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[Part I: A Report to the Shareholders][Verse 1: El-P]Beware of horsesI mean a horse is a horse of course, but who rides is importantSitting high with a uniform, barking orders, demanding orderAnd I'm scared that I talk too much about what I think's going onI got a way with this, they might drag me away for thisPut me in a cage for this, I might pay for thisI just say what I want like I'm made for thisBut I'm just afraid some days I might be wrongMaybe that's why me and Mike get alongHey, not from the same part of town, but we both hear the same sound comingWoo! And it sounds like warWoo! And it breaks our heartsWhen I started this band, didn't have no plans, didn't see no arcJust run with the craft, have a couple laughsMake a buck and dash, yeahGet a little dap like "Yeah I'm the fucking man!", yeahMaybe give a little back like, "Here, I do what I can"It's all jokes and smoke 'till the truth start schemin'Can't contain the disdain for y'all demonsYou talk clean and bomb hospitalsSo I speak with the foulest mouth possibleAnd I drink like a Vulcan losing all faith in the logicalI will not be confused for docileI'm free, motherfuckers, I'm hostile[Verse 2: Killer Mike]Choose the lesser of the evil people, and the devil still gon' winIt could all be over tomorrow, kill our masters and start againBut we know we all afraid, so we just simply cry and march againAt the Dem Conven my heart broke apart when I seen them march mommas inAs I rap this verse right now, got tears flowing down my chocolate chinTold the truth and I've been punished for it, must be a masochist 'cause I done it again"Ooh, Mike said 'uterus'"They acting like Mike said, "You a bitch"To every writer who wrote it, misquoted itMike says, "You a bitch, you a bitch, you a bitch"Add a "nigga" for the black writer that started that sewer shitI maneuver through manure like a slumdog millionaireEl-P told me, "Fuck them devils, Mike, we gon' be millionaires"I respond with a heavy "Yeah"Big bruh says "Fuck that, toughen upStay ready, write raw raps, shit rugged rough"The devil don't sleep, us eitherEl spits fire, I spit etherWe the gladiators that oppose all CaesarsComing soon on a new world tourProbably play the score for the World WarAt the apocalypse, play the encoreTurn around, see El, and I smileHell coming, and we got about a mileUntil it's over I remain hostile[Part II: Kill Your Masters][Verse 1: Killer Mike]Mere mortals, the Gods coming so miss me with the whoopty-whoopYou take the devil for God, look how he doin' youI'm Jack Johnson, I beat a slave catcher snaggletoothI'm Tiger Flowers with a higher power, hallelu'Life'll get so bad it feel like God mad at youBut that's a feeling, baby, ever lose I refuseI disabuse these foolish fools of they foolish viewsI heard the revolution coming, you should spread the newsGarvey mind, Tyson punch, this is bad newsSo feel me, follow meDevil done got on top of meBad times got a monopolyGive up, I did the oppositePitch perfect, did it properlyOwner killed by his property[Verse 2: El-P]This life'll stress you like Orson Welles on the radioWar after war of the world'll make all your saneness goAnd these invaders from Earth're twerkin' on graves you knowCan't wait to load up the silos and make your babies glowIt's so abusive you'll beg somebody to roofie youThey'll snatch your hope up and use it like it's a hula-hoopAnd it's a loop, they talk to you just like their rulers doThese fuckin' fools have forgotten just who been foolin' who[Chorus: Killer Mike]Kill your, kill- kill your kill your, kill-Kill your, kill- kill- kill your, kill-Kill your mastersKill your, kill- kill your kill your, kill-Kill your, kill- kill- kill your, kill-Kill your masters (Kill your masters!)Kill your, kill- kill your kill your, kill-Kill your, kill- kill- kill your, kill-Kill your mastersKill your, kill- kill your kill your, kill-Kill your, kill- kill- kill your, kill-Kill your masters (Kill your masters!)