how he impacted. Um, do you see it affect the current scene? Like he started in 2001, right?

FT: He died. He started in the early 90s, he was probably most popular in '95 until he died in 2000.

NM: He died in 2001 or 2000?

FT: I'm not sure, one of those years.

NM: Yeah, he died about then.

FT: He was probably at his most popular from about '98 until he died, the last two or three years. He had won some big awards for it and I just think that his music was getting out bigger

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than ever. I think now-a-days with artists like OG Ron C who is always chopping up albums, he had chopped up the Frank Ocean album. Pretty much OG Ron C chops up any major rap or R&B album that comes out. All these new artists that are really popular like Drake or Kendrick Lamar or A\$AP Rocky, they all incorporate screwed music into their sound. I think through artists like that there is a new generation of people that are going to find out about screw. Plus there's tons of kids on YouTube that are making their own chopped and screwed mixes and stuff. There's millions of kids out there that are just trying their hand at chopping and screwing music and putting it out on YouTube. I think through that and through these new artists like SpaceGhostPurrp, Kendrick Lamar that are using screwed and chopped sounds, Screw's sound and style is going to live on forever.

NM: Since I'm writing about chopped and screwed from my understanding from what I've researched is DJ Screw started mixing his, you know, and started getting his screwed thing on what did OG...

FT: OG Ron C?

NM: Yeah and Michael Watts. What did... I know they just did that first in the south, Third Ward, South Park and then there's North Side. After Screw passed away, they started doing their own thing?

FT: From what I know, Swishahouse started in like the mid 90s and they were a North Side unit. They were founded by Michael Watts and OG Ron C and this guy G-Dash, who had a different company, they merged to form Swishahouse. They were kind of, kind of competition because back then there was a big rivalry between the north side and the south side of Houston. A lot of the north side people had a beef with the south side people. They didn't listen to the south side music. They would, you know, it was like a big deal. Swishahouse kind of started as

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the north side alternative for people that wanted to hear that chopped and screwed sound but wanted to hear it with like artists talking about their own neighborhoods because on the Screw tapes they are all on the south side markets.

NM: South side.

FT: They are all talking about the south side hoods. I think after Screw passed Swishahouse started to get more in the forefront of chopped and screwed music and as you see they just kept doing up and up, just started making crazy hits and they basically put Houston on the map for the pop charts in the 2000s.

NM: Do you think that something that could help my article like also like talk about the importance of Swishahouse?

FT: I would, you know what there's a documentary that I will send you about Swishahouse because they just did a panel at Rice talking about the company's history.

NM: Oh yeah.

FT: I think that touch on Swishahouse is fantastic but I think that the main importance is to talk about Screw himself because he is your originator for this. It's his style that he coined and it's him that made it popular. I feel like he really is the architect that made Houston rap really what it is today.

NM: You as a rapper right now, do you consider yourself like a rap artist or like a hip hop artist or what kind?

FT: I'm a rap artist, I always look at it like this. I feel like hip hop is the culture showing soul in it that is break dancing, that is being a DJ, that is rap music, that is graffiti. I'm a musician so I do rap music. Rap is a style of music and hip hop is the thing that holds the whole culture together, I feel like.

NM: Oh okay.

FT: I would say that a graffiti artist is a hip hop person. A rapper is a hip hop person, a DJ is a hip hop person.

NM: Oh okay.

FT: But a graffiti artist is not a rapper, do you know what I mean?

NM: Alright.

FT: Me, myself I'm a rap musician.

NM: How do you describe a rapper, now like with Houston, would you consider Houston as being known now?

FT: Absolutely.

NM: As a rappers scene?

FT: Absolutely. I feel like ever since Houston, well you know what I can't really speak, speak of the 90s because I was so young then that I don't really know what the rest of the music industry thought of Houston rap music. But I know like in my day back in the 2000s when I was a teenager, the way that Houston rap burst on the scene when Chamillionaire and Mike Jones and all them, it was then the hottest city. The same way that at times Atlanta has been the hottest city or back in the 90s LA was the hottest city for rap music. Houston was the hottest city. You know in recent years, 5 years ago or so. I think that is has solidified itself in that place. I think when you talk about rap, when you think of a rap city like a Los Angeles or New York or Miami or Atlanta or Memphis or like New Orleans you've got to throw Houston in there because we've contributed so much to rap music that we are in the history books.

NM: Yeah.

FT: Rap will never be the same if it wasn't for Houston then.

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NM: You say that in the early 2000s when Mike Jones and Chamillionaire were big?

FT: Like the mid-2000s, that was when it was hot. I'm talking hot, like a random white girl in Oklahoma was a big Mike Jones fan. I'm talking about hot, hot on the charts, middle, like good songs.

NM: Like which artists?

