

YOUNGBOY NEVER BROKE AGAIN

PRESS PACK 2017

NEVER BROKE AGAIN
AIYOUNGBOY



PARENTAL
ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

YOUNGBOY

NEVER BROKE AGAIN

The realer the story, the realer the rapper.

YoungBoy Never Broke Again lives every word he spits. Through that honesty, the Baton Rouge rapper built a formidable following and earned early acclaim from *The Fader*, *Stereogum*, *XXL*, *HotNewHipHop*, and more, and landed a deal with Never Broke Again records by the age of 17.

Of course, he'd lived about two lifetimes by what would be a typical senior year in high school... "Baton Rouge ain't nice," he sighs. "What I do, there's nothing to explain. I just want people to feel it."

He's played by his own rulebook since birth. At the age of four, YoungBoy broke his neck in a wrestling accident. He took it upon himself to rip the surgical halo off early, leaving what he refers to as "tiger stripe" scars on his forehead. Growing up, mom and another local hero inspired him to rap.

"My mom used to make music," he explains. "An artist named Lil Phat came up from Baton Rouge too, and he made me want to rap even more than that. It was both of them combined."

At 12-years-old, his godmother paid for a professional studio session, and YoungBoy immediately felt at home in the booth. As he rapped, the budding talent took the name "YoungBoy" from a Philadelphia phrase commonly shouted by Meek and "Never Broke Again" as a goal. 2015 saw him release his explosive debut mixtape *Mind of a Menace* followed by *Mind of Menace 2*, *Mind of a Menace 3*, and *38 Baby*.

Following what he describes as "a few setbacks" leading to six months in prison, YoungBoy unleashed pure fire in the form of 2017's *AI YoungBoy*—representative of a new side of his rap persona. Standouts like "No Smoke," "Dark Into Light" [feat. Yo Gotti], and "Wat Chu Gone Do"

[feat. Peewee Longway] showcased his bulletproof bars and hard-hitting hooks, while the single "Untouchable" generated 3.7 million plays in less than a month with its deft lyricism and undeniable chant that's impossible for the competition to touch.

"It's the last song I recorded before my incarceration," he goes on. "It's the first song I released when I came home. It means I'm untouchable. Nobody can knock me off the game since I came home."

With *38 Baby 2* dropping next and a forthcoming major label debut up ahead, YoungBoy's legacy is about to be as real as his story is. "I just want people to listen," he leaves off. "This is what I do, man. That's all there is to say."

8/2017



August 19, 2017

NBA YoungBoy Is Incisive, Introspective, and Next in Line for Greatness

On his latest mixtape, 'AI YoungBoy,' it's impossible to ignore the links between the Baton Rouge rapper and recent greats. At 17, he's already more than his skillset.



In 1999, a 17-year-old Lil Wayne released a song called "Fuck tha World" about the unforgiving cycle of life that claimed his stepfather by the gun, yet rewarded him with the birth of his first child, Reginae. By that time, Wayne had already cemented himself as rap's most exciting youngster with his nasal tone and role in ushering in the bling era. But on this song from his debut album *Tha Block is Hot*, he shed layers that weren't so visible at first. That openness laid the groundwork for the music he'd release as an adult, but it also helped link Wayne's narrative to young black teenagers across the country who were trapped in the quandary of contributing to their family's well-being and still trying to maintain being a kid, all while broader society strips them of their innocence with the perception of inherent guilt. You can currently see the echoes of that in another teenage Louisiana artist, Baton Rouge's 17-year-old, NBA YoungBoy.

YoungBoy's name made it into the minds of many last year, at just 16, when he released his 38 Baby mixtape. That project hoisted him up as the next teenage darling of street music—like Wayne in '99 and Chief Keef in 2011—whose marketability and appeal relied heavily on the juxtaposition of his barely broken voice and baby face with his relationship with guns and drugs. YoungBoy is a far more sophisticated storyteller than his two predecessors, though. That is more evident than ever on his recently released *AI YoungBoy*, which further establishes his ability to give listeners a front row seat into his innermost feelings. But this time, it's with an increased level of polish that usually doesn't happen within just one year.

In November of 2016, YoungBoy was arrested and charged on two counts of attempted first degree murder and spent nearly six months in prison before pleading down to aggravated assault with a firearm. The realizations born in that experience are conveyed through *AI Youngboy* not only in ways that are in plain sight—"In that cell I realized that I ain't got no friends" ("Dark Into Light")—but also in the urgency with which he views life as he enters adulthood. He faces a dilemma on "No Smoke," a song that features an improved, contagious singing voice, in which he has to stay armed not only to protect his own life, but also the ticket that his career holds for his mom, brother, and two sons' liberation. It's the type of situation he'd rather not deal with anymore. That's why at various points throughout, the dire need to get out of Baton Rouge is expressed on this project. BR elder statesmen Boosie Bad Azz echoed those sentiments when he congratulated YoungBoy on his return to freedom back in May. On just about every song on *AI Youngboy*, the rapper born Kentrell Gaulden pledges to not get knocked off of his focus in one way or another. Most teenagers aren't so acutely fixed on anything this much, but most don't have this much at stake either.

In that way, YoungBoy is actually working against the current, considering the output of his teenage peers. Fellow 17-year-old Florida rapper Lil Pump's main pull is the unconscious fun that it promotes. Ohio teen Trippie Redd is making a mark with quasi-Satanic aesthetics and raps that don't feel like they're tied to any particular life event. In this new world of viral fame, a rapper coming out using the blueprint of a Lil Wayne or Boosie Bad Azz isn't the smartest business move, making YoungBoy an anomaly—a teenager who's committed to letting listeners in on everything that makes him tick. In the pursuit of short term success, it's a gamble. But it's this type of content that gains loyalty over long periods of time.