[Verse 3: Zack de la Rocha]Killer children of men on the throne, roving with no atonementGot me feeling like I'm Clive Owen rowing through a future frozenThe flow's a burning wind, blowing to your coastNow in cages 'cause we rode the waves of your explosionsDone appealing to our killers, man, to stop the bleedin'This song's a dirty bomb for they dirty dealingsBoots on the roof, I'm Charley Mingus dumping through the ceilingMaster P-in' on these lost Europeans thievin'Shit be grim, and De La born a reaperBorn in the beast and fixin' feast tearin' its featuresThe world surges, the nation's nervousThe crowds awaken, they can't disperse usWe ain't at your serviceWon't stay sedatedWon't state our numbers for our names andRemaining facelessWe dignified, they can't erase usWe ain't asleep, we rope-a-dope through the flamesMan, the world gonna ride on what's implied in the nameRun 'em[Chorus: Killer Mike]Kill your, kill- kill your kill your, kill-Kill your, kill- kill- kill your, kill-Kill your mastersKill your, kill- kill your kill your, kill-Kill your, kill- kill- kill your, kill-Kill your masters (Kill your masters!)Kill your, kill- kill your kill your, kill-Kill your, kill- kill- kill your, kill-Kill your mastersKill your, kill- kill your kill your, kill-Kill your, kill- kill- kill your, kill-Kill your masters (Kill your masters!)

Yet Killer Mike, a Black man from Atlanta, Georgia, and El-P, a white man from Brooklyn, New York, have transformed what should have been the twilight of their careers as rappers into their biggest spotlight yet. Known as the hip-hop duo Run The Jewels, they have headlined festivals worldwide, become action figures and Marvel comic book characters, spearheaded a worldwide countercultural movement, and played a significant role in the last two presidential elections. This is the buddy-movie-like story of how they got there. It is a tale that parallels the incredible changes the music industry has gone through over the past twenty-five years—charting a course from the highs around the turn of the century to the collapse of the CD format and the eventual rise of streaming media—while also mapping the evolution of both pop culture and its sociopolitical climate. From the surging popularity of afrofuturism and the fall of the Twin Towers to the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement and the kneeling of Colin Kaepernick, such events all tie into how their budding bromance transformed Killer Mike and El-P from solo artists in underground hip-hop to pop cultural icons recognized all over the globe. The book is written by Jaap van der Doelen, and is coming out through UGA Press on December 1, 2024. Sorry! Something went wrong Is your network connection unstable or browser outdated? (feat. Zack de la Rocha) [Part I: "A Report to the Shareholders"] [Verse 1: El-P] Beware of horses I mean a horse is a horse of course, but who rides is important Sitting high with a uniform, barking orders, demanding order And I'm scared that I talk too much about what I think's going on I got a way with this, they might drag me away for this Put me in a cage for this, I might pay for this I just say what I want like I'm made for this But I'm just afraid some days I might be wrong Maybe that's why me and Mike get along Hey, not from the same part of town, but we both hear the same sound coming Woo! And it sounds like war Woo! And it breaks our hearts When I started this band, didn't have no plans, didn't see no arc Just run with the craft, have a couple laughs Make a buck and dash, yeah Get a little dap like "Yeah I'm the fucking man!", yeah Maybe give a little back like, "Here, I do what I can" It's all jokes and smoke 'till the truth start schemin' Can't contain the disdain for y'all demons You talk clean and bomb hospitals So I speak with the foulest mouth possible And I drink like a Vulcan losing all faith in the logical I will not be confused for docile I'm free, motherfuckers, I'm hostile [Verse 2: Killer Mike] Choose the lesser of the evil people, and the devil still gon' win It could all be over tomorrow, kill our masters and start again But we know we all afraid, so we just simply cry and march again At the Dem Conven my heart broke apart when I seen them march mommas in As I rap this verse right now, got tears flowing down my chocolate chin Told the truth and I've been punished for it, must be a masochist 'cause I done it again "Ooh, Mike said 'uterus'" They acting like Mike said, "You a bitch" To every writer who wrote it, misquoted it Mike says, "You a bitch, you a bitch, you a bitch" Add a "nigga" for the black writer that started that sewer shit I maneuver through manure like a slumdog millionaire El-P told me, "Fuck them devils, Mike, we gon' be millionaires" I respond with a heavy "Yeah" Big bruh says "Fuck that, toughen up Stay ready, write raw raps, shit rugged rough" The devil don't sleep, us either El spits fire, I spit ether We the gladiators that oppose all Caesars Coming soon on a new world tour Probably play the score for the World War At the apocalypse, play the encore Turn around, see El, and I smile Hell coming, and we got about a mile Until it's over I remain hostile [Part II: "Kill Your Masters"] [Verse 1: Killer Mike] Mere mortals, the Gods coming so miss me with