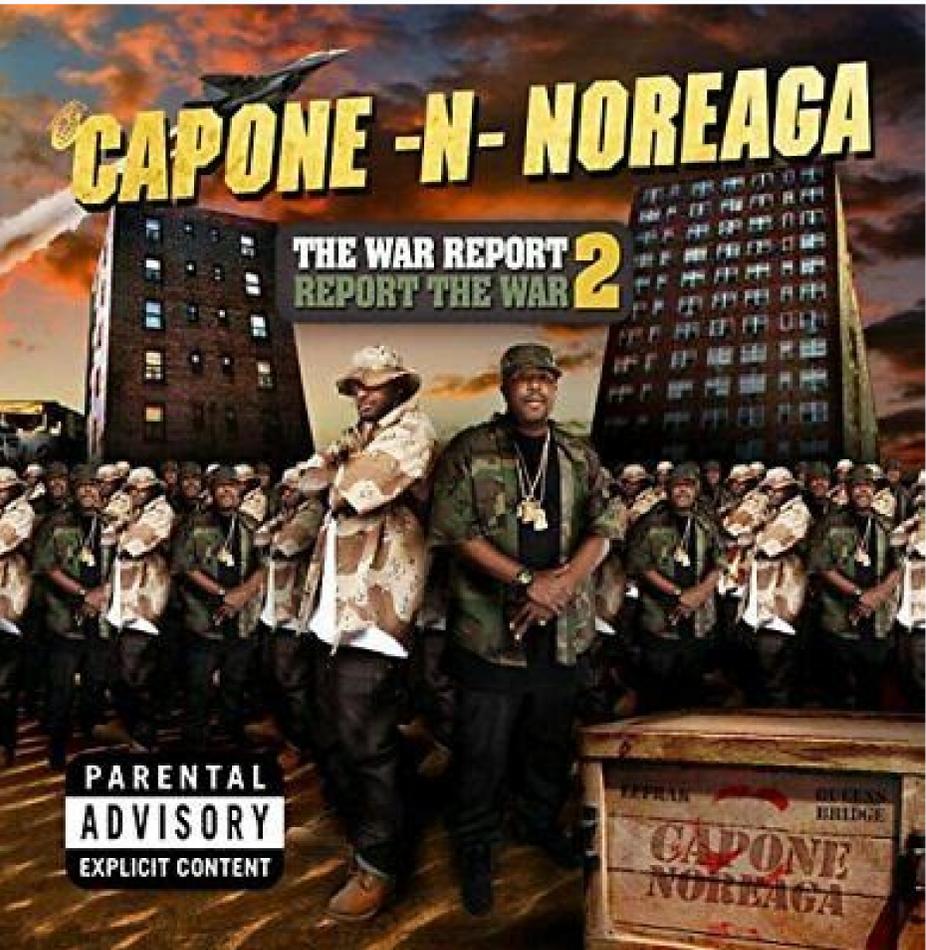
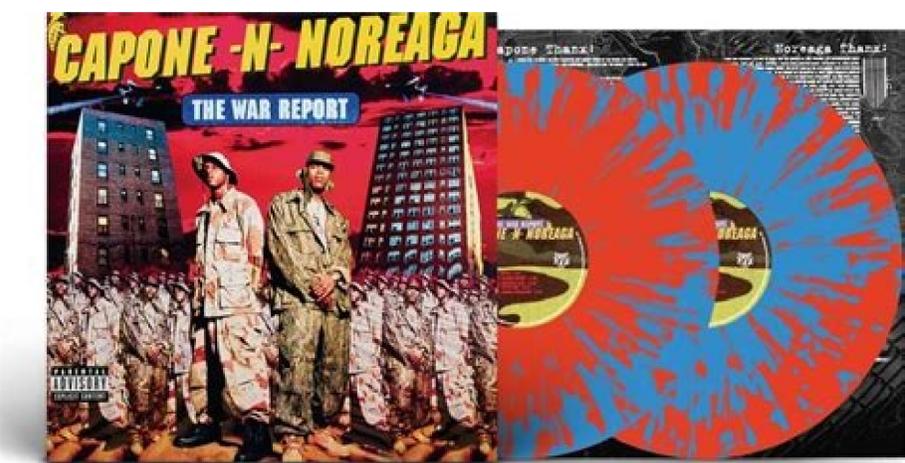


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Hailing from Queens, New York, Capone and Noreaga first met while both serving time in prison. Upon their release, the duo hit the studio, concocting their debut album, "The War Report," and launching Capone-N-Noreaga in 1997. The now cult-classic, featured strong underground overtones and served as a turning point in Hip Hop, bringing a more hardcore sound and is credited for reviving East Coast Hip Hop and signaling a return to realistic, gritty, street aesthetics. Despite the projects underground appeal, it also found massive commercial success. Lead by singles, "L.A.", "L.A.", "T.O.N.Y. (Top of New York)", "Closer," and "Illegal Life," "The War Report" has since been certified Gold by the RIAA and continues to garner spins on radio stations around the globe. Thanks to N.O.R.E.'s unorthodox lyrical delivery and Capone's streetwise slang and Five Percenter references, Capone-N-Noreaga brought new life into the Gangsta Rap subgenre, becoming an instant underground phenomenon, and making them both a household name within the hardcore Hip Hop community. Topping out at #21 on the Billboard 200 and #4 on the Billboard Top R&B/Hip Hop albums chart, "The War Report," continues to prove itself as a must-have amongst record collectors. This year, as part of Tommy Boy's 40th anniversary celebration, this classic project will be reissued as a limited, colored vinyl release that will for sure be a must-have for golden era Hip Hop heads. No part of this site, recordstoreday.com, may be reproduced in whole or in part in any manner without the permission of Record Store Day. For participation and sponsorship opportunities, please email information@recordstoreday.com Sei sei un negozio di dischi o un brand e vuoi partecipare al Record Store Day manda una mail a: information@recordstoreday.com Copyright © RECORD STORE DAY Website Platform by cura di Broadtime Happy 25th Anniversary to Capone-N-Noreaga's debut album The War Report, originally released June 17, 1997. Bursting onto the scene amidst a storm of controversy, the Queens-bred duo of Kiam Holley (Capone) and Victor Santiago, Jr. (Noreaga) helped break New York City's silence 25 years ago, during the bicoastal turf war between some of rap's most prominent artists. During the years when the beef seared over low flames, different contingents of the West Coast hip-hop scene—including notorious Death Row Records executive Suge Knight—stepped in front of microphones to offer opinions on big-name NYC-based artists, while voicing frustration with New York radio's perceived bias against artists on the opposite coast. "Y'all don't love us?" surveyed then Death Row Recording artist Snoop Dogg to a sneering crowd at the inaugural Source Music Awards held in New York City in 1995. Apparently not receiving the desired response, Snoop responded to what he felt was the prejudice of the crowd in attendance, and the East Coast consumer base in general, with "New York, New York," the lead single from close affiliates and label mates Tha Dogg Pound's debut LP Dogg Food (1995). With the echoes of the collapsed New York City skyscrapers kicked over in the video proving enough to wake a sleeping giant, the overt imagery drew more than a subliminal response from a combat ready squad, prepared to rep for the Big Apple. Stamped by fellow Queens natives Mobb Deep and accompanied by a familiar face from earlier in the decade, The Intelligent Hoodlum (a.k.a. Tragedy), the street certified band of brothers known as Capone-N-Noreaga were commissioned to frontline warfare as defenders of hip-hop's birthplace. Hailing from separate sections of the New York City borough that produced hip-hop pioneers Run-DMC, LL Cool J, and Kool G Rap, Capone and Noreaga reaped the benefits of being mentored by the former Super Kid and youngest member of the legendary Juice Crew. The