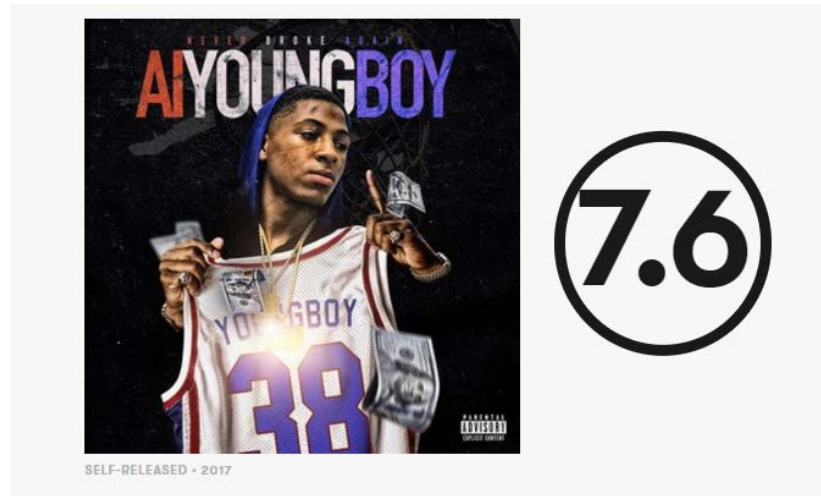
There are a few tracks on *AI Youngboy* that perfectly center his controlled fury. The dramatic piano riffs on "GG" are a foolproof companion to punchlines like "Thunder in my clip / Fuck around get hit with light bitch." The delicate, Zaytoven-like production on "Graffiti" help frame it as the project's most emotionally effective song. There, he reflects on jail, being at odds with his mother, and the fear of an early fate. YoungBoy is his sharpest and rawest on "Murda Gang," though. With elements of vintage New Orleans rap production, the foundation is set for him to get into a pocket early. At the song's start he raps "Niggas know it's dumb with me / You run up, you ain't touchin' me / Nah I swear that you can't fuck with me / My niggas they gon' bust for me / Bitch I could get you touched for free," with a rhythmic emphasis. It's also on this song that he gives a shoutout to Bobby Shmurda—whose bad boy persona and youth garnered him the adulation that YoungBoy now has a real shot at. It's an ironic tip-of-the-cap too when considering the two's parallels, but the rationale may lay within YoungBoy's teenage lack of judgement. You'd think that someone who just got off the hook for murder charges wouldn't recount the hits he's ordered on wax ("Ride On Em"). That's even more evident when considering the basis of the investigation into Shmurda's criminal activity was exclusively tied to what he disclosed in his music. Hopefully wisdom comes with age.

At the crux of the tape is NBA YoungBoy's optimism and gratitude, which gives it a dimension none of his earlier music had. Six months in prison was a wakeup call and an experience that left his margin for error nearly non-existent. The urgency to get his shit straight is the one constant of the tape. Lead single "Untouchable" exclusively discusses getting on the straight-and-narrow: "I gotta make up for all them nights that my Momma cried / I'm goin' in, I'm putting everything on the line." The project's closer, "Dedicated," is an autobiographical story of rising to his current, promising situation. But it's also a pledge to never revisit predicaments that would land him in more trouble. It's these moments that move the scale for YoungBoy in comparison to earlier works. Before AI YoungBoy dropped, it was evident that his skillset was one beyond his years and that would have probably gotten him far enough, but it's the depth of emotions and introspection that add a glimmering light to what the Baton Rouge teenager may end up becoming.

Pitchfork

August 15, 2017

YoungBoy Never Broke Again Review



The teenage Baton Rouge rapper's latest mixtape is an intense and emotional collection about finding new power in freedom. His versatility and charisma are shaping a style that's all his own.

he first thing to know about [YoungBoy Never Broke Again](#), or NBA YoungBoy, is that he does most of his talking in verse. The teenage rapper from Baton Rouge is quiet outside his raps, which teem with pent-up aggression and anxiety. Because of this, many songs read like journal entries. He spills his guts in a grisly drawl still coated in a nasally boyish rasp, constantly negotiating the terms of innocence and indecency. When he was 4 years old, he broke his neck play-wrestling, and he still has scars on his face from the brace that held his head up while he healed. After dropping out of school in 9th grade, YoungBoy turned to crime, and was booked for robbery. This path escalated quickly last year when he was arrested on two counts of attempted first-degree murder, later pleading down to aggravated assault with a firearm. The murder charge came just as he was gaining traction with *38 Baby*, a singsongy mixtape of cold pronouncements from a kid resigned to the violent cycle that governs his city's rap scene.

A week after his release from jail, YoungBoy shared "Untouchable," a post-prison screed of resilience and prosperity. "I didn't really mean untouchable because you are touchable," he [explained](#). "The only thing stopping me is jail or death now. Either you're going to see me on the sideline or you're gonna come get rid of us." YoungBoy seems cognizant of how real the latter threat is, for the video opens with an urgent FaceTime advisory from [Meek Mill](#): "You gotta move or you gon' die." Now free and ready to realize his promise, he's growing sharper, flowing effortlessly. YoungBoy's new mixtape, *AI YoungBoy*, is an intense and emotional collection about finding new power in freedom, dedicating oneself to craft as a means of escape, enduring betrayal, and having a complicated relationship with home and the people searching for meaning there. He wants out, but the prospect of a shootout is still constantly lurking.

