

TO: LUTSF  
11 November 2005

Thank you for making my krumping (for explanation of krumping see report) study trip to Los Angeles (LA) possible.

Over a period of six weeks from September the 5<sup>th</sup> 2005 I was in LA looking for krumping. To support my krumping I took part in street dance and African classes at Debbie Allen Dance Academy (dada) and Debbie Reynolds Dance Studios. I took krumping class on Wednesday the 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> with the Lil' Tommy at dada. I also watched and danced at krump jams outside the Glendale Galleria mall on Friday the 16<sup>th</sup> and Oct 13<sup>th</sup>. I attended two krumping events called the Battle Arena on the church hall at 6525 Normandie Ave in South Central LA. I also filmed and watched Tight Eyes and the Krumpkings do demonstration for a DVD launch at Northridge Tower Records.

I met and talked to the most well known and the originators of the dance style including Tommy the clown and the Krumpkings. I also met David La'Chapelle, the director of the popular krump film Rize. Plus I met and danced with several members of the cast.

During my trip I was able to film live events, (the footage needs to be edited) and take some photos. I made strong links with the dancers, and also made good friends with a Japanese dancer from the Kamikaze clowns crew in Tokyo who was on a similar mission to me.

So far I have achieved my main aim. I found places to see live krumping sessions in its original state and setting. I learnt enough skills to be able to hold my own in the circles, winning the respect of local dancers. This was key to getting involved in the scene, which can be hard being non-black and foreign, even harder if you can't 'Get Buck' (dance well).

Although I learnt enough to krumping to get by I don't have the stamina and vocabulary of moves as some of the dancers I saw in LA. To improve my level is the next step.

Having completed the sunny side of this project I have some hard graft ahead. I have written an article, a draft is enclosed, it is to be published in December 2005 issue of Chapeltown's *Community Highlights* paper, November's issue of the Scarman Trust's *The Voice* and possibly even the Jazz magazine *Straight no Chaser*, so keep your eyes peeled.

I have hours of videotape to sieve through and edit. I am going to be distributing the resulting footage locally as well as using it as part of my lecture demonstration. This workshop/demo will be with one other dancer, rehearsals are booked during Christmas, and we're hoping to be delivering workshops early next year.

PeAcE,

Bobak Walker

P.S. Any future awardees taking video cameras abroad beware of the difference in formats!

### **Bobak's report: A Krump Pilgrimage**

#### **So Bobak you've just come back from the West Coast of the States what exactly were you up to?**

I flew out to LA to research and learn the street dance styles of Krumpin and Clownin, with the aim of introducing them locally on my return to the UK. It's tough work but someone's got to do it.

#### **Wow, so what does that involve, where did you go to learn it?**

This dance style is not found on official courses or a curriculum. It was a question of 'google-ing' away to find out what practise sessions or events were hap'nin while I was there. I also managed to find a studio based Krump dance class that was very helpful.

#### **So what is Krumpin?**

It's always tough to describe. Think bboying meets African or even ballet on speed. I draw parallels to boxing because it uses a lot of arm swings and it has an aggressive edge. Moves include chest pops, taunts, stomps, tricks, character, fakes and clown walk. Like breaking it is usually done in a tight circle, the circles are usually loud with people hollering and screaming, it creates a lot of energy.

#### **You say it's aggressive, did you see any violence?**

Thankfully no I didn't. Yes the style is violent looking and LA has a lot of gang problems, all the peeps that I met through the dance though were friendly enough and Krumpin keeps the dancers out of trouble.

#### **What was it like to be a tourist in South-central LA ('the hood')?**

I got nicknamed The UK Hustler or UKH for short. I was slightly apprehensive at first, I didn't know the area and I was on foot. South-central has seen huge riots and the gang culture is so prevalent you've got to be careful you don't wear the wrong colours, even certain dance moves can be a mistake (namely the crip walk). Despite what they say, during the days that I spent on that side of town I had a great time and met some really friendly people.

Anyone living in Chapeltown will know that the reputation portrayed by the media is hyped and tied into prejudice and racism. Surprise, surprise the same is true to even bigger extreme out there. In Bel-Air I didn't even dare to go too near a house cause of the armed security patrols. On Normandie Avenue in south LA however I would ask people for directions while they hung out on their steps or in their front yards and ended up engaging in friendly banter, being fed fried chicken and root beer on more than one occasion,

although be prepared if you're British the hot subject of conversation will inevitably be the royals. If you're American you'll have a friendly moan about gas prices or taxes.

### **Style and fashion wise what did you notice?**

People are very image conscious, especially in the popular hip-hop classes. Some of the girls had poodles in their handbags with the dog's hair done to match their own hair, o.t.t if you ask me. It was half fashion show half class. You can't really diss them though when you see these kids dance skillz!

Krumpers and clowns wear super baggy clothing always. It's all about customizing, trainers, caps, boots, hoodies and extra tall white tees, all painted up with bright colours and the dancers name or crew. The big built guys will always dance topless; I thought it best to keep my hairy nips out of the picture.

### **And what's the face paint all about?**

I love it. Putting a face on can help really get into a character becoming masked for me it does the equivalent for my inhibitions of at least a double rum and coke. I can then really start to shack out and go nuts.

It's also a chance to get creative and it's a nice chilled kind of lull before the storm atmosphere. The quiet concentration while everyone studies the mirror in detail to get his or her look just right before everyone 'gets buck'.

### **What do you know about this film Rize then?**

It's inspiring, go and see it, twice! It's all about Krumpin. It's centred in South Central and has some great dance scenes, finishing up with massive battle event. I was lucky enough to meet and dance with most of the cast including the legendary Tommy The Clown as well as bumping into David La'Chapelle. Rize is due for release here at the end of October.

### **So what kind of music do you Krump to?**

There are no rules I saw people Krump to all sorts but generally it will be a slow hip-hop beat that makes a lush contrast to some of the super fast movement, at other times the slow beat can be emphasized by a simple move like a foot stomp.

### **Name some tunes then**

OK, but you probably won't have heard of them. My top five Krumpin tunes from LA at the moment are:

1. "Get Krumped" Flii Stylz, Lil' C & Bloezart
2. "Break it on Down" Flii Stylz & Tenashus
3. "Supreme People" Blackalicious
4. "Rhythm Sticks" Blackalicious
5. "4<sup>th</sup> July" Alchemist, Big Twins, Prodigy & Evidence (Dilated Peoples)

**It's great to hear about something so positive being exported from the US; it makes a nice change from weapons and bombs. So now I guess you've got the hard part of your mission to get people Krumpin in Leeds, good luck.**

Bobak Walker

PeAcE.