new group, with their names reflecting hip-hop's fascination with the criminal underworld and rhymes having a Middle Eastern aura, entered the game with a musical savvy, originality, and penitentiary pedigree that stood out amongst the genre's lyrical adaptations of Martin Scorsese films. Dubbing their Queens neighborhoods Lefrak City as Iraq and Queensbridge as Kuwait, Capone and Noreaga—shortened to CNN—interrupted our regularly scheduled programming to offer The War Report in 1997, with special embedded correspondence from Tragedy whose name now had the extension of Khadafi, a reference to the former leader of Libya, Muammar Gaddafi. Earning a healthy buzz through their close alliance with Mobb Deep, who was represented on CNN's first two singles, "Illegal Life" and "L.A.," helped the first round picks earn a coveted spot in The Source magazine's Unsigned Hype column, before striking gold with the street anthem "T.O.N.Y. (Top of New York)" in 1996. Unlike other groups at the time who leaned toward a back-and-forth scheme that emphasized chemistry, CNN embraced a yin-and-yang dynamic, complementing each other's glaring differences. Nore's speaker box style of sporadic words sometimes seemingly thrown together, focusing more on the melodic pacing along the hard drum patterns, was balanced by Capone's strained vocals, which in the tradition of Queensbridge lyricism, expressed in great detail the intricate navigation of street lure and mastery of criminology. Tragedy seemed to sit in the most comfortable position of his own career, at the driver's seat, steering the young duo and acting as the grand architect of the entire project. He actually appeared on more songs than Capone, who returned to prison for a parole violation before the completion and release of the album. "2-5, we on a deadline, read the headline / Noreaga blast with nines / Move fakers, get ya back blown in Jamaica / lay you in the earth and curse you and ya maker." Tragedy's street wisdom interpreted the more aggressive rhymes delivered by his two protégés, particularly Noreaga, whose storytelling could get lost behind the blend of the group's theme of the war-torn Arabian Peninsula and the New York dialect influenced by the Five Percent Nation vernacular. Now the older god, Tragedy's pop-up quotables set the tone for the LP and seasoned the stew of what appeared to be the next great movement from the historic borough. With a production lineup perhaps only outdone by Nas' 1994 debut LP Illmatic, a host of the East Coast's finest stepped in to collectively reshape the sound of the Empire State. "Bloody Money" produced by EZ Elpee who came to prominence in 1995 by helping secure a hit for the Notorious B.I.G. and Junior M.A.F.I.A. with "Get Money," provided the cinematic piano chords over a vintage head-nodding drum pattern that succinctly framed Nore's autobiographical rhymes that still stand as the signature bars of his now 25-year career. Produced by Nashiem Myrick and Carlos Brody, "Driver's Seat" brilliantly works a snare drum over a sample of Willie Hutch's "Do the Thing That's Best for You" for the Imam T.H.U.G. assisted, go-hard track that deprived us of what one could only imagine would have been an epic Busta Rhymes cameo, leaving only the tease of his adlib over the fading chorus, "cut ya hand off!" The heavy-hitting collective D.I.T.C. stepped in as well, deploying Lord Finesse and Buckwild to add additional authenticity to the album. The boom bap veterans helped give the debut long player the gritty, subway station feel of Showbiz & A.G.'s Runaway Slave (1992) and the late Big L's Lifestylz ov da Poor and Dangerous (1995). The hard thumping "Neva Die Alone," produced by Buckwild, inspired one of the grimey 16's from Capone: "Play the corner close - quick to jump on the toast / dead shot - take your knot, dun and get ghost / While you talk fronting - walk fronting like a villain / soft something - so hot what a feeling." Adding yet