YoungBoy is primarily influenced by late Trill Entertainment wunderkind Lil Phat, a 19-year-old rapper killed in a murder-for-hire plot outside a Georgia hospital waiting for his daughter to be born. YoungBoy isn't unlike Lil Phat; both Baton Rouge-born teenage shooters were implicated in robberies as juveniles, and rapped about [juuging](#) as a means to feed broken families. But retaliatory violence and real talk are far more focal to YoungBoy's outlook. In this respect, he is a disciple of Boosie Badazz and [Kevin Gates](#), Baton Rouge cult heroes with rap sheets who relive street life through gritted teeth. None are wordsmiths, but they are all illustrators, and YoungBoy can be nearly as visceral. He sometimes embodies one or the other, on songs like "Murda Gang" and "Ride on Em," which channel their respective energies. Then there's the croaking "Left Hand Right Hand," his first clear-cut hit, which clearly embodies Gates.

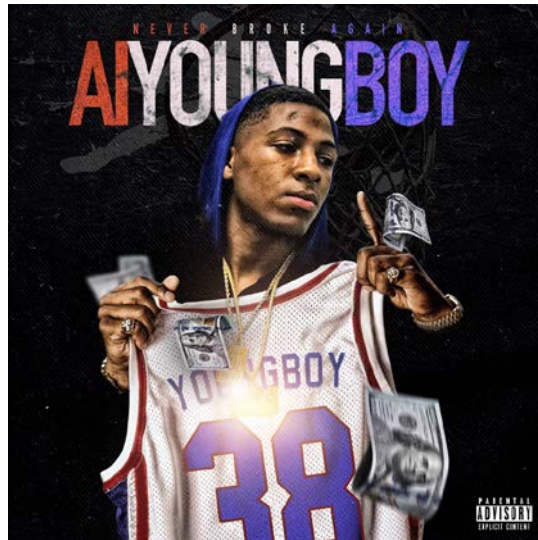
These are the voices that inform YoungBoy's, but he has a style and charisma all his own. His early work was less defined and somewhat limited in tone, but on *AI YoungBoy* he evolves as a writer and rapper, and he begins to realize his versatility. He refuses to mold himself in the image of any one artist (he once rapped, "I ain't never had a role model, watched [Chief Keef](#) growing up"), and here he mixes spacey outsider trap and local country blues. He is as comfortable flexing in his shoot 'em ups and he is decompressing in his half-ballads ("No. 9," "Twilight").

There is a remorselessness to YoungBoy's murder threats that can be chilling (especially given his circumstances), but he has a softer side that complicates him. "Gotta keep my head above water, gotta make it through/I do this shit for my momma and my lil brother too," he raps on "Untouchable." Then there are heart-stopping admissions like this one on "Graffiti": "You know I got money but I'm in a hole/Scared I'ma die when I'm out on the road." These moving flashes of accountability and paranoia reveal a teenager indoctrinated by the streets, seeking an escape hatch. In this light, the chest-puffing "No Smoke" and the bouncy, gun-brandishing romp "GG" come off as necessary warnings and preemptive strikes, measures taken in self-defense. All at once, his music communicates the ways hood masculinity corrupts and guards black boys.

Pitchfork

August 7, 2017

YoungBoy Never Broke Again “Wat Chu Gone Do” [ft. Peewee Longway]



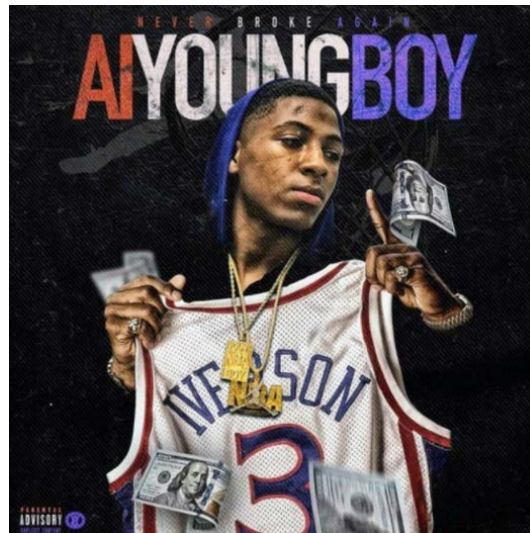
YoungBoy Never Broke Again is a teen rapper from Baton Rouge who's been on a tear as of late. Over the last few months he's sounded relentless on a series of searing singles, culminating in a new mixtape, *AI Youngboy*. "Wat Chu Gone Do," a highlight from the tape, is a tense rap confessional, and on it, Youngboy sounds both vulnerable and resilient.

He raps over a bluesy piano lick and a gospel chorus cooing in the background, a serene trap backdrop for such an edgy song. Throughout "Wat Chu Gone Do," Youngboy narrates grave situations that find him with his back to the wall. "What chu you gon' do mom's late for the rent? /What chu gon' do if that boy try to flex?" he presses on the chorus, sounding like he's daring anyone to step into his shoes. His drawl dances with a natural urgency, his hop-scotching flow bouncing all the way through the track. The more-established Atlanta emcee Peewee Longway barks out his own verse for a break in the action, but Youngboy swoops back in, refusing to let the beat go on without his presence.



August 7, 2017

20 of the Best Lyrics From YoungBoy Never Broke Again's 'AI YoungBoy' Mixtape



Louisiana has been a breeding ground for street-wise spitters with perspectives of war-torn veterans for years, with the likes of The Hot Boys, Boosie BadAzz and Kevin Gates, among others, making a name out of the bayou. Among the more recent prospects to come to prominence out of the state is [YoungBoy Never Broke Again](#), a teenage rhyme animal that has created a considerable amount of buzz for himself in the face of controversy and turmoil. Born Kentrell DeSean Gaulden in Baton Rouge, La., the ninth grade dropout was pinched for robbery and sent to a youth detention center, which is where he would write the majority of the material for his 2015 debut, *Life Before Fame*.