the whoopty-whoop You take the devil for God, look how he doin' you I'm Jack Johnson, I beat a slave catcher snaggletooth I'm Tiger Flowers with a higher power, hallelu' Life'll get so bad it feel like God mad at you But that's a feeling, baby, ever lose I refuse I disabuse these foolish fools of they foolish views I heard the revolution coming, you should spread the news Garvey mind, Tyson punch, this is bad news So feel me, follow me Devil done got on top of me Bad times got a monopoly Give up, I did the opposite Pitch perfect, I did it properly Owner killed by his property [Verse 2: El-P] This life'll stress you like Orson Welles on the radio War after war of the world'll make all your saneness go And these invaders from Earth're twerkin' on graves you know Can't wait to load up the silos and make your babies glow It's so abusive you'll beg somebody to roofie you They'll snatch your hope up and use it like it's a hula-hoop And it's a loop, they talk to you just like their rulers do These fuckin' fools have forgotten just who been foolin' who [Hook: Killer Mike] Kill your, kill- kill your kill your, kill- Kill your, kill- kill- kill your, kill- Kill your masters Kill your, kill- kill your kill your, kill- Kill your, kill- kill- kill your, kill- Kill your masters (kill your masters!) 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[Verse 3: Zack de la Rocha] Killer children of men on the throne, roving with no atonement Got me feeling like I'm Clive Owen rowing through a future frozen The flow's a burning wind, blowing to your coast Now in cages 'cause we rode the waves of your explosions Done appealing to our killers, man, to stop the bleedin' This song's a dirty bomb for they dirty dealings Boots on the roof, I'm Charley Mingus dumping through the ceiling Master P-in' on these lost Europeans thievin' Shit be grim, and De La born a reaper Born in the beast and fixin' feast tearin' its features The world surges, the nation's nervous The crowds awaken, they can't disperse us We ain't at your service Won't stay sedated Won't state our numbers for names and Remaining faceless We dignified, they can't erase us We ain't asleep, we rope-a-dope through the flames Man, the world gonna ride on what's implied in the name Run 'em [Hook] Kill your, kill- kill your kill your, kill- Kill your, kill- kill- kill your, kill- Kill your masters Kill your, kill- kill your kill your, kill- Kill your, kill- kill- kill your, kill- Kill your masters (kill your masters!) Kill your, kill- kill your kill your, kill- Kill your, kill- kill- kill your, kill- Kill your masters Kill your, kill- kill your kill your, kill- Kill your, kill- kill- kill your, kill- Kill your masters (kill your masters!) Lyrics taken from /lyrics/r/run_the_jewels/a_report_to_the_shareholders_kill_your_masters.html "A Report to the Shareholders / Kill Your Masters" by Run The Jewels (Ft. Zack de la Rocha) is a powerful and politically charged song that addresses various themes such as oppression, corruption, and self-empowerment. In the first part, "A Report to the Shareholders," El-P reflects on the fear of speaking out against the system and the consequences of doing so. He expresses his frustration with those in power who abuse their authority and manipulate information to further their own interests. Despite his fear, El-P asserts his right to speak his mind and criticize those who engage in destructive actions. He uses provocative language to convey his anger and refuses to be silenced or controlled. Killer Mike's verse in this part dives deeper into the struggle of choosing between two evils. Though he acknowledges the fear and despair that exists, he emphasizes the importance of taking action and challenging the system. He criticizes the media and their tendency to misconstrue his words, particularly when he addresses sensitive topics like women's reproductive rights. The verse also highlights his determination to persevere and resist the oppressive forces that seek to maintain control and power. The second part, "Kill Your Masters," takes a more confrontational and defiant stance. Both El-P and Killer Mike criticize the influence of those in power and advocate for a revolution and a dismantling of the existing systems of oppression. They condemn the manipulation and abuse carried out by these entities. Zack de la Rocha's verse strengthens the message by discussing the consequences of inaction and the need to free oneself from the grip of those in power. He references historical figures and events to emphasize the urgency and gravity of the situation. Overall, "A Report to the Shareholders / Kill Your