

Film Review: N.W.A. Influences an Era in 'Straight Outta Compton'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 13, 2015 - 7:31pm

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CHICAGO – Gangsta rap, like all the revolutionary and society bending genres before it, was formulated from dire frustration and a need to shake up the surroundings that encased their creators. The prime movers of gangsta was the group N.W.A., and their story is told in 'Straight Outta Compton.'



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

The Compton in the title is in southern Los Angeles county, a city known for its African American and Hispanic gangs, with lower and middle working class neighborhoods. This is where gangsta rap was born, from the artistic well of five young men who would challenge the authority of everything around them. "Straight Outta Compton" is a biography film about N.W.A., but it also serves an allegory for institutional racism against the group, and the way they fought against it through their rap art. The film is stark and effective, especially within the sometimes brutal machinery of the music industry in the late 1980s/early '90s, when the times they were a-changin', but agents cheating artists out of money never seemed to change. Although the film runs a little too long, it's an education in the roots of a rap music form that really stuck it to The Man.

Compton, California, in 1988 is the setting for the film, where a vinyl DJ nicknamed Dr. Dre (Corey Hawkins) is tired of his small gigs, especially when his turntable scratching talents are producing some new beats. He works in the club scene with Dj Yella (Neil Brown Jr.) and MC Ren (Aldis Hodge), and Dre seeks help from a neighborhood entrepreneur named Eazy-E (Jason Mitchell) to start a record label.

Recruiting a local rap poet nicknamed Ice Cube (O'Shea Jackson Jr.), the group evolves into N.W.A.(an acronym for N*ggaz Wit Attitudes), who takes street rap and pulls it into a harsher light of political and social anarchy. Eazy-E recruits a music mogul named Jarry Heller (Paul Giamatti) to get the group more play, and their debut album, "Straight Outta Compton" is a sensation, but the dynamic and attitudes within the context of their journey predicts future problems.

"Straight Outta Compton" opens everywhere on August 14th. Featuring Paul Giamatti, O'Shea Jackson Jr., Corey Hawkins, Jason Mitchell, Neil Brown Jr., Aldis Hodge and Keith Stanfield. Screenplay by Jonathan Herman and Andrea Berloff. Directed by F. Gary Gray. Rated "R"



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The Cast as the Rap Group N.W.A. in 'Straight Outta Compton'

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

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