Life Before Fame, released under the moniker NBA YoungBoy, was an introduction to the delinquent-turned-rapper's gritty sensibility and impassioned deliver, but it would be his 2016 project, *38 Baby*, that would increase his profile. Boasting features from fellow Baton Rouge reps Boosie BadAzz and Kevin Gates, *38 Baby* was touted as a coming out party for NBA YoungBoy, however, [his 2016 arrest](#) in connection to a drive-by shooting in his hometown of Baton Rouge would be an unforeseen roadblock that kept him from fully capitalizing on his momentum.

In May, he posted bail and [was released from jail](#), embracing a name change to YoungBoy Never Broke Again to go along with his new lease on life. Now, the young phenom looks to press forward despite the charges looming over his head with his latest project, *AI YoungBoy*. Featuring appearances from Yo Gotti and PeeWee Longway, *AI YoungBoy* finds YoungBoy Never Broke Again doing most of the heavy lifting, crafting a body of work that proves that his time behind bars has done little to diminish his hunger. With the project in rotation, XXL showcases 20 of the best lyrics from *AI YoungBoy* that stand out from the rest.

“Trappin”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“They gave up on a nigga you know what I mean/Since younger than this I been chasing my dreams/On XXL, but not the magazine/Locked in that cell missed allot of things/Thinkin’ bout to take over the game/I gotta make my way outta the ring/My heart full of hatred, my chest full of pain”

“Trappin”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“I know that my baby mamas fed up with/I know that my niggas steppin’ with me/You dissin’ but know you ain’t fuckin’ with me/You niggas need to try to catch up with me/We confiscating money and stackin’/You niggas ain’t bout it, y’all all actors/You know that my niggas they still trappin’/You run up on me bitch we all clappin’”

“Wat Chu Gone Do”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again Featuring PeeWee Longway

“Take something from me we gon’ cut off his fingers/Reach for my chain then get hit with the glizzy/Me and my niggas we come from the trenches/Walkin’ in public we strapped with extensions/Need more than that hoe for to catch me lil nigga/You know we ain’t puttin’ our trust in these bitches” – YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“Wat Chu Gone Do”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again Featuring PeeWee Longway

“What chu gon’ do when they hop out with rugers/Dope don’t cut nigga hollywood movies/John Wick shooter cut your body like Krueger/NBA Youngboy we come threw recruiting/Shooter, shoot the shooter run in your matehuala/Longway Ricky ruler stendo sticks still in school/Young gorilla work the vacuum seal, sell a brick of bew what chu gon’ do?” – PeeWee Longway

“No Smoke”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“Drop one, one down and we gone kill em all/Shoot you and yo boy and whoever around/Try get away and we gone run em down/He get back up Ben knocking him down/When you say my name nigga be specific/You know how we living that ain’t how you living/If you go to tripping get hit with the glizzy/Ain’t no hesitation, we bring it to you bitches”

“Ride on Em”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“You know me you know that I’m bout whateva/You want with me thats a bet it could go to that level/Ain’t squashing nothing bitch is up just had a talk with the devil/The only way this shit gone end you getting hit with that metal”

“Ride on Em”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“These niggas making diss songs come on now boy be real/AI Youngboy be the reason that yo dawg killed/I speak this shit I live this shit we do this shit for real/Book you for a show and get yo stupid ass zipped for real/These niggas shot my gramma house up with a 22/Spin through that wood tell them people what I did to you/Biggie and Lil Q ran down on em/Special delivery for youngboy and went to firing on ‘em”

“Dark Into Light”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again Featuring Yo Gotti

“Keep a 30 on me, Curry/In your hood I ain’t worried/Niggas know I’m with the shits/Plug never wanted to serve me/I’m a threat to the record labels cause I give the young niggas game/Hell yell nigga all my team got way more money than fame” – Yo Gotti

“No. 9”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“My No. 9, love it when you got it on/Baby you so hot, all these diamonds cool you down/Got a lot of guap every day I walk around/Baby girl I’m up, ask ‘em how I put it down”

“Untouchable”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“Dropped out of school to chase my dream, I had some for to prove/I put my all in this shit, man I can’t fuckin’ lose/They smile up in my face but they don’t know what I been through/Whole lotta nights I went to sleep and I ain’t had no food/But now I’m up and I’m just thinking about my next move/Gotta keep my head above water, gotta make it through”

“Untouchable”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“Now that I made it, ain’t none the same it all changed/When I’m in public people see me they screaming my name/Just a few days ago I was locked up in them chains/Now I’m in back of the Maybach with a lot of bands/I ain’t worry ‘bout ‘em dissin’ naw, I don’t hear a thing they sayin’/This for sons in Montana and can’t forget [Lil Ben]/I never jeopardize this and lose it all again/This for that North, 38 baby, they know I ain’t playing”

“Left Hand Right Hand”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“Still move the wheel with my knee while I count up bands/I show love and affection to all my fans/I got Ferragamo holding up my pants/I turn up on the stage while I hit my dance/I get serious when it comes to business/Don’t waste my time boy you know that I ain’t playing/I got a clique of niggas with me/We dumb, twenty hoes laying where I’m staying”

“Left Hand Right Hand”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“Straighten up my hand right after they deal/Dope ain’t come back when I whipped so I fail/Stroke got pack coming all through the mail/DP had that purp floating all through the jail/Mac and a Compaq I work off of Dell/Left and right hand I use both ‘em well/Right and the left I can use for the sprayer/Don’t get in my way, I ain’t taking a L”

“Twilight”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“Money callin’ gotta go get it, baby/Confident how I been feelin’ lately/I can not just seem to stress about our situation/I just gotta look at the bigger picture, baby/But on the upper end, I been gettin’ it in/Low lights, stacking up my ends and that’s ‘til the end/I done cut off all my friends, gotta stay positive/I won’t let nobody hurt me or get me up outta here”