another testament to his legacy as a top-tier producer in the annals of hip-hop, Buckwild supplied a second track, "Black Gangstas," where his brilliant sample of Gary Burton's vibraphone from "Olhos de Gato" helped Capone scribe his own novella in the tradition of Donald Goins, where he explains "Never sweat D's, I let trees blow / get bent on benches, hopping the fences / Here they come in long trenches, crack / chase 'em, lace 'em, let the chef bake 'em." Offering street narratives on life inside the walls of state penitentiaries and high rise apartments, The War Report rewound New York City back to where it had found its footing in 1993 with Black Moon's Enta da Stage and the Wu-Tang Clan's Enter the Wu-

Tang (30 Chambers), but with fresh new voices. “Thug Paradise,” presumably placed strategically in the middle of the LP as a kind of intermission, fit in as a freestyle sound that was more common on underground mixtapes of DJs like Doo Wop during the mid ’90s. The three main cast members trade fast paced bars, following Tragedy’s lead of “Yo, TV’s in the headrest, Sega entertainment / pushed the Lex Land on the way to my arraignment.” Seeming to have fun, and easily spitting noteworthy bars, the main duo follow suit as Pone comes in with “One for the money, two for villains / three for Willies holdin’ millions, four-wheelin’ with no feelings / Shit, my resident, C-B settlement / hit him on the hill, Jake wonder where the metal went.” Appearing to be home on the street cypher style set up, Nore jumps in as the closer, submitting “Move quickly, switch spots to Poughkeepsie / Black gypsy, but tell me, destiny / move quickly, stick him, he tryin’ to stick me.” From the details of shootouts and robberies conveyed through hardcore titles like “Stick You” and “Illegal Life,” to the insight of life in state greens with “Parole Violators” and Nore’s shout-out to Capone on “Live On Live Long,” CNN’s War Report recalibrated New York hip-hop from the exclusive champagne parties in Manhattan back to Queens’ dimly lit subway stops in between Flushing and Far Rockaway. The Middle Eastern theme of dubbing Lefrak as Iraq and Queensbridge as Kuwait is an unmatched literary feat that expressed inner city American crime as a bi-product of poverty and symptom of urban decay. The comparison of lower income communities to more widely discussed failed states should have raised more of an intellectual conversation on the failure of American capitalism, but it did help pave the way musically for later works like DMX’s critically acclaimed 1998 debut It’s Dark and Hell is Hot. The LP is also notable for showcasing Tragedy as one of the brilliant yet unsung minds of hip-hop, while serving as the catalyst for Noreaga’s successful solo career.At a time when hip-hop had just lost two giants, the most recent being the crowned king of New York, the city desperately sought a definitive sound, staggering between the shiny suit disco samples and fascination with the Italian Cosa Nostra.Although it avoided taking aim at any single West Coast artist outside of the direct response to the “New York, New York” record, The War Report was a declaration that saw many respond to the smoke fire signal sent out from Queens. Premiere producers representing nearly all five boroughs pulled together to help craft the soundscapes, as Capone and Noreaga read out the articles of their war journal. The journal’s pages reminded everyone that the more interesting tales of New York City’s eight million stories take place late at night, among the park benches and playgrounds of public housing. Note: As an Amazon & Apple Music affiliate partner, Albumism may earn commissions from products purchased or downloaded via links featured on our site.LISTEN via Apple Music | Spotify | YouTube: Editor’s note: this anniversary tribute was originally published in 2017 and has since been edited for accuracy and timeliness.

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