



American Gangster - The Return of Marcy's Hero

Everybody has dreams of leaving on their own tems. It is the lousdoorn that want by the control of the part of the control of

003's College Album was at the time, Jay-Z's buzzer beater, ike the celebratory crescendo towards the last half of "Encore," Jay-Z desired to morph into something different in mastering the rubix cube of rap music. What started with 1996's Reasonable Doubt, in a small, rented office, grew to some (https://web.archive.org/web/20070609232211/http://music.yahoo.com/read/interview/12048673). Something special. Something unprecedented. With every release and every pillar knocked down, Brooklyn's own was all of us. Now, he got to transform into something different in mastering the rubix cube of rap music. What started with 1996's Reasonable Doubt, in a small, rented office, grew to some of the properties of the

FA 15% Sept And A 180 cky Ballboa is on top of the world. He enjoys the spoils of his labor as the world champion. Perhaps, he lost some of his drive that had him endure the beatings in two fights with Apollo Creed. Eventually, Clubber Lang came - the young, hungry upstart that beat Rocky. It took Rocky to going back to those hole in the wall gyms, the places where the dream started to get his fire back

2006's Kingdom Come was not necessarily Jay-Z losing his fire. Hip-hop has always been looked upon as a "young man's game." For the first time, especially off albums like The Blueprint and The Black Album, it looked like the hero lost a step. Given the statement that was made with what was his presumed last album, perhaps Kingdom Come was destined to fall short. Maybe Kingdom Come was the wakeup call that even the greatest slip up sometime

2007's American Gangster is not only cinematic, as Jay-Z has shown in prolific story telling ability throughout his career, but auto-biographical. As a pure New York story, Jay-Z created this album with an essence that spoke both from a perspective of Frank Lucas' story as well as his own. For every celebratory get together that is "Roc Boys", there's dealing with the conception of what "Success" really entails. It's the marriage of "Party Life" and "Ignorant Shit" where the dizzying heights start to unravel. You live long enough to see yourself become the villain. That same villain that Jay-Z dismantles in this year's 4:44.

AM is not your conventional "movie soundtrack," it's a syllabus. It's a retrospective in visualizing where you've been to see where you are heading

That album was Jay-Z returning to his "gym," the early days in Marcy Projects as a young black man on the come up. The album is laden with soul samples from the likes of Sean "Diddy" Combs. If there was anybody who can capture the embodiment of what is considered a "New York" album, that's the person to go to. The Neptunes contributed to the dreamy, "I Know," a metaphoric mental tussle that Jay-Z has with addiction from three vantage points. No 1.D. and Jermaine Dupri led the soulful organs of "Success" from "Funky Thing (Part 1)" by Larry Ellis & The Black Hammer. The soul samples from Barry White and Marvin Gaye gives you feel of listening to an album from a vinyl record.

As the album is a journey from lessons of ascendance and decline, you can visualize every word. The cover art is a personification of manifesting the energy of the past to propel into your future. Clad in a suit and tie, overcome by the light from the outside, Jay-Z was both walking from a time machine and setting the stage for the next phase. The opening track, "Pray" sets the stage for what is the warped view of what is the "American Dream." Success, women, money - they all come with a price

They say, "You're too little When you become a man About things you have to get you

"American Dreamin"

Seems as our plans to get a grant

Then go off to college, didn't pan or even out (https://genius.com/Jay-z-american-dreamin-lyrics#note-8477125)

We need it now, we need a town

With this album, Jay interjects his story and defers from Frank Lucas. Where he started from crime, he flipped that hustler's mentality into music and his other enterprises. Jay-Z the mogul and Jay-Z the legendary rapper was back to a co-existing space of abundance. Let's not forget, Kingdom Come was just a year prior. With an artist who has a made a career of being introspective, American Gangster was a return to the source. There was small, five city club tour, even a VHI story teller's episode devoted to the album. Jay-Z found his fire again within his humble beginnings and

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