“Murda Gang”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“When you niggas die, the people gon’ say that we did it /You know how we living, bitch you knowing that we wit it/Catch you, you gon get it when I put one in yo’ fitted/I’m sick as anesthetic, bitch, you knowing how we living”

“Have You Ever”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“Pull up in that lamb, jump out like wazzam?/Let me be there for you baby, let me make you laugh/I won’t hide a thing, I’m a show you who I am/I won’t address you off your past you know I don’t give a damn/You say you got a boyfriend, well let me be your friend/Baby matter fact, let me be your helping hand/I ain’t tryna get up in your business baby girl, I’m just saying/Maybe I can treat you way better than your man”

“Graffiti”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“I get on my knees and I pray on my own/Thanking the lord that I’m here, I ain’t gone/I pray the judge that Q come home/Choppa boy feel he all alone/You know I got money but I’m in a hole/Scared I’m a die when I’m out on the road/Don’t know how I’m feelin’, don’t know what I’m on/All they wanna do is ask for a loan”

“GG”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“If you think I fuck with that lil hoe, then you a fool/I ain’t got no education, I dropped out of school/No security with me so I’m strapped up with that tool/Try to take my jewelry off and you gon’ make the news/Cuban links around my neck, it cost me 22/Audemar Piguët, coulda went and bought a school/Went to Neiman Marcus for my pants and my shoes bitch/Five thousands dollars, what I paid for the whole fit”

“Dedicated”

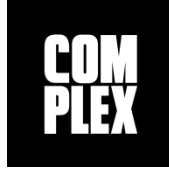
YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“Shit movin’ fast remember it was movin’ slow/As a yungin’ I been jumped up off that porch/Don’t need no lecture you just need what you know/Half of ticket in deposits the same day I came home/Yungin’ on the block with a pole, tryna get some dough/Seen OGs die, shid, he ain’t tryna go/A couple of niggas tried him he ain’t never let it go/Revenge on them niggas, shid I can say bout four”

“Dedicated”

YoungBoy Never Broke Again

“They think that I act like a star/They think I’m stuck up I be chillin’/Think the Lord that I’m far, it’s so many people dead/Down forever, face peeling/They really think that I got millions/I ain’t even make a killing/I know they wish they can kill me”



August 10, 2017

Bout to Blow: 10 Dope New Songs You Should Be Hearing Everywhere Soon

YoungBoy Never Broke Again "Left Hand Right Hand"



Welcome to the August edition of [Bout to Blow](#). This column has two goals:

1. To use the many tools available today to get some idea as to which songs are really bubbling with "the people"—in other words, to insert some science into the process.
2. To contextualize that information, because numbers in a vacuum will have you thinking an anonymous rapper dropped onto a stellar track was hip-hop's next big rap star when he was more like an empty, tattooed vehicle for a dope beat and a hook.

The post is obviously intended to be somewhat predictive. There's also an element of cheerleading, too. Many of these songs might be flourishing in certain markets and could use wider exposure. They're tracks where the metrics suggest some forward momentum, even if the clubs and radio play don't reflect that. After a harsh decision-making process, for July we narrowed a long list down to the 10 best records you have to know.

For fans of YoungBoy Never Broke Again (formerly NBA YoungBoy) this may be a hard sell at first. Musically it's more reminiscent of the sound Kevin Gates tackled on his 2016 album *Islah* than the mix of Baton Rouge country rap tunes and reflective rap ballads that make up most of YB's strong new tape *AI YoungBoy*. But it's not hard to imagine this record—like "2 Phones" before it—breaking through given the right push. It's not the most human moment on the tape, but it does stand apart as an aggressive club hit.

mass appeal

August 14, 2017

OPEN SPACE: YOUNGBOY NEVER BROKE AGAIN



You know you're living life on the edge when 21 Savage tells you to put the chopper away.

That's one of the situations Baton Rouge rapper YoungBoy Never Broke Again describes during the latest episode of MASS APPEAL's Open Space. The MC sat with us to discuss his relationship with his rap mentors ([21 included](#)), the effects of jail on his life and what fuels his admiration for Kendrick Lamar.

What fascinates many people about YoungBoy is how aware he is of his precarious practices. He included [a clip of Meek Mill](#) expressing his concern for him at the start of the video for "[Untouchable](#)" and his recent songs like "[No Smoke](#)" don't hide the fact that he's on constant alert.

In the Open Space interview, he explains how fellow Louisiana standouts Kevin Gates and Boosie Badazz have helped him contend with these realities. "Gates, he told me just keep working. Boosie, he showed me some things that you might not want to hear about," YoungBoy says.

YoungBoy recently dropped his [AI YoungBoy](#) mixtape. Watch his "Open Space" above.



February 1, 2017

YoungBoy Never Broke Again Says He's Finding Himself in First Interview From Prison



Early on the morning of Nov. 28, 2016, rising Baton Rouge rapper NBA YoungBoy, who now goes by YoungBoy Never Broke Again, was at a venue in Austin, Texas where he was set to perform when local authorities swarmed his crew and arrested multiple members. He was extradited to his hometown of Baton Rouge soon after, where he was then charged with two counts of attempted first-degree murder. His bond was set at \$200,000, but he's also got a hold from juvenile court, so paying bail wouldn't necessarily do much good.

In the days that followed, the Baton Rouge Police Department released a report claiming YoungBoy, born Kentrell DeSean Gaulden, was involved in a drive-by shooting that cops believe was connected to a larger string of incidents in the area. The rapper was accused of firing a gun multiple times on the 2000 block of Kentucky Street, and police say he was with three other people in the car, including the driver, a juvenile. During the shooting, one of the passengers was allegedly shot in the neck.

