

TERROR SQUAD



CAN THE BRONX SQUAD EXTEND THEIR SUMMER HEAT?

By Anthony Q. Pasasnovas

Every generation has their summer hit. Along with these chart-topping, often novelty songs comes some sort of corresponding dance. Just think — your parents were most likely up in the clubs gettin' down to the "Watusi," the "Twist," the "Mashed Potato" or even the "Jerk." Corny, isn't it? Sure, but no less corny than the moves of the generations that followed. Your older siblings or cousins probably lit the dance floor on fire with, let's say, the "Electric Slide," "Running Man" or the "Kid 'n Play" — a personal favorite at *Black Beat*

headquarters. And if anyone is still out there doin' "The Dip" or, better yet, "The Macarena," then their loved ones should seriously consider an intervention.

With that in mind, current urban club-goers added a new dance to their arsenal of "Harlem Shakes" and "Shoulder Brushings." The summer of 2004 marked the return of Fat Joe's all-Bronx crew, Terror Squad — and they've had mad heads leanin' back ever since.

With its catchy hook, simple-yet-addictive chorus and a light-hearted video demonstrating just how to get down to the song, "Lean Back" blew up all over the states and it was impossible to escape the song's presence if you were anywhere near the tri-state area. This is

obviously a good sign for Joe, who — despite his constant presence in hip-hop's mainstream — had been suffering from the lackluster sales of his 2002 release, *Loyalty*. Also, considering the fact that his Squad not only went through a few major line-up changes — which caused some very public controversy — and was coming off a very long five-year hiatus that started when their debut LP managed to catch the attention of only obsessive hip-hop fans, you better believe that Joe is laughing in the faces of all those who doubted them.

"In between every album, people want to count me out," says the sizable Latino rapper, "but I'm not going nowhere and this new album is the proof." The LP in question is *True Story*, and with so much having gone

down between Terror Squad's debut and this thus-far-hot sophomore effort, it'd be interesting to see just whose true story surfaces when the dust settles.

On the attack after almost four years of silence are the last members of the Squad. Ex-TS mates, Cuban Link and Triple Seis are both set to drop their "official" solo debuts in light of the Squad's newfound popularity. The legend goes as follows: when Big Pun lost his battle against obesity, many believed the Terror Squad would cease to exist. Pun, Cuban and Seis had all been "discovered" by Joe when they were merely a local group — The Full-A-Clips Crew. Triple Seis retired his Terror Squad chain almost immediately, recognizing that he was only a part of the crew because his late friend, Pun had pulled him onboard. Cuban stuck with the crew for another year because his solo debut was supposed to drop under Joey Crack's guidance. However, lack of promotion began to annoy Cuban, who felt that Joe was-

n't trying hard enough to help get word of his project out to the public. The LP, which was to feature the singles "Flowers for the Dead" and "Still Tellin' Lies," wound up being shelved. Upon breaking ties with Joe, stories

of fist fights and face slashings began to surface. The scars on Cuban's face are the supposed proof.

Though this beef has been recorded in songs and alleged grudges are still being held, Cuban

claims to have been kicked out of this year's *Hot 97 Summer Jam* per Joe's request and has gone on record saying that Jose Cortagena's albums were all ghost written by his underlings. Still, some members of the



During her *Black Beat* interview, Remy (center) confirmed that all Terror Squad members have solo projects in the works.

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Terror Squad believe there's no longer any hate in the air. "There were no negative thoughts and nobody wishes [Cuban and Seis] bad. It's more like everyone just went and did their own thing," explains "new-comer" Remy Martin (AKA Remy Ma). "I tried to fix it. I would've loved for everyone to be at peace with everything, but a lot of it has to do with outside people interfering and people don't wanna see people do good. It's just crazy, there was a lot of controversy and sh*t, but we wasn't even thinking like that when we made [True Story]."

Though this is her current story,

"To the world, it seems like a new line-up," says Remy of the Terror Squad. "I'm really like the only new addition. If anything, it's really just less people and not any added."

Ms. Martin — who was discovered by Big Pun — has in the past dropped her own venom against Joe on wax. She's also grown tired of people claiming that this is somehow a "new" Terror Squad. "To the world, it seems like a new line-up," she clarifies, "but Tony was always there. He was on the first album. Prospect and Armageddon was always there. I'm really like the only new addition. If anything, it's really just less people and not any added."

Her addition and prominence on *True Story* is seemingly the workings of the classic "rap posse" marketing scheme. Much in the same way that the Wu all went solo after dropping their classic *36 Chambers* LP, the Terror Squad is about to brand off into a number of solo efforts. "We all got solo projects comin' out," says Remy. "Tony got a project comin' out. I got my solo album, Prospect, Armageddon — all of us." "So, we were gonna do [True Story] to just set everyone else up." The highly touted fem-tee had already recorded a solo joint that never saw the light of day for the now defunct Loud Records label. As for the rest of the members, they've been waitin' very patiently and trust that their commander-in-chief Joe will finally let them have their time to shine.

Despite their label's lack of marketing, promotions or even tours that came with *True Story*, the Squad is currently hot and Fat Joe isn't about to let this flame die out. When asked about when Terror Squad fans can expect their third release, Remy is quick and proud with her answer. "It's gonna be pretty soon — sooner than you think. Probably early next year. *True Story* came out in early July, so I think you can expect it in January — about six months. We did the Terror Squad album in nine days, down in Miami. We finished it pretty quick. It's easier when it's five of you

in a group, than to do a solo album. Everyone is real focused right now. Everyone is happy. They hot and we love being number one right now." For the moment, that's her true story and she's stickin' to it. •

"In between every album, people want to count me out," observes Fat Joe, "but I'm not going nowhere and this new album is the proof."



Photo: Walk Goshert