

The Death Row Kid

By Jack Hall

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CHARACTERS

George- A record producer

Masta uf tha Streetz- A former street thug who wants to get kids off the streets

Stanley- An average kid

[Author's note: This sketch should not be misinterpreted as a slant against any culture or race but rather as an attack on the entertainment industry's obsession with violence, sex, and vulgarity, as well as the marketing of criminals of questionable artistic talents. The characters within can be played by actors of any race, as all have been used and exploited by money hungry media moguls marketing murderous and deviant behaviors to America's youth.]

(Knock on the door.)

GEORGE- Come in.

(Masta uf tha Streetz walks in.)

STREETZ- Yo, dog. I'm hizz-ere to beez-come a rap stah!

GEORGE- Ah, Masta uf tha Streetz, come in, sit down.

STREETZ- Thankz.

(Streetz sits down.)

GEORGE- Thanks for coming in. Before we can make you a rap star, we need to get some general information from you. See if you're qualified. Mind if I ask some questions?

STREETZ- Coo.

GEORGE- Fine. First, where are you from?

STREETZ- Is you kiddin'? I'm da Masta uf da Streetz. I come from da Hood.

GEORGE- Excellent. Have any gold teeth?

STREETZ- Fee.

GEORGE- Fee?

STREETZ- Yeah, Fee. Un, Too, Fee.

GEORGE- Ah, three. Good. Third, have you ever done time?

STREETZ- I haff, for pozz-ession and attempted murdah.

GEORGE- Fine, strong qualifiers both.

STREETZ- Whut da ya mean?

GEORGE- We find that kids today love deviant artists. The longer your criminal rap sheet, the more impact we can make on the record market.

STREETZ- Hey, man, I dig whut ya mean. I ain't proud of my past, but it bring me a big crowd to heah what I gotta say?

GEORGE- That you're sick of "the man" and you're gonna strike back with a nine?

STREETZ- Naw, man, I ain't about dat. I lernd mah lessonz. I gone straight.

GEORGE- Straight?!?!?

STREETZ- Yo.

GEORGE- Why would you do a goofy thing like that?

STREETZ- Man, prison ain't coo. I wanna share my experance and tell kidz ta stay off dat streetz and outta drugs!

GEORGE- Why don't you just tell 'em to go to church while they're at it?

STREETZ- Hey, dats a good ideal.

GEORGE- Get out of my office! This is a record company, and we're in the business of selling records, not saving the youth of America from their self-destructive tendencies. If we did that, we'd be out of business in a week!

STREETZ- But da kidz, man...

GEORGE- *(stands, angry)* The kids want violence and anger. They want to hear about drugs and guns and the degradation of women.

STREETZ- Man, you don' know nuffin bout dat junk! Dat stuff ain't coo, and I know it, cuz I'm from da streetz!

GEORGE- And guess what, pal? *(pulls Masta uf da Streetz out of his chair)* You're going right back onto the street.

(George runs Masta uf dat Streetz towards of stage, hurling him out. Sound effect of breaking glass, then a thud.)

GEORGE- Masta uf da Streetz? Looks more like Plasta uf da Streetz, now.

STANLEY- *(off)* Man, that was way cool!

GEORGE- *(gets an idea, yells outside)* Hey, kid!

STANLEY- Yeah?

GEORGE- You wanna be a rap star?

STANLEY- Sure, okay.

GEORGE- Come on up here. I'm on the twelfth floor.

(George walks back to center.)

GEORGE- It's getting harder and harder to find authentic thugs these days. Maybe the best thing to do is invent one.

(Stanley enters. He wears a sweater vest and dress shirt, and nice pants.)

STANLEY- Hi.

GEORGE- Hey, kid. Listen, I spotted you on the street out there, and immediately I saw a star.

STANLEY- Where?

GEORGE- I'm talking about you.

STANLEY- Oh, shucks, I dunno.

GEORGE- What do you mean you don't know? Of course you're a star. And you know it!

STANLEY- I do?

GEORGE- All the big stars know they're tough, and they say so. So knock off the humility or else you'll never sell a single record.

STANLEY- Okay.

GEORGE- What's your name, kid?

STANLEY- Stanley Berger.

GEORGE- Stanley Berg—Oh, that'll never do.

STANLEY- Why not?

GEORGE- Stanley Berger is a good name for an economist. It's a lousy name for a thug from the streets of Detroit.

STANLEY- But I'm from the suburbs of Des Moines.

GEORGE- Not any more, you're not. And you're not Stanley Berger either. From now on you're the Death Row Kid.

STANLEY- I am?

GEORGE- Yes you are, and ain't nobody messes with the Death Row Kid. *(hands a lyric sheet to Stanley)* Here, try on these lyrics.

STANLEY- Is this my song?

GEORGE- Sure is.

STANLEY- I don't see any music.

