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On Brevity And Nonchalance In New L.A. Rap

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As soon as I heard Remble rap, I was hooked. A member of Stinc Team, his relatively unorthodox approach makes him the perfect peer to the rhyme renegade Drakeo The Ruler without straight-up copying his flow. His style takes the grandness and nuanced complexities of Los Angeles street life and breaks it down into smaller, at times bite-size chunks. Though not as sparse as when Rick Ross gasped and wheezed through those *Port Of Miami* classics, the brevity of his bars provides just enough space for a listener to stop and think before the next one hits. I'm talking seconds—micro-seconds, really—as you can hear on "Gordon Ramsay Freestyle." Most of its best lines are posed as pithy, straightforward questions without easy answers, each one as much a test as a threat.

This mélange of brags and violence isn't revolutionary by any means, but the eerily placid way Remble executes them sets him apart from the contemporary drill and scam rappers who also operate in these spaces, albeit more aggressively. Though some English majors may disagree on principle, the leanness of his style skews very much towards Ernest Hemingway, the verbose fat neatly trimmed off these meaty verses. What we're left with, then, are portion-controlled meals for the discerning rap consumer.



With all due respect to Lil Jon or Waka Flocka Flame, there's something so chilling about such concision and nonchalance in rap. Remble has that for days, his delivery so matter-of-fact that it legitimately gives pause. The worn-out trope of a rapper saying they're not a rapper loses power just by being uttered on a track. But the detachment he demonstrates on his most recent one "Touchable" sounds like you're sitting across from a unrepentant hitman or perhaps even a serial killer, leaving you unsure whether or not you'll survive the encounter.



And obviously he's not the only one doing that out in L.A. "Different Levels," the latest BlueBucksClan single, has the duo similarly dispassionate in their delivery. But at least you can hear the attitude and the cocksureness there, which doesn't diminish the song's potency but does put it in line with what decades-old gangsta rap had wrought. This is par for the course with their *Clan Virus 2* project, evidenced by prior single "Don't Judge Me" and its nihilistic horny hedonism. Stylistic divergence amid sonic diversity undoubtedly helps hip-hop stay alive and vibrant, and the West Coast has definitely been bringing that of late.