YoungBoy, age 17, was one of the hottest rappers to gain widespread attention in 2016 after releasing his 38 Baby mixtape in October. The 14-track project featured collaborations with the likes of Kevin Gates, Boosie BadAzz and songs like "I Ain't Hiding" and "Hell and Back." Rumors quickly swirled that he was signed to Atlantic, though nothing was ever confirmed, and co-signs from Atlanta rap stars like 21 Savage and Young Thug came soon after. Considering he only dropped his debut mixtape, *Life Before Fame*, in 2015, it was a rapid ascent for the young rapper, and one that didn't come without bumps. After dropping out of the ninth grade and getting arrested for robbery, he was sent to a juvenile detention center in Tallulah, La., where he wrote most of that debut project.

In Baton Rouge, kids can be tried as adults starting at age 17. So now YoungBoy sits in a cell in East Baton Rouge Parish Prison awaiting his Feb. 22 court date. He believes he'll be set free that day.

On Jan. 31, XXL spoke to YoungBoy Never Broke Again over the phone about what he's been doing in jail, what he plans to do when he gets out and what he's learned from all this. These are excerpts from that conversation.

XXL: Are you writing raps in jail?

YoungBoy Never Broke Again: *Yeah, every two days.*

You've been putting out some new music while you're locked up. How do you get that stuff out?

Montana [the head of Never Broke Again Records]. FeeBanks [YoungBoy's manager and head of Good Money Global Management] be getting a lot of shit done for me. I just tell Montana what song [I want to put out].

A lot of high-profile artists from Louisiana have gotten locked up, whether it's Kevin Gates or Boosie BadAzz. Do you feel like the police target rappers down there?

I don't think they really target, but if you got a name, they know who you is. You do something, they gonna come get you, and whoever you're with and whatever they do, you're accountable for it just because you got the biggest name. That's how that shit go.

I noticed on Spotify you had to change your name to YoungBoy Never Broke Again. Why?

Yeah, NBA gonna be on my ass behind that shit, I guess.

Have they reached out to you?

I don't know. Fee wanted to do it the right way with no interference, so we did it anyway. I'm still NBA Youngboy.

There's also a video of an apparent collab with you and Kodak. When did you record that?

I ain't never record no song with Kodak. I don't know what Fee got going on with verses that I did, but I ain't never record no song with Kodak.

Who are some rappers you're trying to work with?

I want to do a song with Nicki [Minaj] or Eminem or some shit. I ain't no big fan of rappers, I don't give a fuck about that shit.

Gates and Boosie were both on your project 38 Baby. How'd you get them on there?

I saw Boosie in Cali at a condo of a friend. Gates, that shit was done through Fee.

Who are some people that have reached out to you while you were locked up?

I be talking to 21 [Savage], that's it. I fuck with him on some personal shit. He's all I really be talking to. Other rappers really don't fuck with me. I don't give a fuck how much they post me, they don't fuck with me.

What's something you want to change about your life when you get out?

I want to change my image up. They should know what I'm like by now, they should know how we live, so I don't really gotta flash guns or none of that shit. I got children, I got a lotta bigger things to look forward to, a career. That's all that really matters. I want to make better music, though. Better than what I've been making.

When you got locked up, your Instagram got wiped of all the pictures you had with guns.

Yeah, positive energy.

Do you feel like all those pictures you'd put up with guns made you a little hot with the police?

Shit, yeah. When I was tricking out my SUV, nigga asked me, "Where the guns at from the pictures and shit?" I didn't respond after that shit, but the guns in the car were legal, they were in my driver's name because my driver likes firearms.

What are your plans when you get out?

I want to get a No. 1 single, a No. 1 album. That's what I'm shooting for now.

Do you write all your raps down with pen and pad?

Yeah, but the whole 38 Baby, the only song that was written on that mixtape was "38 Baby." Every other song from there was freestyled. I'd go in the booth, do four bars, listen to it, aight bet, punch in, let me do this. I'd do another four bars or eight bars and ask Montana or Fee, "You like that shit?" Take it out, do it over, keep going until I get that shit done.

When you come up with your raps, what are you thinking about?

I wake up seven or eight in the morning and just smoke and write. It'll be quiet as a bitch, I'll walk off or some shit. Shit just be coming to me. I really just rap about how I be feeling, the shit I be speaking about I done went through or I'm going to do.

Where do you record in Baton Rouge?

I record in Stroke Studio or Gus Studio.

What's your least favorite part of being a rapper?

I don't know. I ain't really got no least favorite part because I always wanted this shit. I can't complain about nothing. I wanted this shit since I was little. I got it, it ain't what it seems. That's all I could really say.

What have you been doing inside to stay busy?

Cooling. I don't really talk that much. I just watch and observe. I don't really trust nobody. I'm cool with some of the niggas though. I just be cooling, reading.

What are you reading these days?

One Heartbeat Away. It's about when you die. What you gon' do?

What do you want your music to do for people?

Better their situation from it. I can't really say. Learn from it, I guess.

Who are some producers you want to work with that you haven't yet?

I want to work with Young Chop. I like Go Grizzly. Ain't nobody really. Dubba-AA be having some shit.

When you got locked up for this, how'd you feel?

I felt crazy. I thought I'd be out before this. But I've been knew this day was gonna come at some point. Can't run forever. I be prepared. A lotta shit make you mad though.

Is there anything that keeps your spirit up in there?

Yeah, fan letters and hearing how much of an impact my music has. The fact that I'm in here and what it should look like when I get out, from what I hear I guess I'm a bigger artist now, so I can't wait to see how that shit is when I walk out the gate.

How many fan letters have you gotten in there?

Over 500. I appreciate them.

Do you have a tape you want to drop when you get out?

If there's one song you've made so far that's most important to you, what would it be?

"Gravity." I had freestyled that song in Stroke Studio. I had everybody in that bitch, man I couldn't fucking think of nothing. So I sat down where they couldn't see me, smoking in the booth like, Lord, please let me do this song. When I stood up, shit... I came on that bitch and put my feelings into it.