Masters" offers a commentary on social and political issues, urging listeners to question authority, resist oppression, and take a stand against corrupt systems. The song encourages self-empowerment and active participation in creating societal change. They didn’t meet until they were both in their mid-thirties, when they were introduced to each other by a mutual friend - an executive at Cartoon Network. At that time, both were gearing up to make their latest solo records. El-P, a rapper and producer from Brooklyn who was one-third of the hugely influential Company Flow, was content: “I didn’t expect this success,” he says, “and I was OK with not getting it. I was at peace. As long as I was making great records, I was happy.”Killer Mike, meanwhile, felt differently. The Atlanta native’s career had been topsy-turvy from the start. He never struggled for critical acclaim, and as a member of Outkast’s inner circle, he’d made a stirring turn on a Grammy-winning single of theirs, “The Whole World”. Still, he’d been burned by his experiences in the industry. “Fourteen years ago, I dropped Monster,” he reflects of his debut LP, “and it was chugging along, on its way to making its mark, and then the record company decided they’d made their money, so that was it. I had to move onto the next record. And that was hurtful. God damn - just because you’ve decided your bills are paid, we have to leave it behind now?”The pair met in 2011, and quickly struck up a bond on both the creative and personal fronts. The following May, they released the albums they’d been working on, a week apart. Mike featured on El’s Cancer 4 Cure, and El produced Mike’s R.A.P. Music. The seeds of something bigger had been sown. A year later came Run the Jewels, their debut full-length under the name they’d lifted from an LL Cool J song. It netted them the strongest reviews of their career, and when they played it live, there was a noticeable step-up in energy between the pair’s solo sets and their joint headlining slot as Run the Jewels.That’s another indicator of the extent to which this group has been defined by genuine collaboration. They had more than enough material of their own, but when they came together, the proverbial roof came off. There’s also the incongruous relationship between the scathingly political nature of some of their lyrics and the gleefully silly tone of the rest of them. On Run the Jewels 2, they doubled down on both; they’d eviscerate the dishonesty of the ruling classes on “Lie, Cheat, Steal” one minute, and then advise adversaries to “run backwards naked through a field of dicks” the next. When fans raised a frankly ludicrous amount of money - in excess of $60,000 - for the pair to re-record RTJ2 using only cat sounds, they rose to the challenge.The more solemn side of things was coming to the fore at the same time. As fate would have it, RTJ2 dropped in October of 2014, right around the same time that the police shooting of the unarmed Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri led to widespread unrest on the streets. When the grand jury ruled against taking further action against the officer in question in November, Run the Jewels were about to take the stage in nearby St. Louis. Mike delivered a fiercely articulate and openly emotional broadside against the verdict from the stage, and the footage quickly went viral.It didn’t take long for the national media to take note, and sure enough, Mike was appearing on the likes of CNN before too long. “If only I could get Mike up in front of these motherfuckers!” said El gleefully the last time the duo spoke to Best Fit, in December 2014. You could see where he was coming from; his bandmate is enthralling in his eloquence, a man of deep thought and sincere delivery. Mike became a bit of a political fixture, perhaps better known in the wider consciousness not for his music, but for his public service engagement - his high-profile support of Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primaries last year is the chief case in point.By the time touring for RTJ2 was winding down, it felt as if the group were caught up in something like a perfect storm. Once again, there were two sides to the latest chapter in the Run the Jewels story. On the one hand, they’d improbably landed the greatest success of their careers right at the same time that they both turned forty - the best reviews, the biggest venues, the highest income. On the other, they now needed to break ground on a third record that would be made over the course of one of the most turbulent calendar years in political history, and be sure to outdo themselves in the process.