FT: I think the main artists were Mike Jones, Paul Wall, Slim Thug and Chamillionaire. They had the hits like "Still Tippin'" and Cham had the "Ridin' Dirty" song. Those were huge songs! Every artist wanted to have a Houston artist featured on their records. Houston was like the biggest rap city then.

NM: How do you think, where does Houston stand in that? Like in the music industry and the rap scene industry?

FT: Now?

NM: Yeah, now. Like you're in the rap scene now, how do you feel? It was hot then so how, what do you feel?

FT: I feel like times have kind of changed in rap. I feel like there is no longer just a hot city no more. Back in the day when a hot artist came out of a city that whole city would be hot. Like when Cash Money was popular and Lil Wayne was popular everybody was looking for a New Orleans artist. Or when a band like Nirvana was popular everybody was looking for an artist out of Washington. I feel like now people are already looking at the regions or at the cities they are just looking at the artists themselves. The popular artists now they are not really boasting too much about where they are from, the attention isn't really on where they are from. A\$AP Rocky, they don't boast about him being, or Kendrick Lamar, he raps Compton the same way Rocky

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rap's Harlem they don't paint the picture of this "Compton artist" the same way they did when Dr. Dre came out.

NM: Yeah.

FT: I just think that people don't have that same mind set and they are just looking for artists no matter where they are from.

NM: Okay so...

FT: Houston was probably one of the last cities where people were just focused on this one place.

NM: So now what do you feel about the rap scene in Houston?

FT: I feel like the rap scene in Houston is getting more diverse, there's a lot more younger artists than there ever was. Before when I was a 15 year old kid, making music and trying to play at concerts and stuff, I was always the youngest person there. Now I feel that the concerts are mostly young people. I feel like it's a younger scene now.

NM: Like [REDACTED] (30.37)

FT: I think that the influence of artists like an Odd Future, like Lil B is making the younger kids feel like they can do it at an early age.

NM: Isn't [REDACTED] like 16? It's really interesting to see that. I thought I had more questions. You've given me a lot of useful information about the scene, I'm just interested now to know about where you're aiming with your music.

FT: My own music?

NM: Yeah.

FT: My own music has its own message. I'm kind of just talking about myself in several ways. I'm not the kind of artist that's just straight up going to tell you stories about my life, but

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I'll take parts of my life and I'll make up stories about. I have a song about being stalked. I was really stalked in my life but the song itself isn't talking about what really happened. I'm making a fictional account based on what has happened to me. I have a song on my new album that's about romance and it's talking about a guy dating a girl, cheating on her, leaving her and getting with another girl and then that girl cheats on him. That hasn't happened to me exactly but I'm taking parts of my life and making stories out of them. My whole goal is just to better the human condition. I talk about things that are very relatable for a man growing up, like a young black man growing up.

NM: Like Childish Gambino?

FT: Not at all.

NM: You don't like him?

FT: Not at all.

NM: Why?

FT: I feel like he's a slap in the face to black people. I don't like how so much of how Donald Glover is with music, about how he's not black enough and not from the hood. He has pretty much an all-white audience and I think that's setting a bad example of a black man. I'd be different if he had a black audience and he's trying to tell real stories. I'm not doubting that he is, I just feel like it's an irresponsible thing he's doing, telling a sea of white faces that he's not black enough. I think that kind of alters what these young white kids think about black people. Personally. That's my personal opinion about it.

NM: I just listened to like three songs of his.

FT: Word. I'm looking at it in like a totally different way.

NM: Good and that's interesting.

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FT: Not to knock him and I think that he's a successful person for a great reason. People love his music and that's great. But it's not for me.

NM: Yeah and you rap about life and it's cool.

FT: I have fun too.

NM: And how you said you rap to better the human condition.

FT: I want people to be happy and I want people to feel good about themselves. I want people to remain positive and that was always my first goal when I first started making music and I'm still doing that now. I make songs that are about partying. I make songs that are about family. I make songs about not getting home when you are drunk and lost. I make songs about my dad being a Nigerian man. I make songs about trying to picture about what it would be like growing up during the Civil Rights Movement or during slavery. I make songs about gentrification. I make songs about all kinds of things. I'm trying to try to aim to be a great artist the same way that Bob Dylan or the Rolling Stones are, they couldn't be just put in a box. They weren't just artists that just sang about one thing, they sang about a variety of things. That's what I'm trying to do.

NM: Alright cool, and how do you feel, like...I like A\$AP. I like Kendrick Lamar.

FT: I like them too.

NM: I had listened to Kendrick before he started on the radio, because my friend he showed me Frank Ocean before he was on the radio and Kendrick like "No Makeup On."

FT: Yeah, yeah.

