

# For 19th Anniversary of Rodney King Riots, Thurz of Award-Winning Rap Duo U-N-I Releases “Los Angeles” & Preps Solo Album L.A. RIOT



(Los Angeles, California – April 28, 2011) – As one half of Los Angeles’ critically lauded sub-commercial rap duo U-N-I, Yannick “Thurzday” Koffi along with rhyme partner Yonas “Y-0” Michael have already racked up over 2 million views on Youtube while being rained with accolades – named “Best Breakout LA Artist” at the 2008 MTV Video Music Awards, featured in URB Magazine’s “NEXT 100” & “NEXT 1000,” XXL Magazine’s “New Kids in Town,” Billboard Magazine’s “Acts to Watch,” The Source Magazine’s “Unsigned Hype” & “Off the Radar,” Time Out New York’s “The Volume,” MTVu’s “The Hot Seat,” BET.com’s “Rookies of the Year” and ending up on the “SoundBoard” of The Los Angeles Times while serving as the official hosts of MTV’s “Sucka Free” – on the strength of their observant, life-affirming rhymes that revolved around everything from limited-edition sneakers to cosmic existentialism and old-school video games to down-home musings on life and actress Lauren London.

This Summer 2011 Thurz will release his debut solo album, L.A. Riot inspired by the aftermath of the Rodney King verdict which took place during six days in 1992 from April 29th to May 4th and saw the second most populous city in the U.S. serve as the home to rampant and widespread unrest, including looting, arson, assault and murder. The death toll from the

riots officially tallied at 48 men and 5 women cross racial and ethnic lines”35 fell from gunfire (eight at the hands of law enforcement and the National Guard); Thousands more were injured. Property damages totaled over \$1 billion.

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[“LOS ANGELES”](#)

Thurz”whose rap name nods to the weekday of his birth as a counterpart to his last name (“Koffi” which actually means “born on a Friday” in Ghana’s native language, Akan- found the L.A. Riots were the perfect metaphor for the direction his music was moving into: mature and confident yet reactionary and emotional; the response to decades of things unspoken and undone. As someone who had identified with Los Angeles his whole life, it was natural that his artistic manifesto chronicle the most defining moment in the city’s modern history.

WATCH

[“RODNEY KING EVOLUTION”](#)

Produced by hometown heroes R0 Blvd (U-N-I), DJ Khalil (Eminem, Jay-Z, 50 Cent), Aaron Harris (Dr. Dre, Dead Prez), THX (Murs, The Clipse, Mobb Deep) and Terrace Martin (Snoop Dogg, Talib Kweli, Lalah Hathaway), L.A. Riot relies heavily on live instrumentation that eschews samples without sacrificing the boom bap. “What do you Riot for?” is a central question to the music. It’s a matter of importance and meaning” statement masquerading as a query; a movement smuggled through an album and carried out by a multimedia campaign, both online and off, which pays homage to the recent North African political uprisings.

Produced by longtime collaborator R0 Blvd, the first single “Los Angeles” was built around a jazzy horn riff, the beat”wide-open and sparse, anthemic and definitive, groundbreaking yet accessible”was a rapper’s dream: the type

of music that demands a statement. "This could be your 'Exhibit C'," said Ro, alluding to ascendant rap superstar Jay Electronica's Just Blaze-produced lyrical magnum opus. In paying respect to his hometown of Los Angeles Thurz had to go beyond the good times, palm tress and gangsta tropes, he had his fellow Los Angelenos call into his voicemail and leave one sentence definitions of the city. He wound up receiving over 100 messages of civic pride and observationâ€"poetic, straight-forward, sentimental, braggadocios, complex, simpleâ€"that would anchor the song in place of hooks. He laid his rhymes as a skilled latticework of street bravado, ghetto art, sports franchises, and social commentary with the individual vocal drops of nearly twenty proud Los Angelenos articulating its borders. A movement had begun.

Musically, L.A Riot is an album that strives to stand for something and succeeds. "Niggas" uses an electric guitar and widely-sourced vocal snippets to create a discussion around the divisive n-word, race, self-hate and self-love, ending with the declaration: "F%#\$ being a nigga, I'd rather be a king." "Home," featuring soul singer Aloe Blacc tackles the homelessness of Africans in America, debt slavery and cycles of families in the penitentiary system, showing the personal and political as one in the same. "Two Clips," featuring street-based singer-songwriter Kobe deals with patterns of recurring gang violence by dissecting the ideas of honor, loyalty, revenge and karma. Other guests include Black Thought of The Roots and Jive Recording R&B sensation Miguel.

Last month to commemorate the night of the Rodney King beating (March 3rd, 2011) Thurz released a grippingly haunting video clip transforming himself into the image of the beaten motorist (via makeup and computer effects). The song "Rodney King" off the upcoming album is a first-person perspective detailing King's night with acutenessâ€"from the statistics of the basketball game he was watching, the drinks he threw back, the marijuana he smoked, the make and model of car he was

driving; the chase through highways and residential areas through Lake View Terrace interspersed with King's parole worries; the relentless brutality captured on video by a plumber named George Holliday. And it's the events of that night which make "Rodney King" one of L.A. Riot's most compelling songs, full of sentiment and anger, music and motion, ominously rising from the mundane and deepening into dark anger and ending as a beginning, Thurz raps: "Beware: This stormy black Monday will morph its way into a black plague of agony: broken glass, burning buildings coughing up black smoke. My pain will be a molotov cocktail of hope for all those who sit silent, listening, contemplating violence, awaiting their turn to play their part in the uprising we call Rodney King Riots."

The Riot starts here.