“All of it weighed down upon us pretty heavily,” says El. “That was very clear.” He’s sitting, along with Mike, in the back lounge of a tour bus in Manchester. This is the pay-off; this is where they wanted to be whilst they were making Run The Jewels 3, back on the road. In the current climate, they don’t seem to mind taking a short break from America, either, especially after the media focus on the band began to take the focus away from the music. “At times, Mike would be so stressed out that he felt like he couldn’t fucking get on a plane, because he was overwhelmed by what was going on around him. It was affecting him emotionally. You’re trying your best to get into a great creative space, but it feels like you’re having to fight the world to make it happen. There’s a split. Sometimes, when you’re in that space, it’s just fun and exciting, and you’re those rappers again. Other times, it’s an exorcism, and the darkest parts of our minds emerge.” "Sometimes, when you’re in that space, it’s just fun and exciting, and you’re those rappers again. Other times, it’s an exorcism, and the darkest parts of our minds emerge.” Accordingly, RTJ3 turned out far more balanced than might have been expected from a group already given to scorching political rhetoric long before the turmoil of 2016 unfolded. It’s incendiary in places - on closer “A Report to the Shareholders”, El warns ominously of impending war - and measured in others: early single “2100” has Mike advising that “you defeat the devil when you hold onto hope”. Once Sanders was controversially beaten to the Democratic nomination by Hillary Clinton, Mike turned his attentions back to local activism, with his aims best encapsulated by a fiery interview with an Atlanta radio station last July in which he advocated financial boycotts, strikes and action at the ballot box by black communities. “It’s an oligarchy in our country right now, and that in itself was enough to bring some dark days,” he reflects. “But it transfers into the music in some unique and beautiful ways.”“We’re two guys who are from different places and different fucking communities, and we’re genuinely friends,” offers El, “so it feels like, every time we get together to do something during these times, we represent the utopian vision of the American psyche in a small way. We felt a responsibility to present that. There were flare-ups of really dark times, and then there’s a lot of the album that’s just us joking around, because that’s who we are. We were still able to find a common thread, and communicate our ideas properly.”The honesty and understanding in their working relationship was of crucial importance when it came to the writing of “Thieves! (Screamed the Ghost)”. It’s arguably the most irascible track in the Run the Jewels catalogue to date, dealing directly with the repeated failure to hold police officers to account for the killings of unarmed black men, from Ferguson to North Charleston to Baton Rouge. It was one of the trickiest songs to finish for the record because of the delicate balance that had to be struck; it needed to be volcanic enough in its anger to properly convey the severity of the situation, but without sounding like an outright incitement to violence.“We chipped away at it,” El explains. “Mike wasn’t taking no prisoners on a couple of verses. We knew when we were making it that it was going to be one of the more important records we’d made. This wasn’t RTJ1 anymore, where we were just high as fuck in the studio. We ended up with a jam on which we hadn’t compromised from a soul perspective, but we had gone back and forth to make sure we came away with a piece of art that really hit upon the message we wanted to put across.”Besides, if there’s encouragement to take action on RTJ3, it’s often wrapped up in statements that admonish violence, rather than invite it. One of Mike’s lines on “2100”, “I refuse to kill another human being in the name of a government”, sounds like it could potentially be a pacifist statement. “It’s a call to arms,” he confirms. “Every soldier in the British Army, the U.S. Army, the Australian Army could meet on the battlefield with our supposed enemies in the Middle East, put their fucking guns down, turn around to look at Congress and Parliament and say, “you go kill each other.” It’s me saying that I wouldn’t kill somebody in the name of somebody else’s agenda - I won’t resort to that nationalistic tribalism that we’re seeing all over the world right now. You’re British because you were born here. You were given a flag, a religion and a national anthem, but we’re all just human beings, spinning