NM: He showed me that song, part 2, I was like "Wow that is really cool." It's just weird because before you used to see him with females, swimming pools and money trees. Before he

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talked about stuff like “No Makeup” and it’s pretty intense. Now all of the sudden he’s with A\$AP and singing “Bitch, don’t kill my vibe.”

FT: I feel like he’s the closest thing to what I’m aiming for in my music, which is why I think he is so popular. I think people want a real artist. Quote-unquote real artist.

NM: What do you mean?

FT: They don’t want an artist that is trying to be like a Ke\$ha or whatever, they’re tired of them just being vapid. They want an artist that is talking about something emotional that they can remember, and I think Kendrick Lamar does that for a lot of people and I think that’s why he has the best-selling album in recent years for rap music.

NM: Of course I like booty shaking music.

FT: Yeah of course.

NM: I guess I like how you say you rap about real stuff.

FT: Yeah.

NM: You rap for this stuff and that’s awesome and then like guys like A\$AP are singing “I love bad bitches that’s my fucking problem”

FT: Yeah he’s kind of like,

NM: I only listen to the mainstream stuff by A\$AP Rocky because I’m not really...

FT: I like the ASAP music but I think it’s vapid too, it’s vapid the same way a Ke\$ha song could be. Not to knock them or not to say I don’t like it. I like lots of vapid songs. But as far as songs that are really going to last and feel meaningful, there’s not a lot of his music that is doing that for me. Same way most music isn’t doing that for me honestly.

NM: How did you like that recording with A\$AP?

FT: It was great, it was cool. He was cool. Yams was cool. It was a great time.

NM: That's so cool. When my friend told me she was like, she had just bought the ASAP Rocky CD and I was like "Oh yeah! Wait? Fat Tony?"

FT: I was staying in the...

NM: How did you get to make a song with him, like, how did that happen?

FT: Do you know who Yams is?

NM: No.

FT: Alright, are you familiar with the dichotomy of a Dame Dash and like a Jay-Z or Puff Daddy and Biggie?

NM: Okay.

FT: So Yams is kind of like the Puff Daddy to ASAP Rocky's Biggie.

NM: Okay.

FT: Yams is a creative director who oversees the whole thing and finds general producers for him to work with. All that stuff. Yams ran a blog I used to frequent called the Real Nigga Tumblr and I would talk with him on Twitter and stuff. I would stay in New York City for a month and Yams hit me up and said, "Yo, I got this new artist Rocky. I know you are in town, I would love for you to come check him out." They happened to be recording with the same guy that records us. We went to go check him out and we just vibed with them and just chilled while they worked on songs. He just talked to us about what he's doing, what his goals are, music and stuff and we just chilled with him. We were getting drunk and smoking a little bit and then he was doing a "get rich" song. He was like, "Yo man you're from Houston, why don't you get on there and just talk to my Houston shit." I just got on there and I mumbled some words and I ended up being on their album."

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NM: Cool, I did not know that. Man, you're lucky. You're going up there. Are you playing FreePress?

FT: No, I'm not playing this year. I have played Summerfest every single year of it. I think it's good to have a little break from it.

NM: I've never been.

FT: Oh really. It's a huge festival.

NM: That's why I'm going this year. I was thinking maybe I'll see Fat Tony. But you're not going to be there!

FT: I just played a couple of nights ago with Riff Raff at Fitzgerald's.

NM: Oh really?

FT: I'm starting a tour in the middle of June and then one of the shows are in Houston. So I'll be playing here in like late June.

NM: Does Chanelle get in for free?

FT: Yeah always, always!

NM: That's awesome, dude. I'm really happy I talked to you. Can you recommend me to find more information or is there any way I can get ahold of some like pretty interesting people to interview to help my article?

FT: I would absolutely talk to Judy Graw.

NM: Yeah okay. For sure.

FT: She's the number one person I would recommend you talking to.

NM: Okay.

FT: I can show you some articles too.

NM: Okay.

FT: Somebody like her. Let me think some more but she is the number one person I would recommend off top.

NM: And then go check out the archives?

FT: Yeah definitely and it's online too.

NM: Yeah? Because I saw I was trying to look it up when we first started. This was the beginning of the summer so that our teacher started like in class and having us do research. This wasn't available for 2012. I mean it wasn't available yet so I'll have to go check it out and make it happen.

FT: I'll send you some links.

NM: Well anything else you think I should know before I turn it off?

FT: I think we've pretty much got it everything. After you talk to her and you check out some of the stuff I send you, you'll have a way more like clear picture of this stuff.

NM: Alright.

FT: You've got some great blessings and I hope my answers helped. I appreciate you having me talk.

NM: Thank you for coming. I was like "Oh man I hope he says yes!"

FT: Oh yeah absolutely!

NM: Well thank you so much!

FT: No problem.

End of interview