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Gangsta rap is a style of hip-hop that reflects the violent lifestyles of inner-city youth. Gangsta rap evolved from hardcore hip-hop in the early 1980s. Ice T, best known to kids everywhere as "That Guy from Law & Order," is widely credited as one of the early pioneers of gangsta rap. By the time 1983 rolled around, Ice T was making noise with his aggressive content. His first single, "Cold Winter Madness" (aka "The Coldest Rap") was banned on the radio because of its hardcore lyrics. Hip-hop history buffs will recall that Ice T's "6 in the Morning" is also hugely influential as an early hardcore rap hit. Similarly, Schooly D played a pivotal part in advancing gangsta rap as an art form. Later on, Ice T's reign made way for a groundbreaking collective from the west coast, namely N.W.A. Gangsta rap continues to gain popularity, with the likes of N.W.A., Boogie Down Productions (yes, that Boogie Down Productions), Geto Boys and more. This was the late-80s. Hip-hop was in its nascent stage and the world was terrified of this burgeoning art form. Stylistically, gangsta rap favors aggressive lyrics and hard hitting beats. Despite its relatively wide acceptance in the 1990s, gangsta rap would soon fade in popularity. Soon, hip-hop critics were criticizing gangsta rap for its violent themes. Rappers went on the defensive. Their argument? Gangsta rap was merely a reflection of the hardships they faced out in the real world. This was hood reportage at its grimeiest, delivered live from the soldiers who lived these harsh realities. As such, the content of these songs ran the gamut from drive-by shootings, gang violence and substance abuse to misogyny, materialism and various forms of excess. It was perceived as an ugly picture. Some criticized it as the new minstrel show. Ultimately, America was ready to flip the channel. Before its eventual demise, gangsta rap did manage to gain some commercial momentum. You can thank The Notorious B.I.G.'s Ready To Die. B.I.G. for this success. Biggie's production crew (headed by Puff Daddy) meshed gritty narratives with polished pop beats entirely designed with clubs and pop charts in mind. Since then, the same blueprint has been reproduced over and over by today's rap artists. N.W.A. The Geto Boys Ice-T Snoop Dogg Westside Connection Kool G Rap 50 Cent Ice Cube MC Eht Kurupt 2Pac Roots of Evil - Kool G Rap Criminal Minded - Boogie Down Productions Straight Outta Compton - N.W.A. The Chronic - Dr. Dre EMI4Zaggin - N.W.A. Dads need love, too. Hip-hop has plenty of songs about fatherhood. From Ja Rule doling out advice to his baby girl to Ed. O.G. calling for family responsibility, here are 10 great hip-hop songs about fatherhood. Happy Father's Day. Stream This Playlist on Apple Music Slug of Atmosphere. Rick Kern/WireImage "Yesterday" is a standout track from Atmosphere's When Life Gives You Lemons. It finds Slug reminiscing over his late father and cherishing the precious moments he shared with his old man. Purchase / Download Ja Rule and daughter Aisha "Isi" Murray. (Photo by Gregg DeGuire/WireImage) "Daddy's Little Baby" is a rare moment of introspection from Ja Rule. Ja tells his daughter: "Degradate yourself never, 'cause I'm teaching you better/Life ain't all about cheddar, diamonds, and leather." He would know. Purchase / Download NY Oil's "Father Father" incorporates Barack Obama's famous speech on parental responsibility, it's far more captivating than any political rhetoric on the issue. Purchase / Download Slick Rick - It's A Boy. It would be convenient to assume that all of Slick Rick's lyrics are lewd tales. Buried within The Ruler's treasure chest, however, is this joyous celebration of fatherhood. Purchase/Download Game and son Harlem Taylor. Chelsea Lauren/WireImage Game delivers a message to his son on this bright gem from The Documentary. His message is straightforward yet crucial: Learning from your father's mistakes will reduce the chances of making ones of your own. Purchase / Download Royce da 5'9". Wendell Teodoro/Getty Images Royce da 5'9" sets aside his combative side and gets philosophical on this solemn track which doubles as a life manual of sorts to his little man. The song's key message--perspective is reality--may have been too advanced for little Royce at some point, but he'll thank daddy for this heartfelt tribute someday. Purchase / Download Jay Z, Blue Ivy & Beyonce. MTV/Getty Images One of the great things about collaboration is that Kanye West helped Jay-Z discover how human he can be when that royal veil is peeled back. On "New Day," for example, Jay and Kanye write a letter to their future son in the vein of 2Pac's "Letter 2 My Unborn." Both ended up with daughters, so maybe it's time for a gender appropriate sequel. Either way, "New Day" is emotive and powerful. Purchase / Download Will Smith and son Jaden Smith. George Pimentel / Getty Images Will Smith transforms Bill Withers' "Just the Two of Us" into a father-son bonding anthem. Will's version must have resonated with many dads -- it soared to No. 2 on the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 Songs chart. Purchase/Download Xzibit and son. Joe Scarnici/Getty Images Xzibit is no stranger to songs about father-son relationships. "Carry the Weight," from At the Speed of Light, dealt with his rough childhood and his father's role in his life. On "Foundation," though, X flips the table and lays down the law for his Purchase / Download Harun/Roy Ayers Project Beat Submission One of Ed O.G.'s most significant contributions to hip-hop is this poignant plea for parental responsibility. As the title indicates, "Be a Father to Your Child" reprimands deadbeat dads ("Stop sittin' like a chair