GEORGE- Not a problem. We just pick any song recorded in the 1980's and have you rap over the top of it. Here's the one we've picked for this song.

(George pulls out a tape player and plays a few seconds of some 80's new wave ballad: preferably something like "True" by Spandau Ballet or "Hold Me Now" by the Thompson Twins.)

GEORGE- Now try the lyrics.

STANLEY- Okay. *(reads straight)* "I'm the Insert Your Name Here, and I'm—"

GEORGE- No, no, kid. When it says "Insert Your Name Here", use your name. Your showbiz name, not your real one.

STANLEY- Okay. "I'm the Death Row Kid?"

GEORGE- Uh huh.

STANLEY- "And I'm here to say, I like shootin' coppers with machine gun spray. I roam the streets with a nine on my hip. When my girlfriend's bad, I punch her in the lip." Say, that's not nice.

GEORGE- It was awful, but nothing a little coaching can't solve. We'll teach you how to slur your words and keep a beat.

STANLEY- I was talking about the lyrics. Hitting my girlfriend? I can't do that.

GEORGE- No problem. We'll have your bodyguards do it. Which reminds me, what size shirt do you wear?

(George looks at Stanley's shirt collar.)

STANLEY- I dunno.

(George walks to his desk.)

GEORGE- Miss Baker? I need a kevlar vest, size extra large for the Death Row Kid.

STANLEY- Kevlar? Isn't that the bulletproof stuff?

GEORGE- *(to Stanley)* You'll thank me for it, kid. *(on phone)* Miss Baker? I we also need a pistol and a couple bodyguards. End of today would be wonderful. *(hangs up)* Now you've got a name, a song, a gun... *(snaps fingers)* you need a good look. Untuck your shirt on one side.

(Stanley complies.)

GEORGE- Loosen your belt and lower your pants about 4 inches.

STANLEY- Why?

GEORGE- So your boxers stick out at the top.

STANLEY- I can't. These pants aren't that loose.

GEORGE- Then we'll have to get you some new clothes. In the mean time...

(George walks over and pulls Stanley's boxers out from the pants, giving Stanley a wedgie and causing him to yelp.)

GEORGE- There. Yeah, that will be a good look for you. Have any tattoos?

STANLEY- No.

(George picks up his phone.)

GEORGE- Miss Baker? Make an appointment at Tattoo Charlie's for the Death Row Kid... Tell him the Kid wants the Street Thug special.

(George hangs up.)

GEORGE- Now, we've got to give you a hair cut.

(George pulls a bottle of whiskey out and electric barber clippers.)

STANLEY- What are you gonna do with that?

GEORGE- I'm not doing anything. You're gonna drink this whiskey, then when you're good and drunk, cut your hair.

STANLEY- I dunno, that sounds kinda messy.

GEORGE- Trust me, all the big stars do it. Okay, Kid, one last thing.

STANLEY- What's that?

(George pulls a gun out of his desk and walks to the window.)

GEORGE- Come on over here, Kid.

STANLEY- *(walks to George)* Okay.

GEORGE- See those people down there? *(hands Stanley the gun)* Shoot a couple of them.

STANLEY- What???

GEORGE- Go ahead. Just aim and fire.

STANLEY- Isn't that illegal?

GEORGE- Kid, you have to trust me. If you wanna sell a few records, you've got to be a real life killer.

STANLEY- I can't shoot people.

GEORGE- *(takes the gun)* Why not? It's not hard.

(George fires a couple rounds.)

STANLEY- Wow! You shot that guy! And that old lady!

GEORGE- You wanna do a few yourself?

STANLEY- Sure!

(George hands Stanley the gun. Stanley closes his eyes takes a couple shots.)

STANLEY- Did I hit anything?

GEORGE- Yes. You just assassinated a Toyota Corolla.

STANLEY- Oh, man.

GEORGE- Not to worry. *(walks to his desk)* I'll let you take credit for the people I shot.

(George picks up the phone.)

STANLEY- What are you doing?

GEORGE- What do you think? I'm calling the police.

STANLEY- Why?

GEORGE- You just shot two people.

STANLEY- No, I didn't. You did!

GEORGE- Kid, if you don't get caught for murder, we won't sell a single unit. This is the way it goes.

STANLEY- *(points the gun at George)* I don't wanna go to jail!

GEORGE- Hey, kid, take it easy! You'll go away for six months, twelve max. Then you'll get out and live like a king... except for the occasional felony which has to be done to keep you in the spotlight.

STANLEY- I don't care, man. I'm not going to jail!

GEORGE- Kid, put down the gun.

STANLEY- Not until you put down the phone.

GEORGE- *(laughs)* Come on, Kid. I just picked you up off the streets. You can't even shoot straight. You don't have the guts to kill me.

(Stanley shoots George several times. Stanley hangs up the phone.)

STANLEY- Sorry, man. Ain't nobody messes with the Death Row Kid!

(Stanley exits.)