on this planet until we perish.” “It’s an oligarchy in our country right now, and that in itself was enough to bring some dark days,” El picks up the thread. “It’s a really interesting point, and I love the idea that a call to arms could be a call for the reduction of arms, especially because peace is a fucking brutal and vicious fight of the mind and the soul. People have to die for peace. You’re going to hear all of those things on our records; sometimes there’ll be moments of rage and moments of us begging for peace, and then you’re also going to hear us to talk about weed and our dicks a couple of times. If we just focused on one side of it, we’d just be a distillation of one idea. But RTJ is a creative force, so all of these things are going to spill out. It proves that it’s not premeditated.”There’s no question that both members are very much their own men and that contrast of ideas is all the more apparent in conversation. Mike’s a deep and nuanced political thinker, riffing on the inextricable ties between racism and the American class system when the track “Don’t Get Captured” is brought up; “until we get out of the mindset of, ‘I’m Muslim, I’m Christian, I’m African, I’m northern, I’m Jewish, I’m American,’ we’ll continue to fall back into what makes us feel comfortable - the caste system that reinforces the class system.”El, meanwhile, is constantly feeding off of those notions and finding a way to bring them back to the music. The factor that seems to unite their frames of mind - both specifically in terms of RTJ3 and in general - is the amount of importance they place on individual freedom. It’s the single biggest concept running through this latest record. “El talked about fighting for peace,” says Mike, “and anybody who knows anything about pugilism, whether it be boxing, martial arts or just being willing to fight - you need the spirit to speak truth to power, and resist it at every opportunity. If I leave any legacy besides music, that’s what I’d want it to be: to let people know that they are absolutely free, and that you have the power to bring who you perceive to be powerful to their fucking knees. Kill your masters.”“Exactly,” El concurs. “You are literally as powerful as anybody else on this fucking planet right now, and the only thing people have over you is a grip on your heart and your soul. They have your mind in their hands, but that doesn’t mean you can’t still say, from one human to another, ‘fuck you’. That’s what Run the Jewels gives to kids when they listen to us. We don’t even have to say it directly - just us being friends in the face of this shitstorm of politics and confusion is a defiant act, and so is the fact that we don’t have to explain ourselves to anybody.”That freedom extends, too, to the striking directness of the pair’s relationship with their fans. Both are avid Twitter users, with their personal follower counts totaling around 450,000 between them. All three of their albums to date were released for free via their website. As with its predecessors, no members of the press were allowed to hear RTJ3 before its release to the rest of the listening public and, when they spontaneously brought forward its scheduled January release date to Christmas Day of last year, the decision was entirely theirs to make. December, and the festive period especially, is usually a graveyard for album releases, but Run the Jewels are not subject to the industry’s traditional considerations.For a long time, though, El-P was. He ran his own label, Def Jux, for a decade, and very much in the old-fashioned way, too - the onus was on physical releases. In 2010, he put the imprint on hiatus as the industry’s transition to digital began to take its toll. Given that he’d always craved a way to cut out the middleman and have as close a relationship as possible with listeners, you’d be forgiven for thinking that the way things have gone since with Run the Jewels represented something like a dream scenario for him.