and having your baby wonder where you are/ Or who you are, fool"). The song urges all fathers to realize that their presence is more important than the presents. An undeniable hip-hop masterpiece. Purchase / Download Greetings, ghouls, and goblins. When Halloween is upon us, we must celebrate the mayhem and mischief with the appropriate music. Ready to venture into the night and get your freak on with zombies and werewolves? Good. Here are 15 scary rap songs to get this party started. Looking for a Halloween rap song to get the party started? Cue this monstrous posse cut and watch the crowd go wild. Bon Iver kicks things off with: "I shoot the lights out/Hide til its bright out/Whoa, just another lonely night/Are you willing to sacrifice your life?" Later, Jay-Z rattles off a list of all the creatures that spooked us out as kids: "Sasquatch, Godzilla, King Kong, Lochness, Goblin, Ghoul, a zombie with no conscience." No Hip-Hop Halloween playlist is complete without at least one song from Gravediggaz, who specialized in blood-thirsty throwdowns. "6 Feet Deep," the title track from their controversial debut, spots unsettling vocals and a decidedly moody beat. "Your world is black. You drop into a hole." Raymond Boyd/Getty Images After seeing Nightmare on Elm Street, Fresh Prince finds he can't go to sleep because he's been visited by Freddy Krueger. Freddy asks to be his partner-in-rhyme, but Prince ridicules him and sends him home instead. "Yo Fred, I think you got me all wrong/I ain't partners with nobody with nails that long. Look, I'll be honest this team won't work." Reality only sets in the end when Freddy decides to kill Jazzy Jeff. This one gave me shivers when I was a kid. Driven by dour piano licks, "Ghost in the Machine" is a dark and creepy track from Bobby Ray. The reflective grandeur of transcendent emotions overwhelms B.o.B, as he cries out: "I'm terrified, like I've seen a UFO." Randy Shropshire/Getty Images No need for ghosts and goblins here, the mere thought of dying is terrifying enough for Snoop. Hear him testify: "I'm shaking and they breaking, tryin' to save the Dogg, pumping on my chest and I'm screamin'. I stop breathing, damn I see demons, Dear God. I wonder can you save me? I can't die, my Boo-Boo's bout to have my baby." Snoop's plea for mercy gets an even eerier thump from Dr. Dre's cinematic production. Imeh Akpanudosen/Getty Images Backed by a gnarly soundtrack, Ras Kass strikes up an intricate conversation with supernatural beings. Otherworldly sound effects come alive as the dialogue shifts from creationism to Armageddon. Like a full moon rising, "Maniac" gradually unfolds with a gothic vibe. Cudi and Cage add the perfect touch of horror with lines about a psychotic disturbance deep within. "It lives inside of me, eating what's in its way," Cage laments. If you want to turn up the surreal vibe a few notches, set this one to a strobe light. Daniel Boczarski/Getty Images There are at least 10 references to Lucifer in "Hell Sent," which finds Bone Thugs bragging about "taking demons hostages" and starting a riot in hell. Wish Bone unleashes the fiercest assault towards the end. "A demon told me that Lucifer said meet him at the black hole. I told him 'I'm a be there; ain't no b*tch in my soul!' Fed up with his personal failures, Biggie gives himself a death sentence on "Suicidal Thoughts." His friend (Diddy, in this case) attempts to dissuade him, but Biggie is too far down the windpipe to reconsider. We'll never know if B.I.G. was really as depressed as the song indicates, but "Suicidal Thoughts" is still one hell of a spooky song 11 years after his real death. You only need to listen to "Stan" once before realizing that this ill-fated account of a psychotic Eminem worshipper is simply unforgettable. "Stan" unmasks a vulnerable Eminem, one that turns up the pathos several notches while barely raising his voice. Dido's ethereal crooning adds more soot to the tale. Tech Nina has crafted his share of spooky songs over the years. "What's Ya Psycho?" is a monstrous anthem that can turn a graveyard into a dancehall full of zombie troupes. In "Mind Playing Tricks on Me," Paranoia gets the best of Scarface as he stands alone in his four-corner room staring at candles, seeing images. "He owns a black hat like I own. A black suit and a cane like my own." Face rhymes. "It's F****ed up when your mind's playing tricks on you." Turns out he was staring at his own reflection. The vertically challenged Bushwick Bill then teams up with Face and Willie D to fight off a 7-ft tall enemy. The giant disappears only for Bill to realize he'd been ferociously pounding concrete the whole time. Raymond Boyd/Getty Images Darkness permeates "Dance with the Devil" from start to finish, as Immortal Technique tells an elaborate tale of a man named Billy. Billy's hunger for social acceptance drove him to commit all sorts of atrocities, including one that involves a close relative. The song's hazed-out jazzy vibe, coupled with Tech's psychopathic recital, is incredibly chilling. N-I-P is a certified psycho who probably deserves his own list. I mean, has there ever been a hip-hop artist scarier than this guy? Sample rhymes: "I ain't gon' lie, I feel like killing my niece." And that's just the opening salvo on N-I-P's debut LP. The rest of the track plays out like one sick horror flick, replete with severed heads and holy matrimony with a horse. Don't ask, don't neigh? Big L had a dream (more like a nightmare) in which he pictured himself as the devil's son and decided to write a song about it. Backed by dramatic horns and pounding drums, L rhymes about running into a church strapped. This horrorcore treat from Big L's 1993 demo tape is definitely not for the faint of heart.

