

For Kenzo B, rap is a family business, but it's also a cutthroat competition. The 18-year-old native of the Bronx, who has quickly become one of the most magnetic voices in New York's vibrant drill music scene, honed her skills at home, where she vied with her brother, Bando, to see who could write the better verse to any number of borrowed beats. This spirit of rivalry continued when Kenzo took on the world. Her vocal adaptability and dogged attention to detail—not to mention the charisma that practically drips off of her—have not only made her one of the most instantly inimitable MCs in drill but have allowed her to navigate the traditionally male-dominated genre with ease. While she was still in high school, Kenzo released songs like the Dick Dale-sampling “Bump It” and the critically acclaimed “The Realest,” which were equal parts menacing and free-spirited, marked by raw energy and tonal sophistication the likes of which often elude artists twice her age. As she gears up to release a flurry of new singles—including the piercing, furious “No Tweakin” and the scorching track “Sanctioned”—as well as her debut project on Warner Records, Kenzo has continued to hone her rapid-fire flows and expand her songwriting repertoire. That's all while remembering that, in an era where social media can pull listeners' attention in a thousand different directions, the best way to make yourself stand out in rap is still to go harder than everyone else around you.