

Jam Master Jay Tribute  
By: Stewart Dalley

As I text messaged friends and colleagues the awful news on October 30<sup>th</sup> that Jam Master Jay had been shot dead the disbelief was palpable. No one could comprehend why such a peaceful man had fallen foul to such an untimely end. But sadly it was true, at aged 37, Jason Mizell aka Jam Master Jay was dead.

Standing behind two decks replete in trademark Raiders jacket, Godfather style hat, black Lee jeans and laceless white Adidas is how he'll always be remembered. And as the DJ in Run DMC, Jam Master Jay will, for many an aspiring DJ, be the one that set them on their journey. Tracks like 'Peter Piper' – as currently being sampled on Missy's 'Work It' – highlighted his cutting skills to perfection. With the groundbreaking 'Walk This Way' acting as an introduction to the art of scratching - it was, incidentally, the first 12" I ever purchased and it still takes pride of place in my collection, some 16 years later.

A trailblazer in the truest sense, Jam Master Jay (with his Run DMC partners) set out the stall for all rap groups to follow; hip hop's first gold and platinum albums; the first hip hop artists to be nominated for a Grammy; first hip hop video on MTV. As a vehement supporter of local talent he was always locked up in his studio producing new artists, and it was there he met his end. With his JMJ record label he was also responsible for many acts, most noticeably Onyx.

Whilst hip hop has suffered its losses before, notably with Tupac and Biggie, Jay's is the one I felt. He wasn't involved in petty, media-fuelled, turf wars. He had lived all his life in Queens, New York and was loved and respected for it. His legacy is therefore a positive one, making his killing even more senseless.

RIP Jam Master Jay.