What's been the scariest moment of your life so far?

I done been through a lot of shit. Scariest moment, shit... this. This right here. Not knowing if I'm gonna lose my career or not, if I'm gonna be in here. I'm behind here, I don't feel how they feel out there. They could be telling me anything, they could be telling me I'm coming home knowing I'm finna sit in this bitch for five years. I'd come out and be a nobody. It's up to me to keep the faith because I know they ain't gon' tell me. I don't do shit but pray and read and observe. That's all I could do. I'm good though, stay strong through anything that happen.

You consider yourself religious or spiritual?

I don't know what to call it, I believe in God though. I don't think the same as no 17-year-old. I got my way of thinking.

You were raised by your grandmother. Where were your parents?

My daddy been in jail. My momma, we got a good relationship. I seen her every day, that's how I want it to be, that's how I chose it to be. But my grandmother passed away, so shit... so long from there.

So you chose to live with your grandmother instead of your mother?

Yeah, my grandmother from the North. I'm from the North.

Why did you decide to move in with your grandmother instead of your mother?

Because my momma stayed in Scotlandville [in Baton Rouge] on the avenues, that's at least 20 minutes from where my grandma stay. My grandma used to spoil me and shit. I used to get my weight over there. I used to get my ass whooped. My sister used to beat me up when I was little. I used to hate being around any girl.

How many siblings you got?

Older sister and one little brother.

Growing up, was there somebody that really had a big influence on you?

Music. I think music made me who I am. Music taught me what was gutter and what wasn't. Music taught me how to live. I know right from wrong.

Lil Phat is your biggest influence. What are some of your favorite songs by him?

I like all of 'em. I like "It Won't Be Long."

How do you feel about the rap scene in Baton Rouge?

Fuck rappers. Fuck Baton Rouge rappers, Fuck every rapper but rappers who fuck with me.

Do you feel like you have a lot of support in your hometown?

Yeah, I got a lot of hatred too. A lotta niggas wanna be like me, a lotta niggas diss me, lotta niggas talk shit and then wanna rap like me, be like me and listen to my music. That ain't how that shit go. Bitch ass nigga gotta see me though. I don't wanna talk about them niggas.

What was the moment in your life when you realized you really wanted to be a rapper?

Shit... when I was about 11 I think. I've been writing since I was 7. I wrote my first song in the first or second grade. I was on and off from there.

Do you feel like you have a responsibility as a rapper with a bigger profile in the city?

Yeah, forever proving niggas wrong. Putting my flex down.

You said rap made you who you are. Who do you feel like you are?

That's what I'm trying to find out now. This time is to find out who I really am, feel myself out.

October 4th, 2016

Meet NBA YoungBoy, Baton Rouge's Rawest New Rapper



Water hung in the air, thick and suffocating, on a humid August day in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where, two weeks prior, floods rose up to claim lives and property in a historic natural disaster. The flood waters were gone, but evidence of the destruction was everywhere on a residential street on the east side of the city: large piles of drywall, wood, and carpeting had been pushed to the curb, obscuring the low-slung houses behind them.

NBA YoungBoy, Baton Rouge's most promising rapper, was a short drive away on a quiet street just outside the reach of the flooding, where he lives with his friend KK. In the kitchen, KK answered calls on two different phones while another friend, Lil Ben, watched YoungBoy's recently released video for "What I Was Taught" on a phone attached to a portable speaker. The 16-year-old artist's wiry frame suddenly appeared from the hallway at the other end of the house, just in time to rap along to the closing bar of his verse, as he pumped his arms up and down: Finna be one of the dumbest in town/ Got the major labels calling my phone.

YoungBoy, born Kentrell DeSean Gaulden, was raised by his grandmother in north Baton Rouge. "It was hard but fun," he says of his early childhood. "We had to make it fun." At the age of 4, YoungBoy broke his neck in a wrestling accident, and three deep scars still mark his forehead from wearing a halo brace. When his grandmother passed away a few years ago, YoungBoy was left to fend for himself. He dropped out of school in the 9th grade and, shortly after, was arrested for robbery. "I had been rapping, but I used to hide that shit," he remembers. "I was scared, not for sure 'bout myself, playing with my craft." During his six-month sentence in a juvenile detention center in Tallulah, Louisiana, he wrote song after song for what would later become his first mixtape, *Life Before Fame*, released in 2015.



In person, YoungBoy uses words sparingly, saying only what's needed to get his point across. "I'm quiet," he explained. "My vibe gets killed fast." But in his music, he puts his whole life out in the open. Like B.G. and Boosie before him, YoungBoy deals in reality rather than elaborate metaphor, treating the sinister piano melodies and pounding bass patterns that he raps over as his confessional. On "Cross Me," a track from his *Mind of a Menace 2* mixtape, he offers a line about his father, who's been incarcerated for much of his life: On my heart, that's on my soul, I won't tell no lies/ Uncle told now my Daddy doin' 55.

Loyalty is extremely important to YoungBoy, and it's easily the most consistent theme across the four projects that he's released. "Without loyalty, you won't accomplish anything," he told me. "Everything will be salty." The Baton Rouge he raps about is dark and treacherous, a city where no one's business stays secret and betrayal lurks around every corner. YoungBoy brings this environment to life, alternating between gruff-voiced street storytelling and melodic hooks heaved from his chest. His autobiographical style has earned him a rapidly growing fan base in the South and comparisons to his city's most recent national star, Kevin Gates. But, despite the fact that he's rapped over multiple instrumentals from Gates's catalogue, the only influence that YoungBoy claims is Lil Phat, a lesser-known hero of Baton Rouge rap, who was gunned down in 2012 at the age of 20.

