



Rich Gang

Various Songs

Rich Gang Tha Tour Pt. 1

09/2014

Cash Money Records

# Marble Floors and Human Connections

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*Who you pulling up with Rich Homie? Young Thugger*

*I'm talkin bout that's my mofuckin brother*

-Pull Up, Rich Gang: Tha Tour Part One

Rich Gang's 2014 mixtape *Rich Gang: Tha Tour Pt. 1* is the fervent, insistent joy of the come up and human connection distilled to a fine cognac, or codeine. This shit takes you somewhere else, and in 2014 it got me through some lonely months of an interminable winter.

During the fall of 2014 and the early months of 2015, the public friendship of Rich Homie Quan and Young Thug produced sonically lavish, exuberant music, before their brotherhood dissolved along with their musical partnership. Their mixtape was released in September 2014, followed by a few tour dates and a mysterious feud that precluded any release of the promised follow-up tapes.

Recently, Gucci Mane offered the two rappers \$1 million to reunite and make new music, ostensibly because he, like many fans, including myself, does not know if he will ever hear two voices that sound more melodically destined for shared greatness. The tweet that made the offer, Rich Homie Quan's enthusiastic response on Instagram, and Young Thug's cryptic rejection, brought the brief era of Rich Gang's 2014 reign back to the forefront of music news. A YSL and champagne drenched Rich Gang reunion might be the only cultural content able to bring diamond-studded, gold-leaf rimmed and auto-tuned joy back into a rap mainstream that in 2018 is dominated by depressed, Xanax-addled teenagers. The fact that a new collaboration appears to be a pipe dream reminded me to be grateful for those twenty tracks of ecstatic, absurdist lyrics dripping in irreverent humor, for the few months of a friendship riding a high.

In the same roughly eight month period that Rich Gang peaked and dove, I fostered an unrequited crush on one of my best friends, another close friend stopped speaking to me for reasons that remain opaque, and I blacked out more often than I would like to admit. I was living in Scotland during this year, a place I moved to because I was not sure who I was, and I thought living in a three street town that seemed to be falling off a crag into the ocean would help me figure it out.

I stumbled through the specific fog of a new place with that tape. The twenty tracks pumped me up when I already felt good (*she don't yield at stop signs lil shawty on goo*) and refracted my self-indulgent, depressive slumps through the mixtape's prism of unadulterated appreciation of life, basically calling me out on my shit. There is nothing like the poetry of *I'm every little kids' idol, got more verses than the bible/the lifestyle I live here priceless/pull up on yo ass like a diaper (what)?* to remind you that life is supposed to be fun, and you are probably being overdramatic. I played Flava and Givenchey at parties, Imma Ride and Everything I Got on buses through the Scottish countryside.

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One of my first nights in Scotland, I kissed a boy with a slightly strange accent. I would eventually know the sharp edges and choked off valleys of his voice in the deepest recesses of my mind, but I would never end up sleeping with him. I walked home tipsy, tilting, in the chilly pink Scottish dawn through the foreign fields of tall grass that led to my soulless university housing. Dawn there bites bare skin, tastes a little too salty, sobers you up fast, forces you to get familiar with your regrets before you even fall asleep.

A couple months later, he is crying in the spitting rain. The waves are crashing loudly two blocks away, I am shivering. I am in a skintight metallic dress, his suit is slightly too big for him and rapidly getting ruined. I just watched him shove my friend, his girlfriend, against a wall at a very fancy party and dragged him outside, where I should be abandoning him for acting like a sexist asshole. His face crumples, and I can't. My conscience fizzles up, sparks, tastes like rock candy. Champagne slinks through the crevices of my skull. I walk him home. My heels and my breath catch in the cobblestones, so I walk barefoot in the rain.

I cry over him outside the library during finals. We almost kiss on a sweaty, blurry, dance floor, and against cold, stained formica in the kitchen of his crumbling house. He tells me his life story, yells at me for doing drugs in his house. He makes out with my visiting friend in front of me at a house party, and she makes out with his friend in an attempt to access more drugs. Night bleeds into morning, we make up and bring champagne to the North Sea, run into the frigid water at dawn.

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One of the only times that year that I see a girl who used to be my best friend, we go clubbing in Barcelona. Dawn there is bright orange and blue and overlaid with neon, is not its own time period but is an extension of the night, hot and thick, sweet in a way that sticks to you and the stranger dancing next to you. All the clubs are somewhat outdoors, and we are never too far from a palm tree. She barely speaks to me, preferring her other friends until they abandon her for the VIP section. We act like the friends we once were in our faraway New York dorm room in the cab, in stupid hotel robes in the morning. We go to very ancient churches and less ancient churches in a hungover stupor, eat patatas bravas that burn our tongues. We hug goodbye to a pulsating beat, her face blinks in and out of my vision in the strobe lights. I scream happy birthday, I don't know if she hears me.

Losing a friend via an extended ghosting is a deeply inexplicable sensation. You can't publicly complain to other friends about it beyond an amorphous point after which you become clingy, or pathetic, or seemingly obsessed. Romantic breakups inspire outpourings of support, the immediate construction of a human fortress of sympathy in your DMs and over drinks. Platonic breakups, especially when slow, and subtle and not the result of easily identifiable drama, are stinging tears behind your eyes for months, checking your phone for a text you won't receive as a vaguely manic tic, the bitter, cloying knowledge that your personality just wasn't enough.

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The lyrics on *Rich Gang Tha Tour Pt. 1* are absurdism at its apotheosis, friendship and luxury metastasizing into a lifestyle of twenty tracks that slide into one another, espousing brotherhood on the outro and having a fucking good time on the hook. It is genuinely impossible to maintain a depressive mood to the tune of "War Ready". I dare you not to smile while listening to the lines *you don't want no beef no spaghetti/premium*

*gas no unleaded/ain't tryna preach like a reverend...baby I'm the hot dog you can be the relish.*  
This is simultaneously abstract art and a roll your windows down good time.

By March of 2015, Young Thug was calling his former brother "Bitch Homie Quan" in concert, their joint tour was canceled, and a true follow-up album seemed not to be forthcoming. Quan's admirably mature response been—"He's my brother for life man"—epitomizes the optimistic, cherish-the-moment ethos of their music. I don't know if I took as high a high road with the demise of my two pseudo-relationships, but I know the public artistry and drama of this one helped me remember that petty fights don't have to devalue a relationship that once was, and also that nothing really matters but the joke inevitably laced in the underside of every drama.

The brief few months of Young Thug and Rich Homie Quan's social and artistic partnership is crystallized in the angsty hearts of every rap fan who was or felt like a teenager in 2014. I know my problems are privileged as fuck, not remotely comparable to the struggles either of these artists created their art in response to. That isn't the point, though. The point is marble floors, gold toilets, chandeliers, appreciating absurdism and the necessity of getting a little too fucked up sometimes, recognizing that just because a relationship of any type ends doesn't render its brief glinting high of connection any less important. This is about the human experience, top floor lifestyle.