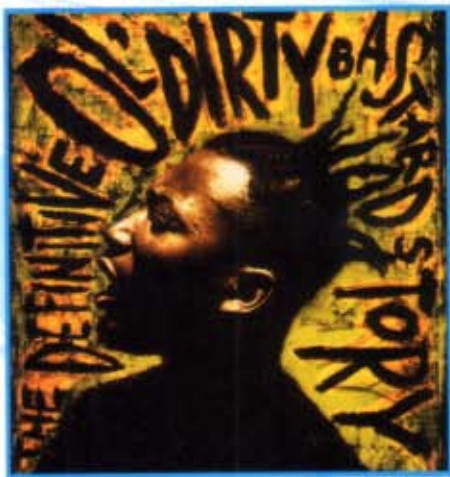


# SPIN CHECK



## O' Dirty Bastard

*The Definitive O' Dirty Bastard Story*  
Elektra/Rhino Records

One quick look at *The Definitive O' Dirty Bastard Story's* track listing will bring any true hip-hop head to tears. Why? Because, much like the posthumous "official mixtape" *Osirus* that was released shortly after ODB's untimely death, it reminds us just how great ODB was, even if he wasn't nearly one of hip-hop's finest rappers. On that mixtape, ODB sounded like a rejuvenated artist seeking to reclaim some of his lost glory. He was wild, crazy and downright hilarious over tracks produced by no less than the legendary DJ Premier. On *The Definitive...* we are treated to no less than 16 of Dirt's finest solo tracks (if you want his Wu work, you'll have to look elsewhere).

**"The Definitive O' Dirty Bastard Story's (superb) track listing will bring any true hip-hop head to tears."**

In fact, if you've never listened to solo ODB before, no collection could possibly ever top this (other than perhaps a box set of *everything*). "Brooklyn Zoo," "Shimmy Shimmy Ya," "Proteck Ya Neck II The Zoo," and "Raw Hide" all appear courtesy of his first solo release, 1995's classic *Return To The 36 Chambers: The Dirty Version*. Nearly half (a total of seven cuts) of his sophomore effort, *N\*\*\*ga Please* appear, including the Kelis featuring single, "Got Your Money." In addition to the album cuts are his features with Mariah Carey ("Fantasy (Remix)") and Pras ("Ghetto Superstar (That Is What You Are)"). In addition to all this superb hip-hop is a bonus DVD packed with his three videos ("Brooklyn Zoo," "Shimmy Shimmy Ya" and "Got Your Money") and a 1995 *Box Talk* interview. The liner notes include worthwhile stories and memories from his fellow clansmen and family members (The GZA), but the only story you really need to hear is in the music itself. **-AQC**



## Eric Benet

*Hurricane*  
Warner Brothers Records

After a six-year absence, Eric Benet is back with his third album, *Hurricane*. One can only infer what the title of this album means. Maybe he's referring to his stormy break up with actress Halle Berry, or he could just be talking about other happenings during his D'Angelo-like hiatus. But with tracks such as "Where does the Love Go," "Cracks," and "The Last Time," the former conclusion would be a much better inference. *Hurricane*, which relies heavily on acoustic instruments, represents a staunch departure from his second album, *A Day in the Life*, which featured guest appearances by Faith Evans, and Roy Ayers. On track 4, "Where does the Love Go," Benet laments, "I'm not asking for second chances, I just want you to see, until you take a look at your yourself, you could never be free," to a nameless woman. Yet again on track 12, "Cracks," Benet pleads to this nameless woman to take time out with him to mend all of his mistakes, singing, "I don't want us to fall through the cracks of your broken heart." Let's give this nameless woman a name. How about Halle? In this case, a more fitting title for the album could be, "Letters to Halle." Although, most of the album sounds more like apologizing, pleading, and wailing, Benet does name a track after his daughter India, and encourages her to "keep reaching for the stars." All in all, *Hurricane* represents the traditional R&B album, with the modern tale of a love lost. One could not help but wonder though, just how different would this album be if him and 'Halle' were still together? We can only guess!

**-Aishah Alassan**



## SunN.Y.

*Overnight Celebrity*  
So So Def/Virgin Records

After utterly dominating all the competition tossed at him on *106 & Park's Freestyle Friday*, Rochester-bred rapper SunN.Y. was approached by Jermaine Dupri and given a record contract. Surprisingly, Dupri made good on his promise to not sleep on his new artist the way that the Ruff Ryders slept on Jin. The result is *Overnight Celebrity*, an aptly named album that managed to capitalize on his *106 & Park* stardom in a timely fashion. The question is: does this emcee live up to his freestyle hype?

**"SunN.Y. proves that he isn't just some battle rapper who was heard today and gone tomorrow."**

Let's just say that unlike Jin, SunN.Y. proves to be a much more solid, less-gimmicky emcee. In fact, when SunN.Y. shines, he truly lives up to his hype. Much like Jay-Z (whose voice SunN.Y. resembles almost too much like at times) spits intelligent street rap. There's songs about hustling and the street game, but it's almost all about the plight and unfortunate loop the 'hood has got itself stuck in. The problem this album suffers from is in its beats and SunN.Y.'s occasionally repetitive flow. Things come together nicely on more traditional-sounding (read: east coast-inspired) tracks such as the single "Soul of a Hustla" — which tells a sweepingly epic hustla's tale with a dramatic piano-driven beat backing it. Or its follow-up "Same Corner," which opts for a sparse beat. "Luv 4 Me," which details his rise to stardom over a bumpin' soul-tinged track sounds like it could easily be an upcoming single. However, the problems do arise on the more awkward/edgier/electronic productions. His flow works better over traditional beats and is lost (and becomes boring) over the more erratic tracks. Overall, SunN.Y. proves that he isn't just some battle rapper who we hear today and is gone tomorrow. **-AQC**