Within minutes of my arrival at KK's house, YoungBoy was headed out the door to meet up with the rest of the Never Broke Again crew, a group of young men that he grew up with and refers to as his brothers. Much of the day was spent this way: decisions were made in the moment and no location or idea lasted too long. The one constant was the presence of his NBA comrades, who surround him at all times like a coat of protective armor. "I got to see Lil Ben, I got to see 33. Everyday," he explained. "I make sure they know all of us. I ain't gon' overshadow nobody."

YoungBoy is the sole rapper in his circle, but his friends are recurring characters in his songs, and they stand beside him in each of his music videos, heavily armed, aiming their weapons at the camera. When asked about the Glock with a 30-round clip that remained half-tucked into his jeans all day, YoungBoy said that it was "for protection." But he said he isn't afraid of the problems that might come with fame or wealth. "The only thing that scares me is dying," he said, calling that something more likely to happen in Baton Rouge than anywhere else his music might take him.

The group had just gotten back from Los Angeles, where YoungBoy was meeting with record labels, and they were already itching to go back. Instagram videos from the trip show the young men walking the Venice Beach boardwalk, blasting his latest songs for baffled Uber drivers, and splurging on medical weed from the dispensary. YoungBoy said he is currently planning a permanent move to the West Coast — but only if he can bring his brothers with him.



April 13, 2017

Watch YoungBoy Never Broke Again Freestyle



At age 17, YoungBoy Never Broke Again was one of the hottest young rappers in hip-hop until misfortune struck. The Baton Rouge native and multiple members of his crew were arrested before a concert in Austin, Texas on Nov. 28, 2016. He was extradited to his hometown of Baton Rouge and later charged with two counts of attempted first-degree murder. His bond was set at \$200,000, and details of YoungBoy's case were later released by the Baton Rouge Police Department.

Before YoungBoy, born Kentrell DeSean Gauden, went to prison, he stopped by XXL to deliver an a cappella freestyle. The video is one of the last he shot before he went to jail. "Keep your head up and focus/That's what Monique told me," he raps. Peep the freestyle below.

After releasing his 38 Baby mixtape in October of 2016, YoungBoy gained national exposure. The 14-track project featured guest verses from Kevin Gates, Boosie BadAzz and standout songs like the title track, "I Ain't Hiding" and "Hell and Back." Major labels were chomping at the bit to sign the promising upstart, coining him as the next big star coming out of B.R.

Since dropping his debut mixtape, Life Before Fame, in 2015 and projects such as Mind of a Menace, Mind of a Menace 2 and 3 plus Before I Go Reloaded, YoungBoy Never Broke Again has built himself a cult following and is one of the most talented new artists right now.

XXL spoke to him while he was in jail about what he plans to do when he gets out and what he's learned from his situation. Since he's been locked up, he's released the video for "Win or Lose" off the Mind of a Menace 2 mixtape plus "Too Much" and "Draco."

Peep the new freestyle below and spin NBA's Mind of a Menace 3 Reloaded mixtape as well featuring a couple new tracks.



October 27, 2016

Premiere: Stream NBA Youngboy's New '38 Baby' Project



Baton Rouge rapper NBA Youngboy is blowing up and this is only the beginning. Behind his street hit, "38 Baby," the 17-year-old rapper breaks out on Thursday with the official debut of his new mixtape of the same name. The project is a big step forward for Youngboy, and includes from Kevin Gates, Boosie Badazz, and more.

Youngboy is fresh to the scene, as he not only brings a distinct realness, but a dynamic versatility where he's able to both rap and carry catchy melodies throughout his songs. The young rapper has already built up a solid fanbase through his previous releases and that will surely only continue to grow as his popularity blossoms. There's not telling how far NBA Youngboy can take this, but he's surely off to a good start. You can stream the project below, and also watch his brand new video for the song "Hell and Back."

YOUNGBOY

NEVER BROKE AGAIN

Press Report 2017

Noisey (Online)

- [NBA YoungBoy Is Incisive, Introspective, and Next in Line for Greatness](#) (August 19, 2017)

Noisey Beats 1 Radio (Online)

- [Noisey Beats 1: NBA YoungBoy, Jim-E Stack, and More](#) (August 11, 2017)

Pitchfork (Online)

- [Youngboy Never Broke Again Review](#) (August 15, 2017)

Mass Appeal (Online)

- [Open Space](#) (August 14, 2017)

Genius (Online)

- [NBA Youngboy "Untouchable" Official Lyrics & Meaning | Verified](#) (August 10, 2017)

Complex (Online)

- [Bout to Blow: 10 Dope New Songs You Should Be Hearing Everywhere Soon](#) (August 10, 2017)

Fader (Online)

- [11 Songs You Need In Your Life This Week](#) (August 8, 2017)

XXL (Online)

- [20 of the Best Lyrics From YoungBoy Never Broke Again's 'AI YoungBoy' Mixtape](#) (August 7, 2017)

Pitchfork (Online)

- ["Wat Chu Gone Do" \[ft. Peewee Longway\] Review](#) (August 7, 2017)

XXL (Online)

- [Watch YoungBoy Never Broke Again Freestyle](#) (April 13, 2017)

XXL (Online)

- [YoungBoy Never Broke Again Says He's Finding Himself in First Interview From Prison](#) (February 1, 2017)

Complex (Online)

- [Premiere: Stream NBA Youngboy's New '38 Baby' Project](#) (October 27, 2016)

Fader (Online)

- [Meet NBA YoungBoy, Baton Rouge's Rawest New Rapper While labels call, he's keeping his friends close.](#) (October 4, 2016)

DJ Smallz Eyes 2 (Online/video)

- [NBA YoungBoy Decodes "NBA Live" Mixtape Title and What To Expect](#) (August 4, 2016)