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ART

EAR TO THE STREET

FROM CREATING GRAFF TO DESIGNING THE SOURCE LOGO AND PUPPETS FOR COMEDY CENTRAL, ARTIST TODD JAMES, A.K.A. REAS, KNOWS NO LIMITS.

MIX MASTER

INTERVIEW ROYCE BANNON

YOU DESIGNED THE ORIGINAL SOURCE LOGO. DID YOU EVER THINK IT WOULD BECOME THIS ICONIC?

There were two completely different logos before the one made by myself and Dave Skilken (R.I.P.). One was on the newsletter and then the second had these speed lines through it. By the time we began redesigning it, *The Source* was a prominent part of what was then the emerging industry of Hip-Hop. We were working on *The Source* logo just as we had started work on a Violator logo, and that got held up. We thought the font was super strong so we used that font for *The Source*. Jon Shecter, the editor back then, actually worked quite closely with us to develop it. Looking back now and seeing how far Hip-Hop's come, those days seem kind of innocent.

WHO OR WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR INFLUENCES COMING UP?

I love cartoons and was doing subway graffiti, so Tex Avery, John K, Chuck Jones, Skeme TNT, Tack FBA. I have a huge list of influences. Those are [just] some early examples.

SOME OF YOUR NEW WORK FOCUSES ON WAR, BUT IN A CARTOONISH WAY. ARE YOU WORRIED THAT SOME MIGHT MISS THE POINT?

I make art for myself, but I think most people get it or get something from it.

I WAS A BIG FAN OF CRANK YANKERS AND MINORITEAM.

ANYTHING NEW FOR TV?

A year ago, I designed puppets for a pilot the producers of *Crank Yankers* were making with Kanye West for Comedy Central. It was like a Hip-Hop version of *The Muppet Show*. Who knows, maybe I'll do something on TV again.

DO YOU MISS DOING GRAFF? WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE GRAFF OR STREET ARTISTS?

I still think about it sometimes. I draw in books and paint the occasional legal piece. Some favorites are Blade, Part, Chain3, Doc, Strider.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR REAS?

My new mixtape; it will either be titled *Shit I Don't Got* or *Call of Duty: The Prestige*. ☹



SOMALI PIRATES AT SUNDOWN



HOT DOGS AND HAMBURGERS