“The thing is, you couldn’t ever have imagined this ten years ago,” he counters. “It wasn’t quite the reality of the technological situation at that point, and it wasn’t something you could realistically monetize, either. As a guy who’s always been very involved in the business and always tried to be at the vanguard of thinking about new models, I never necessarily thought it would be this, but I did want to have the closest connection I could between myself and the fans. That’s definitely the truth. It dawned on us that the old industry’s gone; only a fraction of it still works that way, and so it should - it’s not like Adele’s worried about Twitter. For everybody else, though, those things - whether it’s social media or giving the music straight to our fan base - they’re tools that allow us to do whatever the fuck we want, in an industry where it’s always been really complicated to do that.”Their irrepressible energy hasn’t just been kept up since; if anything, the intensity’s gone up a notch, even as the group continue to sell out bigger and bigger rooms. Night after night, regardless of which corner of the world they’re in, they can more or less bank on a feverish reception from the local faithful - almost to the point that they might even start to get used to it. “I suffered too long for that to happen,” says Mike. “Early in my career, it just seemed like it wouldn’t go. I’m glad, in retrospect, that I absorbed that pain and never forgot it, because it keeps me appreciative every day. I don’t give a fuck what kind of day I have, the hour I’m on stage with him is usually, aside from making love to my wife, the best hour of my day.”El grins. “I’m shooting for number one, though! This explosion in our careers happened after we were already secure in ourselves - happy in our hearts and with our direction, so it feels like a bonus every fucking time. Every night we’re out there, at least once or twice, we’re going to have a real moment where we’re looking at each other and remembering our careers before that, when we were pleased to be playing 300-person clubs. To have gone from that to headlining at places in the States that hold 5000, it’s an incredible feeling. It’s fucking nuts.”Some reviews of RTJ3 wondered whether it might be the last we hear from Run the Jewels for a while, or perhaps even ever; counterbalancing the hectic engagement with the political climate was a palpable sense of triumph, from “Call Ticketron”’s prediction that they’ll soon headline Madison Square Garden to the buoyant self-aggrandisement of the likes of “Legend Has It” - on which Mike calls RTJ “the new PB&J” - and “Hey Kids (Bumaye)”, which has El declare himself “the fucking tits”. Of note, too, was Nick Gazin’s cover art. The now-iconic hands insignia - zombie-blue and bare on the front of RTJ1 and heavily bandaged on RTJ2’s cover - return, but this time are made of solid gold. "My hope for Run The Jewels, in terms of what I pray to the ancestors about at night, is a twenty year career and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.” The chain that the right hand clasped previously has vanished, too. Mike points out that this wasn’t supposed to reflect self-satisfaction or pride, but instead the album’s prevailing theme - the knowledge that you’re free, and the power that yields. “I always interpreted freedom as something I’d been denied, and there are certain freedoms that I have been denied, but ultimately, I was born free. I want to inspire other people to realise that, too - that you don’t need a Constitution to fucking free you. The gold hands say that you are truly the jewels, and freedom’s not something you have to wait on.”Was RTJ3 ever supposed to sound like it was a case of mission accomplished? As he spins an RTJ-branded snapback on his finger, El laughs. “Are you fucking kidding me? We’ve got more hats to make! There’s no end in sight. We’re going to go as far as we can, and that’ll lead to a lot of creative shit. Mike said that he when he first heard my beats for this album, that it sounded like an audio movie - like two teenagers stuck in the apocalypse, trying to escape. There’s no reason we can’t go into film and books, that sort of thing. I just want to have fun and make good shit, and exercise all kinds of creative stuff that I’ve always been interested in.”Mike is even more forthright in his vision for the group, which he says has already helped him to realise a lot of his dreams. “When we first sat down, our first talk was about four records and nothing less. Part of the pre-requisite for doing this was that we needed to be like EPMD, Led Zeppelin and Outkast. Four is the basic minimum, and it’s like the shit won’t really start until after the next album. My hope for Run the Jewels, in terms of what I pray to the ancestors about at night, is a twenty year career and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.”Both burst out laughing at Mike’s matter-of-fact delivery. El tempers his expectations a little. “That might be a bit ambitious.”“It might - but I’m still the same kid who told my eighth grade teacher that N.W.A. would be inducted one day! Who knows?”Run The Jewels 3 is out now. Run The Jewels play London's Field Day on 3 June.

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